
INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It is with pride that the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI) offers to the international community the Resource Material Series No.63.

This volume contains the Annual Report for 2003 and the work produced in the 123rd International Senior Seminar that was conducted from 14 January to 13 February 2003. The main theme of this Seminar was, “The Protection of Victims of Crime and the Active Participation of Victims in the Criminal Justice Process Specifically Considering Restorative Justice Approaches”.

The need for the criminal justice system to protect victims of crime was specifically recognized by the United Nations by the adoption of the “Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power” at the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1985. This focused the international community on the domestic situation of member states in relation to the role, support and protection of victims of crime.

The development of victim support and protection heavily influenced and added impetus to the restorative justice approaches that had been growing. Countries are starting to create fresh approaches to justice as well as looking to the history of their own societies where restorative justice was once often practiced. In 2000 “The Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century” was adopted by the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders. This declaration provided for the introduction of action plans to create mechanisms for restorative justice and the encouragement of restorative justice policies. Based on this Declaration, the working group on the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice drafted “Basic Principles on the Use of Restorative Justice Programmes in Criminal Matters”, as a United Nations standard for restorative justice which was formally adopted by the U.N. Economic and Social Council in July 2002.

Although the United Nations has laid an important foundation and great progress has been made in some countries, major parts of Asian, African and central and southern African countries do not have adequate systems for the protection of victim’s rights and the active participation of victims in the criminal justice process. In this Seminar the participants held seven general discussion sessions in which they identified and clarified problems and found practical solutions and more effective ways to protect victims and involve them in the criminal justice process, particularly in regard to restorative justice. The essence of these discussions was then crystallized in the recommendations of their General Discussion Paper.

In this issue, papers contributed by visiting experts, selected individual presentation papers from among the Seminar participants, and the General Discussion Paper are published. I regret that not all the papers submitted by the Seminar participants could be published. Also, I must

request the understanding of the selected authors for not having sufficient time to refer the manuscripts back to them before publication.

I would like to pay tribute to the contributions of the Government of Japan, particularly the Minister of Justice and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and the Asia Crime Prevention Foundation for providing indispensable and unwavering support to UNAFEI's international training programmes.

Finally I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all who so unselfishly assisted in the publication of this series; in particular, the editor of Resource Material Series No.63, Mr. Simon Cornell (Linguistic Adviser).

July 2004

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kunihiko Sakai', written in a cursive style.

Kunihiko Sakai
Director of UNAFEI