

# VICTIMS RIGHTS WORKING GROUP

ADVOCATING FOR THE RIGHTS OF VICTIMS AT THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

## Statement on the Strategic Plan of the International Criminal Court

June 2006

The Victims' Rights Working Group (VRWG) welcomes the Court's initiative to develop a strategic plan to assist it in identifying goals and strategies and defining and assessing its work in accordance with key parameters and priorities. A Strategic Plan is an opportunity for the Court to underscore the basic tenets of the institution and to ensure that all organs and units of the institution share a unified vision of both how the work of the Court should proceed, and how the organs and units might work collaboratively towards the achievement of this vision.

Accordingly, the VRWG makes the following comments:

- **VISION:** The Preamble of the Rome Statute recognizes as an impetus for the creation of the ICC the 'millions of children, women and men that have been victims of unimaginable atrocities that deeply shock the conscience of humanity.' The Statute and Rules of Procedure and Evidence affirm the centrality of the reparative role of the Court to ensure that victims are treated with full dignity and respect, protected from re-traumatisation and reprisal, provided with the opportunity to express their views and concerns, and are entitled to claim reparations.

The recognition of the rights of victims is one of the principal achievements of the Statute that should be specifically reflected in the overall vision of the Court. Accordingly, the Vision statement should refer specifically to the reparative mandate of the Court and should recognise victims as stakeholders with respect to the crimes it investigates and prosecutes.

- **MISSION:** The Mission statement should recognise specifically that the ICC will provide a safe space for the independent views and perspectives of victims of crimes within the jurisdiction of the ICC and affected communities to be heard. This is enshrined in the Statute and is a fundamental requirement if meaningful justice is to be achieved. The Mission statement should also recognise the importance of ensuring that Court processes are understood by such affected communities and made meaningful in local context.

- **STRATEGIC GOALS:**

- a) **Quality of Justice:** 'Quality of justice' entails both the respect for the procedural rights of all parties as well as the adequacy of the outcomes for the Court's stakeholders. Accordingly, under the heading of 'quality of justice' the Court should make specific reference to the procedural rights of victims. These include the need to ensure that victims are able to participate in proceedings with full dignity and respect, making certain that there are adequate information flows through outreach and other means and protected from re-traumatisation and

reprisals. Equally, reference should be made under this heading to the need to ensure that the Court and its proceedings are accessible to victims, taking into account in particular language, age, gender and health, as well as the nature of the crime particularly where it involves sexual violence, gender violence or violence against children. The Court should also make specific reference to the quality of outcomes, in particular the need to ensure that investigations and prosecutions take adequate account of the nature and level of victimisation of individuals and communities.

- b) A Model of Public Administration:** While the Court needs to ensure a smooth and efficient administration, the running of the Court should equally reflect the unique tasks it must accomplish and the especially skilled personnel and systems required to meet such tasks. Accordingly, under the heading of 'public administration' the Court should make specific reference to the role of the Court in servicing the individuals and communities most affected and, in this respect, the need for the Court to ensure that appropriate and well-trained personnel are in place to deal effectively with such stakeholders, in particular victims and witnesses.