



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Sixteenth session

Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the  
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-third session, held in Geneva from 18 to 22 October 2010. 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-sixth session, detailing the outcomes of the thirty-third and thirty-fourth sessions of the Board of Trustees.

##### **B. Mandate of the Fund**

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

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\* Late submission.

### 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. At its thirty-third session, Ms. Doretti was elected Chairperson.

### 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 or other channels of assistance. 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, and various forms of legal assistance for victims or members of their families, including for seeking redress or applying for asylum. Depending on the resources 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 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-third session of the Board of Trustees

### A. Financial situation of the Fund

5. The table below shows the contributions received between 1 January and 25 November 2010, including contributions received since the last report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Fund (A/65/265). It should be noted that only contributions received up to 18 October 2010 were allocated to grants recommended by the Board at its thirty-third session.

#### Contributions and pledges received from 1 January to 25 November 2010

<i>Donors</i>	<i>Amount</i> <i>(in United States dollars)</i>	<i>Date of receipt</i>
<b>States</b>		
Algeria	5,000.00	15 January 2010
Argentina	2,336.00	10 February 2010
Austria	134,925.78	30 March 2010
Canada	55,944.08	7 January 2010
Chile	10,000.00	29 July 2010

<i>Donors</i>	<i>Amount (in United States dollars)</i>	<i>Date of receipt</i>
Denmark	320,701.23	10 June 2010
Finland	180,024.66	3 September 2010
France	269,179.00	1 April 2010
Germany	498,218.25	19 August 2010
Iceland	20,000.00	10 February 2010
Ireland	111,402.36	25 August 2010
Kuwait	10,000.00	6 May 2010
Liechtenstein	23,062.73	30 July 2010
Luxembourg	34,722.22	19 November 2010
Morocco	3,000.00	22 March 2010
Norway	164,826.11	24 August 2010
Republic of Korea	95,000.00	21 November 2010
Turkey	10,000.00	23 August 2010
United States of America	7,100,000.00	13 September 2010
<b>Private sources</b>		
Individuals	316.30	April 2010
<b>Total contributions and pledges</b>	<b>9,048,658.72</b>	

6. In accordance with United Nations financial regulations, programme support costs will be charged to the 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 estimated annual expenditure be maintained to cover exchange rate fluctuation and any shortfalls and to meet final expenditures, 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, inter alia, 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.

7. 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 thirty-first session of the Board of Trustees, held in October 2009, and the thirty-third session of the Board, held in October 2010, and the operating cash reserve of the previous cycle. Any voluntary contribution received between 18 October 2010 and 30 January 2011 may be used for funding projects that will be considered by the Board at its thirty-fourth session in February 2011, in addition to the \$1,116,950 already set aside by the Board for that purpose at its thirty-third session.

## **B. Recommendations adopted by the Board**

8. At its thirty-third session, the Board reviewed information prepared by its secretariat concerning 327 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 \$20,688,284 for more than 300 projects to provide direct assistance to victims of torture

and their family members, as well as requests for 25 projects amounting to \$858,754 for training sessions and seminars to be implemented in 2011.

9. As foreseen at its thirty-second session in February 2010, because of the decrease in the level of contributions received and the absence of pledges made in 2010, the Board was not in a position to maintain the level of funding of 2010 and had to decide on strategic cuts for the 2011 grants cycle. A decrease of 20 per cent was applied to all projects located in countries in the Group of Western European and Other States, while all projects located in other regions were reduced by 10 per cent. As a rule, support to new grantees was capped at a maximum of \$20,000 instead of the usual \$50,000. In addition, consideration of funding for training and seminars for professionals assisting victims was postponed to the thirty-fourth session in February 2011, subject to the availability of resources.

10. The Board of Trustees made recommendations for grants for the period from January to December 2011 for over 280 ongoing and 23 new projects of direct assistance in more than 70 countries, for a total amount of \$9,525,050, to be paid in January 2011. The High Commissioner approved the recommendations on 22 November 2010 on behalf of the Secretary-General.

11. The Board recommended that \$1,116,950 be set aside for projects that the Board could not consider at its thirty-third session because information to be submitted by the applicants was pending or visits had not yet been undertaken by a United Nations staff member, and which would be considered by the Board at its thirty-fourth session in February 2011. In addition, the Board decided to set aside \$300,000 for emergency and intersessional requests for 2011, in particular for projects located in priority regions (Africa, Central Asia and Asia) identified by OHCHR field presences.

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-fourth session of the Board, to be held from 31 January to 4 February 2011.

### **III. Financial situation of the Fund and estimated needs for 2012**

13. Between 2006 and 2010, the Board had progressively increased the amount awarded in grants to projects worldwide. This had been possible since the income used during that period 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 had decided to use the carry-overs to increase the level of funding to projects, particularly in priority regions.

14. However, for 2011 the Board faced a shortfall of some \$3 million to continue to meet requests from grantees at the 2010 level, and thus decided on strategic cuts for the 2011 grants cycle (see para. 9 above). If no additional contribution is received in 2011, the Board will still face a significant shortfall and might have to maintain or increase these strategic cuts for the 2012 grants cycle and place additional limits on the support it provides to new projects.

15. On the basis of the requests received for 2011, it is expected that approximately \$22 million will be requested by organizations for 2012.

#### 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 “United Nations Geneva General Fund”, account No. 485001802, J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, International Agencies Banking, 1166 Avenue 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, sorting code: 60-92-42, IBAN: GB25 CHAS 6092 4223 9619 01); (c) in pounds sterling 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, sorting 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); (e) in other currencies 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); (f) 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 in its resolution 64/153 of 18 December 2009, and by the Board of Trustees of the Fund as included in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/65/265, paras. 30 and 32), donors are invited to pay their contributions to the Fund before the opening of the thirty-fifth session of the Board (to be held from 17 to 21 October 2011), in order that the contributions may be taken into account at that session.**

18. **In the light of the difficult financial situation faced for 2011, the General Assembly and the Board have also reiterated their call to 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 2011.**