

Report of UN Liaison Committee Revised as of 12 May, 2007

The UN Liaison Committee has focused on implementing the UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power and related UN instruments concerning victims through the activities of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Its major focus is to get a UN Convention on rights for victims.

The committee has been very active. It involved a wide number of members of WSV, particularly at the Orlando Symposium. It had an active and organized delegation of four persons at the UNODC in Vienna in April. It has great support from Randy McCaul on the WSV website.

To stand a chance of succeeding, it needs WSV as a whole to advance successfully on several other parts of the WSV strategic plan. It needs public relations material such as the two videos shown in Orlando that can be used at UNODC next year and for use in national symposia on victims. It needs the WSV membership to expand across more countries and include persons interested in the UN Declaration being implemented and the Convention. It needs the Research Committee to include action on the UN questionnaire and alternative indicators. It needs the Tokiwa International Symposium Committee to include a focal point on the convention. It needs a committee to take on the organization of a petition through the WSV website and other ways.

In December 2005, InterVict hosted a meeting with WSV to develop a cogent draft of the convention, a strategy for its implementation, an interest in developing a petition to pressure political change, and the establishment of terms of reference for a special rapporteur. The draft of the convention as well as the report of the meeting is on the InterVict website (<http://www.tilburguniversity.nl/intervict/undeclaration/>).

At the WSV International Symposium in Orlando, a plenary session on the Theme: Expanding the Mission through the United Nations followed on the Plenary Session Theme I: Advocacy and rights: Will victim justice become the new standard in the criminal justice system? A well attended workshop with participation from all regions of the world examined the proposed contents of the DRAFT UN Convention on Justice and Support for Victims of Crime, Abuse of Power and Terrorism. An equally well attended workshop with simultaneous translation discussed strategies to get the Convention adopted, including an international petition.

At the 15th United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in April 2006, the UN Liaison committee influenced a decision to hold an intergovernmental experts meeting on implementation of UN instruments relating to victims so that the meeting would not only examine a questionnaire to go to governments (WSV had concerns about its utility) and also look at other ways of implementing the declaration. This meeting took place in November 2006 in Vienna and was attended by Marc Groenhuijsen who made a full report that is available on request. A couple of other WSV members attended in different capacities but not well coordinated. The attached

report from the meeting includes a questionnaire and several important recommendations including interest in the draft convention.

Because NGO's were excluded from this meeting, Irvin Waller insisted on the WSV being invited. A last minute compromise led to an invitation to the WSV to send an expert but this could not be taken up as only 24 hours were left before the meeting. Irvin Waller raised this issue formally at the Vienna NGO Alliance meeting in Vienna on April 23 where there was strong support to avoid this happening in the future.

At the 16th Commission on the Prevention of Crime and Criminal Justice in Vienna from April 23 to 29, the UN Liaison Committee was represented by:

1. Irvin Waller (focusing on theme of prevention of victimization and sexually exploited children)
2. John Dussich (focusing on next UN Congress in 2010, including the name, core themes, and practical workshops)
3. Marc Groenhuijsen (focusing on the implementation of Conventions and standards and norms relating to victims, including the follow-up to the IEGM on victims – see report attached) and,
4. Hidemichi Morozawa (focusing on the treatment of victim issues within the strategic plan of the UN).

Waller, Dussich and Groenhuijsen prepared statements in advance in a coordinated way. These are available on the WSV web site. Dussich used the material from Bangkok to prepare a press release that is also available on the WSV web site. These were good for WSV recognition.

ACTION NEEDED Both Dussich and Groenhuijsen have prepared reports on their participation that are set out in the next pages. My conclusions are that:

1. Real progress for victims will require long term and concerted action by WSV – the 16th session provided a learning experience more than real results – little was achieved in relation to the questionnaire (Groenhuijsen saw the US agreeing with WSV to confront Canada), the convention, the strategic plan or the Congress – much was achieved in terms of experiencing the process and making contacts, particularly for a first timer like Dussich.
2. The draft convention is a good way to mobilize opinion outside and inside the UN – TIVI is considering holding a workshop on the Convention similar to the Tilburg meeting which would be an important step.
3. Work must be targeted on the next Congress – WSV must be represented at ISPAC in a way that enables WSV or INTERVICT or TIVI to propose practical workshops
4. WSV should follow the recommendations from Groenhuijsen and IEGM to influence use of the questionnaire by informally collaborating with UNODC
5. Success at UNODC and the Congress comes with a combination of personal contacts and experience in these fora. WSV should organize its UN Liaison Committee to ensure continuity and a balance between experience and persons learning.

