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Forty-fourth session
Agenda item 112TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING
TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENTUnited Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of TortureReport of the Secretary-General

1. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 36/151 of 16 December 1981 for the purpose of receiving voluntary contributions for distribution, through established channels of humanitarian assistance, as humanitarian, legal and financial aid to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of torture and to relatives of such victims. In accordance with that resolution, priority is to be given to aid victims of violations by States in which the human rights situation has been the subject of resolutions or decisions adopted by either the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council or the Commission on Human Rights.

2. The Voluntary Fund is administered in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the United Nations by the Secretary-General, with the advice of a Board of Trustees composed of a chairman and four members with wide experience in the fight of human rights who act in their personal capacity. They are appointed by the Secretary-General with due regard to equitable geographical distribution and in consultation with their Governments. The term of office of the members of the Board of Trustees ended on 31 December 1988. The Secretary-General was informed by Mr. Hans Danelius (Sweden) that because of his appointment to the Supreme Court of Sweden he would not be in a position to continue as a member of the Board. The Secretary-General decided to reappoint the four remaining members of the Board, and he appointed Mr. Jaap Walkate (Netherlands) as the fifth member of the Board of Trustees. The membership of the Board of Trustees is thus as follows: Ms. Elizabeth Odio Benito (Costa Rica); Mr. Waleed Sadi (Jordan); Mr. Ivan Tosevski (Yugoslavia); Mr. Amos Wako (Kenya); and Mr. Jaap Walkate (Netherlands).

3. The Secretary-General has received from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees the information on the Board's activities, which is annexed to the present report. The previous reports of the Secretary-General on the Voluntary Fund are contained in documents A/37/618, A/38/221, A/39/662, A/40/876, A/41/706, A/42/701 and A/43/779.

4. Since the Voluntary Fund began operations in 1983 and pursuant to recommendations of the Board of Trustees, 155 grants, totalling \$US 4,176,094, have been authorized for 77 projects. The projects are from some 36 countries on four continents.

5. Since the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its forty-third session (A/43/779), the following contributions to the Voluntary Fund have been received from Governments during the period from 16 October 1988 to 15 October 1989:

<u>Government</u>	<u>Contribution</u> (United States dollars)
Argentina	4 000
Austria	5 000
Cameroon	1 227
Canada	25 201
Denmark	127 535
Finland	153 773
France	108 425
Germany, Federal Republic of	114 943
Greece	5 000
Haiti	186
Iceland	2 000
Ireland	2 858
Malta	300
Netherlands	50 308
New Zealand	18 420
Norway	75 000
Republic of Korea	5 000
Spain	34 885
Switzerland	32 258
Togo	1 540

6. In addition, during that period the Government of the United States pledged \$90,000, and contributions have been received from a number of individuals.

ANNEX

Information on the activities of the Board of Trustees of
the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture,
provided by the Chairman of the Board

1. The Board of Trustees has held eight sessions: in March 1983, October 1983, August 1984, April 1985, February 1986, February 1987, February 1988 and April 1989. At each session the Board has scrutinized a large number of projects submitted to it and has made recommendations to the Secretary-General for grants to those projects which the Board considered worthy of financial support from the Fund. In many cases, the Board, before making any recommendations, requested further information or clarifications from the sponsors. The Board has also reviewed reports submitted by the sponsors on the use made of each grant. It has insisted that such reports, containing a description of how the project was carried out and an accounting of the use made of the grant from the Fund, should be submitted before the Board could recommend any further grant to the same project.
2. During its sessions the Board has also met with representatives of a number of sponsors of projects in order to receive information from them and to discuss the best way of using a grant from the Fund. It should be mentioned that the Board has normally not been prepared to finance a project entirely but has recommended that funds be obtained from other sources as well. The reason for this policy has been, first, the fact that the Fund has only had rather limited resources at its disposal and, secondly, the desirability of avoiding making the sponsors entirely dependent on future financing from the Fund, which the Board would not be able to guarantee.
3. At its most recent session, held at Geneva from 24 to 28 April 1989, the Board of Trustees elected Mr. Jaap Walkate Chairman. The Board and the representative of the Secretary-General expressed their deep gratitude to Mr. Hans Danelius, who served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees from its inception through 1988 and made an important contribution to the establishment of the procedures followed by the Board.
4. Also at that session, the Board discussed the interpretation of its mandate, the definition of torture and the question of the prevention of torture with a view to making the best possible use of the finances available. At that session the Board decided to make recommendations to the Secretary-General for grants of nearly \$500,000.
5. The Board hopes to be able, during the coming years, to continue its activities at least on the same scale as in the past. This will only be possible if sufficient contributions are received each year from Governments and other sources. The Board therefore again wishes to express the hope that, in particular, Governments will find it possible to support the Fund on a regular basis, preferably by making annual contributions to the Fund.
6. The focus of the grants made by the Voluntary Fund is on therapy and rehabilitation projects. They extend to some 36 countries in Africa, America, Asia and Europe.

7. Many of the projects are implemented in countries where there have been important political changes and where persons who were tortured in the past, under various political circumstances, are still in urgent need of help. In Central America, regional projects set up under the aegis of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have been partly financed by the Fund. Moreover, organizations assisting refugees who are torture victims have in a number of cases received some support from the Fund. In those cases the policy of the Board has often been to help by financing and developing some special part of their work, which might include visits to areas where the needs are particularly great or the teaching of medical staff from other countries. The organizations that have been supported by the Fund are located in countries such as Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Pakistan, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

8. The Board of Trustees has found that in some cases very rapid action is needed to help torture victims. On the one hand, it may be necessary to make funds available to provide medical care in a person's home country. On the other hand, it may be necessary to provide funds to enable a person and his family to leave a country rapidly to go to a place where medical care is available. The Board has recommended support to a project aimed at providing assistance in urgent cases of this kind.

9. In order to provide the general public with information about the Fund, a leaflet entitled "How Can You Help Torture Victims?" has been produced with the assistance of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat. More detailed information about the activities of the Fund is provided in an article published by the first Chairman of the Board of Trustees in his own name. The article is entitled "The United Nations Fund for Torture Victims: The first years of activity" and has been published in the Human Rights Quarterly, volume 8, No. 2, May 1986 and in a revised and updated version in the Review of the International Commission of Jurists, No. 37, December 1986. Finally, in connection with the World Campaign for Human Rights, a fact sheet (No. 4) entitled "Methods of Combating Torture" has been published that includes a section on the Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. Further information on making contributions or submitting projects for support can be obtained by writing to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, Centre for Human Rights, United Nations Office at Geneva, Palais des Nations, CH 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.
