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Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
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High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Operations of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

Note by the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

A. Submission of the report

1. The present note was prepared in accordance with the arrangements approved by the Human Rights Council in its decision 2/102. It presents updated information on the activities of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, and in particular on the recommendations adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Fund at its thirty-first session, held in Geneva from 19 to 23 October 2009. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights approved the recommendations on behalf of the Secretary-General. The present note will be complemented by the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Fund, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, detailing the outcomes of the thirty-first and thirty-second sessions of the Board of Trustees.

B. Mandate of the Fund

2. The Fund receives voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals. In accordance with the practice established by its Board of Trustees in 1982, the Fund provides grants to non-governmental organizations that submit projects involving medical, psychological, social, financial, legal and humanitarian or other forms of assistance to torture victims and their relatives.

C. Board of Trustees

3. The Secretary-General administers the Fund through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) with the advice of the Board of Trustees, composed of five members acting in a personal capacity and appointed by the Secretary-General with due regard to equitable geographical distribution and in consultation with their Governments. In October 2008, the Secretary-General reappointed Krassimir Kanev (Bulgaria), Savitri Goonesekere (Sri Lanka), Joseph Oloka-Onyango (Uganda) and Derrick Pounder (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) for a final period of three years, and appointed Mercedes Doretti (Argentina) for a three-year term, renewable once.

D. Admissibility criteria

4. Project admissibility criteria are outlined in the guidelines of the Fund. They require a project to be presented by a non-governmental organization. The beneficiaries must be direct victims of torture and/or direct family members. Priority is given to projects providing direct assistance to torture victims, which could consist in medical or psychological assistance, help with social or financial reintegration through vocational training for victims, legal assistance for victims or members of their families seeking redress or for processing asylum-seekers' claims. Depending on the funds available, the Fund may finance projects to organize training programmes, seminars or conferences to allow health-care professionals or other service providers to exchange best practices. Grant requests for projects involving investigation, research, studies, publications or similar activities are not, however, admissible. The Fund may also provide emergency assistance to individuals in countries where no project is receiving support. This type of request is examined according to a specific procedure outlined in the guidelines.

II. Thirty-first session of the Board of Trustees

A. Financial situation of the Fund

5. The table below shows the contributions received from 1 January to 24 November 2009, including contributions received since the last report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Fund (A/64/264). It should be noted that only contributions received up to 24 November 2009 were allocated to grants recommended by the Board at its twenty-ninth and thirtieth sessions.

Contributions and pledges received from 1 January to 24 November 2009

<i>Donors</i>	<i>Amount (in United States dollars)</i>	<i>Date of receipt</i>
Algeria	5 000.00	5 March 2009
Andorra	32 928.27	14 July 2009
Austria	85 978.84	21 January 2009
Canada	49 884.48	7 January 2009
Chile	10 000.00	16 June 2009
Croatia	7 000	18 November 2009
Czech Republic	10 000	16 November 2009
Denmark	343 465.57	17 March 2009
Finland	203 626.22	25 June 2009
France	255 754.48	17 March 2009
Germany	557 880.06	6 July 2009
Greece	42 194.09	30 June 2009
Hungary	6 936.79	1 January 2009
Ireland	140 449.44	31 July 2009
Israel	2 500.00	1 January 2009
Liechtenstein	23 062.73	3 July 2009
Monaco	17 127.80	14 April 2009
Morocco	3 000.00	29 April 2009
	3 000.00	31 July 2009
Norway	155 400.16	23 July 2009
Republic of Korea	70 000.00	9 October 2009
South Africa	9 986.60	6 April 2009
Spain	443 787.00	10 November 2009
Switzerland	95 238.10	13 August 2008
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2 000.00	7 January 2008
Turkey	10 000.00	26 March 2009
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	5 000.00	9 February 2009
Total contributions	2 535 126.25	
Pledges		
Belgium	127 887.24	2 March 2009

Netherlands	1 120 000.00	2 March 2009
United States of America	7 100 000.00	17 August 2009
Total pledges	8 347 887.24	

6. The amount available for distribution to projects was calculated after deducting programme support costs, operating cash reserve and expenditure for non-grant activities from the total amount of funds made available in the form of contributions received between the twenty-ninth session of the Board of Trustees, held in October 2008, and the thirty-first session of the Board, held in October 2009, and the operating cash reserve of the previous cycle.

7. In accordance with United Nations financial regulations, programme support costs will be charged to the Trust Fund at the rate of 13 per cent of total annual expenditure. In addition, the United Nations requires that an operating cash reserve of 15 per cent of annual estimated expenditure be maintained to cover exchange rate fluctuation, any shortfalls and to meet final expenditure, including any liquidating liabilities. The operating cash reserve will be left unallotted and carried forward from year to year, until required. Expenditure for non-grant activities include travel expenditure for Board members, expenditure for monitoring and evaluation of projects by United Nations staff and technical assistance for the further development of the grant management system.

B. Recommendations adopted by the Board

8. At its thirty-first session, the Board reviewed information prepared by its secretariat concerning 240 projects, including the analysis of narrative, financial and audit reports on the use of grants paid in previous years. It considered requests for new grants amounting to \$18,370,674 for more than 170 ongoing and 30 new projects, as well as for 15 training sessions and seminars to be implemented in 2010.

9. The Board of Trustees made recommendations for grants for the period from January to December 2010 for over 200 projects in more than 70 countries, for a total amount of \$11,809,050, after deduction of the programme support cost and the operating cash reserve. The High Commissioner approved the recommendations on 3 November 2009 on behalf of the Secretary-General.

10. The Board recommended that \$9,864,350 be paid in January 2010 and \$1,944,700 be disbursed after its thirty-second session in February 2010, upon receipt of satisfactory information by applicants. In addition, the Board decided to set aside \$250,000 for emergency and intersessional requests for 2010, in particular for projects located in priority regions (Africa, Central Asia and Asia) identified by OHCHR field presences.

11. In accordance with recommendation 3 of the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its report on the evaluation of the Fund (E/CN.4/2005/55, para. 76), the Board continued its practice of financing training and seminars, thus allowing health professionals, social workers, lawyers and other service providers to exchange experiences and develop new strategies to address the needs of torture victims. The Board recommended an allocation of \$276,100 to 15 organizations for training sessions to be organized in 13 countries in 2010.

12. Further information on the activities of the Fund, including detailed information on, inter alia, the distribution of grants by region, policy decisions, meetings of the Board with Member States and relevant actors in the field of assistance to victims of torture, will be available after the thirty-second session of the Board, to be held from 1 to 3 February 2010.

III. Financial situation of the Fund and estimated needs for 2011

13. Since 2006, the Board has progressively increased the amount awarded in grants to projects worldwide. This has been possible because the income used during the period 2006–2010 has included both the yearly voluntary contributions and unallocated amounts carried over from previous years. These amounts resulted from more efficient management of the Fund, including the change in cycle, closer monitoring of grantees and stricter reporting requirements. The Board decided to use the carry-overs to increase the level of funding to projects, particularly in priority regions.

14. At its thirty-first session, the Board carefully examined the financial situation of the Fund of recent years. For 2011, Board expects that, in order for it to continue to meet requests from grantees at current levels, it will be faced with a shortfall of some \$3 million. Should contributions for 2011 remain at their current level, the Board may need, as a last resort, to implement a reduction of 20 per cent in grants to be awarded as of 2011.

15. On the basis of the requests received for 2010, it is expected that approximately \$19 million will be requested by organizations for 2011.

IV. Making a contribution

16. Contributions to the Fund should always be marked “payee: United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, account CH”. Payments may be made either by bank transfer (a) in United States dollars to the United Nations Geneva General Fund, account No. 485001802, J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, national Agencies Banking, 1166, Ave. of the Americas, 17th floor, New York, NY 10036-2708, United States of America (Swift code: CHAS US 33; ABA code: 021000021); (b) in euros to the United Nations Office at Geneva, account No. 23961901, J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, 125 London Wall, London EC2Y 5AJ, United Kingdom (Swift code: CHAS GB 2L, sorting code: 60-92-42, IBAN: GB25 CHAS 6092 4223 9619 01); (c) in pounds sterling to the United Nations Office at Geneva, account No. 23961903, J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, 125 London Wall, London EC2Y 5AJ, United Kingdom (Swift code: CHAS GB 2L, sorting code: 60-92-42, IBAN: GB25 CHAS 6092 4223 9619 03); (d) in Swiss francs to the United Nations Geneva General Fund, account No. 240-C0590160.0, UBS, rue du Rhône 8, Geneva 2, Switzerland (Swift code: UBSW CH ZH 12A; IBAN: CH65 0024 0240 CO59 0160 0); (d) in other currencies to the United Nations Geneva General Fund, account No. 240-C0590160.1, UBS, rue du Rhône 8, Geneva 2, Switzerland (Swift code: UBSW CH ZH 12A; IBAN: CH65 0024 0240 CO59 0160 1); (e) or by cheque payable to the United Nations, addressed to Trésorerie, Nations Unies, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Donors are requested to inform the secretariat of the Fund and the Resource Mobilization Unit of OHCHR when a payment has been made (a copy of the bank transfer order or of the cheque would be appreciated) to facilitate effective follow-up on the official recording procedure and preparation of reports of the Secretary-General.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

17. Pursuant to the appeals made by the General Assembly and the Board of Trustees of the Fund, donors are invited to pay their contributions to the Fund before the thirty-third session of the Board (18–22 October 2010) to enable the latter to take them into account in October 2010.

18. In the light of the difficult financial situation foreseen for 2011, the General Assembly and the Board have urged regular donors to increase, as much as possible,

their contributions to the Fund in order to provide the Board with the necessary resources to meet the growing needs of torture victims and the members of their families worldwide.

19. The Board strongly encourages Governments that have not yet contributed to the Fund to do so, preferably before September 2010.
