

**Statement on UNODC Strategic Plan
Submitted by**

**World Society of Victimology
to
UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
April 28, 2006**

Greetings once again, I am Marlene Young, President of the World Society of Victimology (WSV).

On behalf of that organization, I would like to submit several comments on the proposed UNODC Strategic Plan.

The Commission, throughout the last twenty years, has set as a major priority responding to the plight of victims. But, despite some achievements during those years, victims throughout the world remain unserved and underserved even in affluent countries. Thus, it particularly troubles us that victimization and the response to it is relatively unaddressed in the current proposed Plan.

Without detailing the background of the achievements of the Commission in the past, or the current gaps in the proposed Plan, let me simply provide these suggestions for changing the Plan which we think are consistent with the general objectives of the Commission.

First, under Strategic Objective II – Rule of Law, one of the Outcomes is to see that universal instruments are fully operational. While this outcome includes some very specific items such as dealing with instruments and international cooperation regarding proceeds of crime and financing of terrorism, there is no mention of operationalizing and implementing one of the landmark accomplishments of both the Commission and the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Declaration on the General Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power. It is our contention that it is time that the Commission carried forward the intent of that Declaration through the passage of a Convention on Victim Rights and accompanying Protocols. Hence, we feel that this operationalization should be explicit in the Plan.

Second, under Strategic Objective III – Treatment & Reintegration, the Outcome focusing on assistance is far too narrow.

It restricts assistance to victims in the criminal justice system. We know most victims never are involved in the criminal justice system, for a variety of reasons. We also are aware that other outcomes such as those with regard to juvenile justice explicitly include provisions of alternative approaches outside the traditional justice systems. We believe that the outcome on victims should refer to “Assistance to victims” in general.

We also believe that the specific outcomes should include a general recommitment to the promotion of victim rights through implementation of the Declaration. Remember, victim rights are human rights and human rights include victim rights.

We also believe there should be a specific outcome that addresses “reintegrative assistance for victims of crime”.

Both of these outcomes should precede the three references to specific categories of crime victims that are included in the current draft.

WSV is committed to ensuring that services and rights to victims become a fundamental principle of international law and policy. You can help by altering the current plan in these ways and more accurately reflecting the Commission’s commitment to supporting victims’ rights to be treated with dignity, compassion and justice.