



International Organization for Victim Assistance,
Organization in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC

Irvin Waller, President

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Statement to the plenary at the 13th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on Agenda item 3 relating to *successes and challenges to get implementation of successful comprehensive crime prevention to support sustainable development and strengthen recommendations, including recommendations c i and iv in the UNODC background document.*

I am Irvin Waller, President of the International Organization for Victim Assistance.

This is a unique moment in human history. We can choose to contribute to sustainable development by reducing interpersonal violence and improving victim assistance by 50% within the next 15 years. We have the knowledge endorsed by organizations such as WHO and UN-Habitat to reach these targets. But we need to use this knowledge and inspiring successes to convince the world community to invest now.

In 1985, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a land mark decision 40/34 for victims by resolving to prevent victimization and implement the UN Declaration on Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (1985).

Sadly many deeply disturbing challenges remain in 2015, including:

- Epidemic rates of street violence in many countries in Latin America and some countries in Africa and elsewhere – more than 400,000 homicides – yes a statistic but 400,000 tragedies (UNODC);
- 1 in 3 women will be victims of intimate partner violence in their lifetime and equally unacceptable numbers will be raped – yes another statistic that represents tragedies (WHO).
- Knowledge that high rates of violence cost economic development (World Bank) and diverts as much as 5% of the world GDP from sustainable development (Institute for Economics and Peace) – often more than 15% of GDP of developing countries;
- Too many efforts to control crime are not using scientific methods (WHO/UNODC/UNDP) or agreed UN standards and norms and so are unnecessarily wasteful of human lives and scarce resources;

Fortunately some successes have been achieved since 1985, including:

- Important scientific knowledge (Waller, 2013, Smarter Crime Control)
 - Significant accumulated evidence about effective ways of reducing violent crime which point to pre-crime prevention focused on parenting, youth programs, control

of weapons and alcohol, and changing attitudes to violence, particularly against women and children)

- Important consensus that successful implementation requires funding and a responsibility centre to promote, training, targets and measuring outcomes – what gets measured gets done;
- Strong evidence for a compelling business case that if you invest in what is effective you save lives, avoid loss of quality of life for victims, foster sustainable development and avoid wasted resources – an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
- Inspiring examples of cities that have reduced violence by 50% or more in some higher violence developing and developed countries;
- Growing investments in, and laws for, services and rights for victims of crime in many developed and some developing countries;

So IOVA calls on the world community and particularly the 13th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to encourage Member States and UN Offices (jointly UNODC, WHO, UNDP, OCHR, UNHCR, and UN Habitat) in partnership with civil society to develop the business case and so commit to 4 goals for Sustainable development achievable within 15 years:

1. Reduce the numbers of victims of intentional homicide by 50% as an indicator of reduction of interpersonal violence (UNODC indicator);
2. Reduce the number of women and children who are victims of violence by 25% (measurable inter alia by surveys such as the Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey of CDC);
3. Increase by 50% the number of victims of crime, abuse of power and terrorism who demonstrably receive support, reparation and rights consistent with international standards (International victimization surveys);
4. Invest 1/10th of 1% of global GDP to the planning, training, development, implementation and evaluation of the actions to achieve these goals (measured by Institute of Economics and Peace)

It is time to use successful actions, UN norms and scientific evidence to reduce the number of victims, provide services and rights to victims. UNODC and its partners must work together to make the compelling case for the investment that will save 100s of 1000s of lives and foster sustainable development. If they were achieved, it is estimated that the achievement would free up \$1 trillion by the end of fifteen years for economic and sustainable development.

Prevention is proven to be the most effective and cost effective way to reduce crime. Interpersonal violence is not inevitable with today's knowledge. It is preventable. Avoiding tragedies by saving hundreds of thousands of lives and avoiding millions of persons who lose their basic quality of life each year is achievable. It is a question of top decision makers changing the paradigm and getting to know the evidence and so choosing the necessary investments in effective crime prevention and victim assistance.

For further information on sources: see Waller, Irvin, Smarter Crime Control: A Guide to Safer Futures for Citizens, Communities, and Politicians, Rowman and Littlefield, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1av9GHF> and contact wallerirvin@msn.com

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