

**Assembly of States Parties  
Trust Fund for Victims (TFV)  
Board of Directors  
Ambassador Altangerel  
November 2009**

Mr. President,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to represent the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims today and to launch our second public programme progress report and newly designed website at: [www.TrustFundforVictims.org](http://www.TrustFundforVictims.org).

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work completed by the outgoing Board of Directors, which oversaw the start-up of the Trust Fund for Victim's operations and activities in two situations – namely northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. We look forward to transitioning our involvement to the newly elected Board of Directors and wish them great success in the coming years as the Trust Fund for Victims grows and matures.

The survivors of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity have unique vulnerability and are often forgotten. Victims include adults and children who saw their loved ones being killed,

tortured, raped, and mutilated. Children may have been forced into militias or military service. Women and girls may have been victims of sexual violence. Other people may have seen their property and livelihoods destroyed. Victims often feel stripped of their dignity and are shunned by their communities. Conflict also tears apart the social fabric of communities, disrupting family roles, gender relations, and other social structures.

It is impossible to fully undo the harm caused by the crimes under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. However, it is possible to help survivors recover their dignity, rebuild their families and communities, and regain their place as full members of their societies. By giving survivors a voice, support and the tools they need, the Trust Fund for Victims helps give these communities renewed hope for the future.

By November of this year, the Trust Fund for Victims had raised €4.5 million in voluntary contributions. Out of this, approximately €2.3 million has been obligated for activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and northern Uganda. Another €600,000 has been allocated for activities in the Central African Republic, which we hope will begin in 2010. We also have a reserve of €1 million to complement any potential Court-orders for reparations.

Currently, the TFV has 34 approved projects under its mandate to provide general, non-Court ordered assistance to victims of crimes under

the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction in northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Of these, 29 projects are active and an additional three are in the final stages of programming. The remaining projects will be programmed in early 2010.

The TFV estimates that these 29 projects are currently reaching 226,000 victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity, both *directly* and *indirectly*. In northern Uganda and the DRC, these crimes include enlistment and conscription of child soldiers, sexual enslavement, rape, murder, pillage, destruction of property, attacks directed against a civilian population and more.

Approximately 39,000 victims are benefiting directly from TFV-supported services, including counselling, community reconciliation workshops, education grants, reconstructive surgery, start-up grants for income generating activities, and more. The TFV estimates that an additional 187,000 of their family and community members are benefiting indirectly from these initiatives.

The Trust Fund for Victims would like to acknowledge the support received this year from Member States who have provided earmarked support toward the Board's 2008 donor appeal to support victims of sexual violence. The Fund considers its assistance to victims of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence a key step toward ending impunity for human rights abusers, establishing durable peace and

reconciliation in conflict settings, and for successfully implementing *United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, and 1889*.

The TFV also considers both mainstreaming a gender-based perspective across all programming (including reparations), *and* specifically targeting crimes of sexual violence, as key steps to achieving its mission of addressing the harm resulting from crimes under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

With this in mind, the Board of Directors initiated a filing with the Court to launch support for victims of sexual violence in the Central African Republic. We have received a response this week from the Pre-Trial Chamber and will be working with the Secretariat on the appropriate response.

We are all aware that the Rome Statute established a unique system in which the elements of retributive and restorative justice were reconciled. Therefore, let me share a story of one child who is benefiting from the Fund's assistance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is my hope that this will show you how our support has benefitted those who have fallen victim to the world's gravest crimes.

This story comes from the district of Ituri in eastern Congo, where the Trust Fund is supporting the Peace School. This project brings together children victimized by war to express their trauma through art and drama so they can share messages of peace, healing, and

reconciliation with each other and their wider communities. The children at the Peace School have endured the worst human rights abuses: some were abducted into fighting forces, in some cases forced by their own families; some witnessed their parents' brutal murder in front of their own eyes; and some were abducted and enslaved as the "wives" of commanders and soldiers, forced to give birth while in captivity.

The Peace School brings these children and youth together to share their stories, give voice to their anger, and start the healing process. Together, children learn from one another that they are not alone, and that forgiveness is possible.

But, of course, forgiveness is not easy.

During one of the school's recent sessions, a little girl burst into tears. She had been abducted, forced as a wife, and raped repeatedly. And when she heard the other children start to talk of "forgiveness," she did not believe it was possible that she too might one day heal. Through tears, she told her story:

"My heart is preparing to revenge the person who did me harm. Please help me. How can I forgive? If I do not do so, I will end up committing a crime."

She then worked with the other children at the school to create a play, and present it to their peers and families. In the play, a little girl is

abducted, enslaved, and raped by a group of rebel soldiers. The little girl gives birth to a child, escapes, and tries to return home, but she is rejected by her family. She is alone and full of hatred. But in the play, she meets another child, a small boy who was abducted and forced to fight on the front lines, but who later escaped. Together, they decide to visit the local chief, who is grieved by their story and calls on the two families to accept the children. Upon his urging, the families open their doors, and welcome the children back home.

Later, after presenting her play, this girl shared her feelings once more. Having heard the children's' other stories she felt that healing was indeed possible.

"I long sought to avenge the man who raped me," she said. "The child I bore made me sick. I did not want to keep it. But if I had not come here, perhaps I would have done worse than my attacker."

This is only one small story out of thousands, but it is important because it highlights the hope and healing that the Trust Fund's assistance can provide and the real difference it is making in victims' lives. Working with victims in resource-poor settings requires culturally appropriate and locally relevant responses. The Trust Fund employs such care throughout its programming by involving the victims in designing and implementing their assistance.

The Trust Fund for Victims is also learning valuable lessons from these experiences, and believes that such lessons can help to inform the Court's approaches to defining reparation awards - both for individuals and communities. As such, justice will be a complete process – because victims' assistance and their reparation will no longer be complementary, they will be central to justice, rehabilitation and reconciliation.

All of this has been possible this year because of the contributions made by Member States. You can read in more detail about the work of the Fund in the latest programme report and on our new website which goes live today!

We hope that you are encouraged by the work of the Trust Fund for Victims to reach *the faceless ones, the anonymous ones*; and we hope that your governments will continue to commit funds through voluntary contributions now that projects are up and running; and new situations are opening under the ICC's jurisdiction.

Mr President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, with your continued support and contributions former victims can work for peace themselves, heal trauma, ensure justice and overcome the legacies of war – the Trust Fund for Victims has seen this first hand.

Thank you.