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**Statement submitted by Victim Support Europe in
consultative status with the Economic and Social
Council***

The Secretary-General has received the following statements, which are being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



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Statement

Victims of crime are too often excluded from sustainable development efforts, despite the serious impact victimisation has on equality, resilience, public trust and social cohesion. Crime can cause long-term psychological harm, economic insecurity and social exclusion, preventing individuals and communities from contributing fully to society. Sustainable Development Goals on gender equality, sustainable communities, peace, justice and partnerships cannot be achieved without addressing victimisation and its consequences.

Globally, victims face growing and changing harms. Technology-facilitated violence, online hate, fraud, exploitation and organised crime are expanding rapidly. Women and girls are disproportionately targeted through online harassment, stalking, image-based abuse and coercion, creating major barriers to equality, education, employment and public participation. Criminal networks continue to profit from trafficking in persons, labour exploitation and illicit markets, while victims often remain hidden and unsupported.

Victims of cross-border crime face additional obstacles. Many must navigate unfamiliar legal systems, overcome language barriers, as well as navigate inconsistent support services and justice systems, often at significant personal costs. When justice and support systems stop at national borders, victims are denied equal access to rights, protection and recovery. This not only deepens their vulnerability, but also erodes trust in institutions, weakening the foundations of international cooperation.

Victim Support Europe represents 80+ organisations in 36 countries, supporting more than three million people affected by crime each year. Our experience shows that victim-centred systems strengthen societies. When victims receive timely emotional, practical and legal support, recovery improves, the risk of repeat victimisation diminishes, and trust in public institutions is strengthened.

To accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, governments should adopt comprehensive national victim support frameworks that guarantee all victims access to justice, information and specialised services. Such frameworks should ensure coordination between police, courts, health, education and social services, so that victims are not left navigating fragmented responses.



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States should also address emerging forms of crime, especially digital-enabled violence, through updated laws, stronger prevention measures and accountability for online platforms. Cross-border cooperation must be strengthened so victims can access support and remedies regardless of where the crime occurred.

For this to be achieved, long-term investment in victim support services is essential. Stable funding enables continuity of care, mental health support, legal aid and social reintegration. Training for justice, healthcare and frontline professionals should embed trauma-informed and victim-sensitive approaches to reduce secondary victimisation.

A whole-of-society response is essential. Communities, civil society and the private sector all have a critical role in prevention, safety and recovery. By placing victims at the centre of policy, Member States can foster more just, inclusive and resilient societies, ensuring that no one is left behind.

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