



World Society of Victimology

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www.worldsocietyofvictimology.org/

Greetings, delegates of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice's Sixteenth Session,

In 1985, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power. This international instrument, the first to be dedicated to crime and abuse of power victims, was a rallying cry heard around the world. In the years that followed it became the primary reference for international, national and local victim reforms all over the globe. The primary supporters of this initiative were: the World Society of Victimology; governments, like the Netherlands, the United States of America, Canada; and delegates like yourselves representing your governments and organizations and expressing concern for the plight of the billion victims who suffer every year in some part of the world.

Over the past twenty two years, the Declaration of Basic Principles became so important that it has been given the honorable nickname: "The Magna Carta of Victim Rights." This document provided governments and organizations with a beam of light that has continued to shine over this last, almost quarter of a century. However and unfortunately, that light has only touched a limited number of countries. Many countries have accepted the challenges offered by the Declaration, yet many others have not.

It is time to rise up and honor the noble intents of that Declaration; it is time to widen the beam so that other countries can be warmed by its light. It is time to renew our efforts on behalf of victims (who still remain silent and unseen in many countries); and, strengthen the resolve of the community of nations represented by the UN. Now, let us form a new instrument, a *Convention*, to press for the comprehensive adoption of those noble principles that will help further humanize how all governments should treat victims with "compassion and respect for their dignity."

Join the World Society of Victimology on this mission by first insuring that the role of victims is kept as an integral part of our considerations. Let us assure that the word "victim" is prominent in all our deliberations and writings; and, speaks for all those who are without words. Let us champion the cause to keep alive the spirit of those who must be heard and seen, even though they are often quiet and hidden. Let us brighten their light, speak their names and stand up for their rights!

Sincerely yours,

John P. J. Dussich, Ph. D.