
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 Resource Material Series No. 70.

This volume contains the work produced in the 131st International Training Course that was conducted from 29 August to 6 October 2005. The main theme of the 131st Course was “The Use and Application of the United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power - Twenty Years after Its Adoption”.

The United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (the “Declaration”) was a milestone in the struggle for the greater recognition of victims of crime and abuse of power. It recommends Member States take comprehensive measures to ensure that victims of crime are treated fairly and compassionately, and among other things that they be provided financial compensation. In regard to abuse of power it proposes that Member States incorporate into their national law norms prescribing abuses of power and provide remedies to victims. Since the Declaration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1985 the U.N. has made great efforts to encourage Member States to fully implement the Declaration. These efforts include the production of a Handbook on its use and application and a Guide on its implementation for policy makers.

Nevertheless, Member States have been slow to implement the Declaration. The Guide, published in 1999, states in its introduction that there is probably no jurisdiction that is fully in accordance with the Declaration. In order to instil a sense of urgency, the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice in 2000 set 2002 as a target date for Member States to review their practices and take the necessary measures in accordance with the Declaration.

In consideration of the above UNAFEI, as a United Nations Programme Network Institute, decided to hold this Course in order to study and analyse the current situation, problems and effective countermeasures concerning victims of crime and abuse of power and explore ways in which the Declaration could be more fully incorporated into the law and practice of the participating countries.

In this issue papers contributed by visiting experts, selected individual presentation papers from among the participants, and the reports of the Course are published. I regret that not all the papers submitted by the Course participants could be published.

I would like to pay tribute to the contributions of the Government of Japan, particularly the Ministry of Justice, 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. 70, Mr. Simon Cornell, who so tirelessly dedicated himself to this Series.

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