



**General Assembly**

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/HRC/7/50  
7 January 2008

Original: ENGLISH

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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
Seventh session  
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND REPORTS OF THE OFFICE OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

**Report of the Secretary-General on the operations of the  
United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture**

**Summary**

In accordance with Human Rights Council decision 2/102, the present report provides updated information on the activities of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (the Fund) since the publication of the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/62/189) on 6 August 2007, including further progress in implementing the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). It also describes the financial situation of the Fund and its needs for 2009.

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## **Introduction**

### **A. Submission of the report**

1. The present report was prepared in accordance with the arrangements approved by the Human Rights Council in its decision 2/102 of 6 October 2006. It presents updated information on the activities of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (the Fund), and in particular the recommendations adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Fund at its twenty-seventh session, which was held in Geneva from 22 to 26 October 2007. The High Commissioner for Human Rights approved these recommendations on behalf of the Secretary-General. The present report complements the report on the activities of the Fund submitted to the General Assembly (A/62/189) on 6 August 2007.

### **B. Mandate of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture**

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 a Board of Trustees composed of five members acting in their personal capacity and appointed by the Secretary-General with due regard to equitable geographical distribution and in consultation with their Governments. The Secretary-General in August 2005 appointed the following members for a period of three years, renewable once: Krassimir Kanev (Bulgaria), Sonia Picado (Costa Rica), Savitri Goonesekere (Sri Lanka), Joseph Oloka-Onyango (Uganda), and Derrick Pounder (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

### **D. Admissibility criteria**

4. Project admissibility criteria are outlined in the Fund's guidelines. 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. This could consist of medical or psychological assistance; help with social or financial reintegration through vocational training for victims; or legal assistance to seek redress for victims or members of their families, or process the claims of asylum-seekers. 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. However, grant requests for projects involving investigation, research, studies, publications or similar activities are not admissible. The Fund can 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.

## I. TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

5. The Board of Trustees held its twenty-seventh session from 22 to 26 October 2007 and made recommendations for grants for a total amount of US\$ 8,582,700 to 191 projects in 65 countries. The High Commissioner for Human Rights approved these recommendations on 12 November 2007 on behalf of the Secretary-General.

6. In spite of the limited resources available, and consistent with recommendation 3 of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Fund,<sup>1</sup> 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 US\$ 97,500 to nine organizations for training to be organized in 2008.

### A. Financial situation of the Fund

7. Table 1 below indicates the contributions received as of 12 December 2007 and since the last report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the activities of the Fund (A/62/189), including contributions received between February and October 2007, which have been allocated to grants recommended at the twenty-seventh session.

**Table 1**

#### Contributions received as of 12 December 2007

Donors	Amount (in United States dollars)	Date of receipt
<b>States</b>		
Finland	199 726	28 August 2007
Greece	41 040	14 August 2007
Germany	544 959	2 October 2007
Holy See	1 000	7 September 2007
Iceland	29 620	23 August 2007
Italy	164 139	7 August 2007
Kuwait	10 000	2 November 2007
Portugal	15 000	30 July 2007
Switzerland	85 470	9 October 2007
United States of America	6 517 170	9 August 2007
<b>Individuals</b>		
Rita Maran	50	7 September 2007
<b>Total contributions</b>	<b>7 608 174</b>	

<sup>1</sup> E/CN.4/2005/55, para. 76.

## B. Recommendations adopted by the Board

### 1. Grants awarded for the period January to December 2008

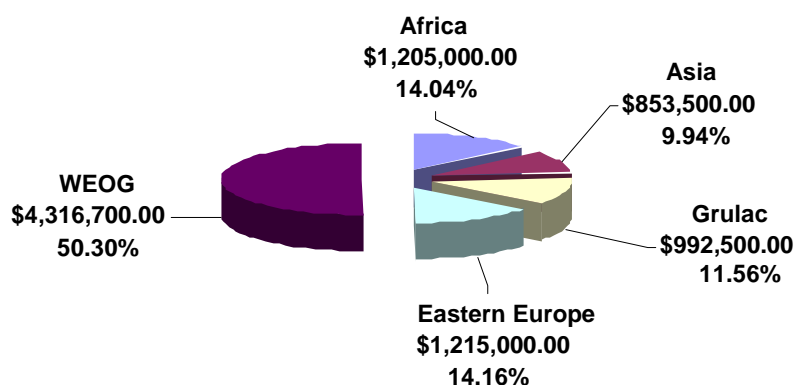
8. The Board expressed satisfaction with the smooth completion of the change in funding cycle for grantees, pursuant to recommendation 10 of the Office of Internal Oversight Services,<sup>2</sup> following its evaluation of the functioning of the Fund. For the first time grants have been allocated for a future period, January to December of the year following applications, enabling organizations to plan their activities more effectively, as the Fund grant would be received at the beginning of the calendar year of implementation of the project.

9. The Board reviewed information prepared by the secretariat concerning 255 projects, including the analysis of narrative, financial and audit reports on the use of grants paid in previous years. It considered 199 requests for new grants amounting to US\$ 14,035,172 for projects to be implemented in 2008.

10. The Board recommended that US\$ 7,770,500 be paid in January 2008, and US\$ 812,200 after its twenty-eighth session in February 2008, upon receipt of satisfactory information by applicants. In addition, in accordance with the guidelines of the Fund, the Board decided to set aside US\$ 417,300 to finance projects in priority regions, identified through OHCHR field presences during the intersessional period.

11. The figure below provides information on the distribution of grants per region for the year 2008. The list of organizations subsidized can be found on the webpage of the Fund <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/about/funds/torture/>.

#### Distribution of grants for the period January to December 2008



12. The Board was pleased to note that its efforts to attract suitable applications from organizations working in Africa and Asia and Central Asia resulted in a noticeable increase, over previous years, of projects identified and funded in the above regions in 2008.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

**Table 2****Number of subsidized projects for the period January to December 2007**

Region	Number of projects July 2006 to December 2007	Number of projects 2008	Amount in United States dollars awarded for 2008
Africa	12	25	1 205 000
Asia	20	25	853 500
Latin America and the Caribbean	24	29	992 500
Eastern Europe	19	29	1 215 000
Western European and Other States	90	83	4 316 700
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>8 582 700</b>

13. The Board expressed appreciation of the efforts undertaken by the secretariat since its previous session to organize assessment visits to projects in the field. From January to December 2007, 56 projects in 19 countries had been visited and monitored by OHCHR staff, United Nations Human Rights Field Presences and Board members.

## **2. Policy decisions**

14. The Board recommended that in cases where awards are received from national or international courts as a result of successful litigation, legal fees paid by the Fund need not be returned to it, in accordance with the conditions under which the grant was made. However, it encourages organizations to use any such awards for the continued protection of victims of torture. It also encourages organizations to keep it informed as to how they intend to use any such future awards. The Board has requested that the secretariat undertake an assessment of best practices of other donors in this respect.

15. The Board also discussed the possibility of strengthening the capacity of grantees and has requested the secretariat to identify organizations providing good services but facing difficulties in fulfilling the requirements of the Fund. At its next session, the Board will consider options presented by the secretariat on ways to assist these organizations to meet the requirements of the Fund.

## **II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES**

16. The Board was pleased to note that 13 out of the 16 recommendations initially made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its review of the functioning of the Fund<sup>3</sup> are now considered as implemented. The Board noted that the remaining three recommendations dealing

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

with multi-year funding, interaction with donors and United Nations entities, and a strengthened management system were well under way and would be fully implemented by the end of 2008.

#### **A. Multi-year funding**

17. Recommendation 6 (b) suggested that the Board consider multi-year project approval for three-year periods for projects with a good track record with the Fund. In order to draw on the experience of other institutional donors, the Board met with representatives of the European Commission, USAID (the United States Agency for International Development), the United States Office of Refugee Resettlement, the OAK Foundation and KIOS, the Finnish NGO Foundation for Human Rights. The discussion contributed to the development of relevant criteria and guidelines on multi-year funding, in particular the identification of grantees to be included in a pilot scheme, to be discussed further at the twenty-eighth session of the Board in February 2008.

#### **B. Interaction with donors and other United Nations entities**

18. Recommendation 7 (d) called on the Board to strengthen its interaction with donors and to be more proactive in fund-raising by approaching decision makers in donor capitals and by better promoting the Fund to actual and potential donors, within the context of an OHCHR global fund-raising strategy. It also called on the Board and secretariat to address the issue of greater synergies with other United Nations entities.

19. The Board held a meeting with Member States during the twenty-seventh session, which was attended by some 20 delegations. The Board provided extensive information on its latest activities, including field visits by members to Argentina, Chile and the Philippines. It also briefed Member States on its stricter guidelines and reporting requirements. The Board provided information on the efforts made over the past three years to address the historical geographic imbalance in grant allocation, in particular the increase in the share of grants allocated to projects based in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe following the outreach work initiated by the secretariat.

20. The Board was pleased to note that the secretariat had met with representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to discuss issues of common concern, such as monitoring and evaluation of projects, co-funding of projects, emergency grants and the dissemination of information about the Fund to UNHCR's implementing partners.

#### **C. Strengthened management system**

21. The Board noted with interest the information provided by the secretariat that the 2009 call for applications would be electronically based, and encouraged OHCHR to complete the technical development of the outstanding components of the grant management system, namely the administrative and reporting modules.

### **III. ESTIMATED NEEDS FOR 2009**

22. On the basis of the requests received for 2008, it is expected that approximately US\$ 14 million will be requested for 2009.

#### IV. HOW TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION

23. Contributions to the Fund should always be marked as follows: “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 “United Nations Geneva General Fund”, account No. 485001802, J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, International 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 “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, Sort code: 60-92-42, IBAN: GB25 CHAS 6092 4223 9619 01); (c) in sterling pounds to “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, Sort code: 60-92-42, IBAN: GB25 CHAS 6092 4223 9619 03); (d) in Swiss francs to “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 any other currency to “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 “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 the Secretary-General’s reports.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

24. **Pursuant to the appeals by the General Assembly and the Board of Trustees of the Fund, donors are invited to pay their contributions to the Fund before the twenty-ninth session of the Board to enable the latter to take them into account at its twenty-ninth session, to be held in October 2008.**
25. **The General Assembly and the Board have also urged regular donors to increase their contributions if possible, in order to provide the Board with the resources to meet the growing needs of torture victims and the members of their families.**
26. **The Board strongly encourages Governments that have not yet contributed to the Fund to do so for the first time, preferably before September 2008.**

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