



Press Release from the World Society of Victimology

On the occasion of the 16th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna, Austria

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The World Society of Victimology calls on the United Nations to commit an act of justice by turning its attention to focusing on vulnerable groups, funding services and providing justice for victims of crime.

In 1985, the UN General Assembly agreed to prevent victimization and assist victims of crime and abuse of power. It adopted the Declaration on Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power. Yet millions of victims continue to suffer loss, injury and trauma without services or laws to protect them, particularly in developing countries.

Governments pay for police, lawyers and courts without providing direction, training or accountability to victims. Few governments tackle the causes of victimization in a systematic manner. Outside the European Union, North America and other developed countries, effective legislation to implement the UN principles for victims does not exist.

“Once again governments will come together at a UN Congress in 2010 to discuss serious crime problems without adequate attention to their victims,” said John P J. Dussich, President of the World Society of Victimology (WSV). “Their conclusions must focus on actions to protect and assist victims of trafficking, terrorism, and economic crimes as well as victims of violence such as that committed against women and children within their homes.”

The UN has developed a guide for policy makers and a handbook to train practitioners. “Victims will not be treated fairly until these are used and professionals are held accountable,” said Irvin Waller, Vice President of the WSV. “We need to consider the rights of victims as important as any other human rights. Policy makers must legislate to provide that balance.”

“Inspiring examples exist for what is needed for developing countries,” said Marc Groenhuijsen, Vice President of the WSV. In Europe and other developed countries, the needs of victims of crime and abuse of power are met through legislation, services, and reparation. In the USA, services for victims of crime have been funded from fines on offenders rather than taxes. In France, victims have lawyers in criminal courts

Japan has recently adopted a model law on how to implement the UN declaration. For India, the Commission for Reform of Criminal Justice has called for an overhaul of criminal justice to make it more responsive to victims, and to provide rights and reparation.

The World Society of Victimology is committed to understanding and serving the needs of victims across the world. It is an international non-governmental organization in consultative status with the UN with hundreds of members from 60 countries as well as support from twenty national Victimology societies.

WSV will host the 13th triennial International Symposium on Victimology in Mito, Japan, 2009.

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Understanding and serving victim needs across the world

www.worldsocietyofvictimology.org.