

## **Blaak Sow, Mirjam (Uganda)**

[Original: English]

### **Statement of qualifications**

This is a statement submitted in accordance with paragraph 6 of the resolution of the Assembly of States Parties relating to the procedure for the nomination and election of members of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims for the benefit of Victims (ICC-ASP/1/Res.7), adopted on 9 September 2002.

Ambassador Mirjam Blaak Sow meets the criteria established in paragraph 1 of the above mentioned resolution; “the candidates [shall] be of high moral character, impartiality, integrity and have competence in the assistance to victims of serious crimes.”

Following obtaining her Master of Laws degree and right at the inception of her career, Ambassador Mirjam Blaak Sow was privileged to have been posted as a Legal Protection Officer to the Nairobi office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a position that brought her in direct contact with victims of conflict and civil strife in many ways similar to the victims the TFV is dealing with. This role presented the opportunity for her to assist in designing practical solutions to alleviate their plight.

Ambassador Mirjam Blaak Sow is of high moral character, impartiality and integrity, qualities and attributes that have been tested and proven in the 34 years of her career, which has been mostly international.

Ambassador Blaak Sow was appointed Uganda’s Ambassador Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary to Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg and the European Union in 2012. Earlier on, she had served as the Deputy Ambassador accredited to Brussels but based in The Hague representing Uganda in all legal institutions including the International Criminal Court (ICC), International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapon (OPCW). The other key elements of her mandate involved promotion of tourism, trade, transfer of technology and investments, attributes that are crucial for lobbying and promotion of a cause such as the TFV.

Ambassador Blaak Sow was at the heart of the preparations for hosting of the Review Conference in Uganda in 2010. The process entailed preparations and coordination for visits to the affected communities in the months leading up to the Conference. These visits brought the ICC as well as the States Parties closer to the victims and resulted in a better understanding of victims’ issues in the plenary sessions of the Review Conference and subsequent Assembly of States Parties’ Sessions.

Prior to that Ambassador Blaak Sow had introduced the work of Interplast Holland to the Trust Fund for Victims. Interplast is an organisation that has carried out extensive reconstructive surgery and thus rehabilitated many victim of crimes committed by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Northern Uganda.

Moreover Ambassador Blaak Sow has considerable experience in Fundraising arising out of membership on various Boards, which she believes would be an asset to the TFV.

Through her role in Justice Rapid Response (JRR), the Board of which she previously chaired and has been active with since inception, Ambassador Blaak Sow has played an instrumental role in formulating the training and building capacity at national level for

responding swiftly to the need to investigate human rights violations especially Sexual and Gender Based Crimes for which now there is a solid roster that can be drawn upon at any given time.

Ambassador Blaak Sow is a member of the Governing Council of Africa Legal Aid (AFLA) and devotes considerable time to enhancing and strengthening and stamping out impunity and taking justice to victims.

A professionally trained legal mediator, Ambassador Blaak Sow has played a key role in the implementation of article 86 on cooperation between the ICC and her country Uganda especially in the first case that was referred to the ICC. Her mediation and negotiating skills have many a time been drawn upon for consensus building with the Africa region group.

Her extensive work with the Court in the last 12 years has among others encompassed chairing working groups on gender and geographical representation and she is a highly respected member of the international diplomatic community for her tireless advocacy for Uganda, Africa and victims on the whole. She has good working relations with the judges and other members of the Court.

As the TFV embarks on its next phase of broadening its area of operation Ambassador Blaak Sow's understanding and knowledge of the region, the complexities, the challenges, opportunities and her broad network with Governments and civil society will no doubt be a substantial asset to the Board.

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