



Statement on behalf of the  
**World Society of Victimology**  
(In consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the Council of Europe)

to the April 24, 2007 delegates of the  
16<sup>th</sup> United National Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice  
on the proposed  
**“12<sup>th</sup> United Nations Congress  
on Crime Prevention, Victim Support and Criminal Justice”  
2010**

Honorable Chair and Member states, it is my honor to be the president of the World Society of Victimology, and in that capacity I am privileged to come here to speak for the silent 1.5 billion victims of violence from around the world who's cries are mostly unheard and who's images are mostly unseen; and, in spite of being in the shadows, they suffer every day in every corner of this earth mostly ignored. That is an indictment of our claim to being a civilized world! Until we all recognize the immorality of giving more resources, more rights and more compassion to criminals, we cannot in good conscience claim to be humane in the governance of our nations. My purpose today is to offer you the chance to correct this unbalanced equation and show your commitment to morality, by giving victims of crime and abuse of power their rightful place at the table of justice.

The World Health Organization reports that every year there are roughly 1.5 billion persons victimized by violence, with close to 1.6 million of those murdered. The US Department of Justice reports that close to 1 million women and children are trafficked every year, and UNICEF tells us that about half of those are between the ages of 13-18! I could go on, the list is very long. But, these numbers are just faceless statistics; yet behind each one of these numbers there is a mother, a father, an aunt, a sister, a son, and a daughter. And, with each victim is a family and friends that also suffer. If we grieve for one or two, we understand what is it like, but how can we imagine grieving for 1.6 million souls?

In 1985, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power. The primary supporters of this initiative were: the World Society of Victimology; governments, like the Netherlands, the United States of America, and Canada; and delegates like you representing your governments and organizations and expressing concern for the plight of victims. Many countries have accepted the challenges offered by the Declaration, yet many others have not. Just over 20 years after the Declaration was passed by the UN general assembly, the task is not yet completed. It is now time to rise up again and honor the intents of that Declaration. The challenge is how do we do this?

Our grand opportunity is the 12<sup>th</sup> UN Congress in 2010. These are the simple and practical recommendations offered by the WSV:

- **Prior to the end of this Commission, give the next congress the title: “the 12<sup>th</sup> United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention, Victim Support and Criminal Justice;**
- **Prior to the end of this Commission, ensure that all documents concerning criminal justice reforms include the words “victims” so that there is a balance with offenders;**
- **By the end of 2008, require that the Intergovernmental Expert Group develop a new information-gathering instrument so that reliable data can be collected on the implementation of the UN Declaration on victim rights;**
- **That by the end of this Commission, one of the UN Institutes be given the task of organizing an entire workshop on the development of a Convention on Justice and Support for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power to be presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress;**
- **That by the end of this Commission, one of the five themes for the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress be dedicated to victims;**
- **The by the end of this Commission, a staff position in the UNODC be created that would be dedicated to victims by: monitoring the plight of victims world-wide, monitoring the implementation of the UN Declaration, and, periodically bringing together experts, institutes and NGOs that represent the highest levels of expertise in this field and making this information available to all future deliberations dealing with victims in the UN; and,**
- **That by the end of this Commission, the two leading victimology institutes (Tokiwa International Victimology Institute - TIVI, in Japan; and, the International Victimology Institute Tilburg – INERVICT in the Netherlands be commissioned to serve within the parameters of the Institutes of the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme Network .**

Thank you for your kind attention.