



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NOVEMBER 17, 2011

PRESS CONTACT:
SARA.JILMSTAD@BRA.SE
+46 70 419 35 01

Stockholm Prize in Criminology to be Awarded for Global Research on Crime Victims

The 2012 Stockholm Prize in Criminology has been awarded to Professor Jan van Dijk of the University of Tilburg, The Netherlands, for his sustained leadership of the International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS) since 1989. Professor van Dijk will receive the prize at a ceremony in Stockholm on June 12, 2012.

In announcing the Prize winner in Washington DC today at the Annual Meetings of the American Society of Criminology, the Co-Chair of the International Jury for the Stockholm Prize said the Jury “selected the winner for his repeated achievements with a large global team of research scientists in producing one of the most widely used data sources in modern criminology.” The Co-Chair, Professor Lawrence Sherman of Cambridge University and the University of Maryland, suggested that the world’s police and justice ministries can join hundreds of comparative criminologists and victim support providers at the three-day Criminology symposium in Stockholm next June 11-13 to exchange their latest research and celebrate the achievements led by Professor van Dijk, who will be awarded the Prize on June 12.

Clearing The Fog of Crime

The International Jury’s chair compared the work of the 2012 Stockholm Prize winner to clearing away a “fog” of confusion about whether crime is becoming more or less frequent or serious. Prompted by human reactions to a wide range of information about crime, societies are easily misled about the true dimensions and trends of the problems they face. By providing more reliable benchmarks of crime both within and across countries, Sherman said, Professor van Dijk and his numerous colleagues offer a much clearer view of the truth.

Since 1989, the ICVS has interviewed over 300,000 people in the course of five waves of the survey in a total of 78 countries, with separate findings for 33 major cities. It is the largest ever multi-national effort to apply the science of criminology to measuring and comparing rates and trends in the harm of crime, how it affects victims, and how crime victims perceive the governmental responses to their crimes. As in global data on diseases, economies, climate and other universal concerns, the ICVS has provided a systematic resource for addressing a wide range of major questions.

Among the many major conclusions from the ICVS are the following:

- Levels of crimes recorded by the police cannot be reliably across countries because of differential rates at which crime victims report crimes to the police.
- Crime victims in many countries show substantially less preference for prison to punish crimes than their countries employ.

- Rising levels of personal security measures correspond to a general drop in crime across western nations since 1993, but changes in the use of imprisonment do not.
- Crime victims in Western nations have recently become less satisfied with police responses to crimes, despite clear evidence that these responses have changed.
- Perceptions of the risk of crimes in many countries vastly exceed the actual risk of crimes, while in some countries people underestimate risks.

The Western Drop In Crime

The ICVS has provided the most comprehensive evidence yet of the recent drop in crime across European countries as well as in the US, Canada, Australia and many other developed countries. The data are from surveys amongst the general public and therefore not influenced by political or ideological agendas of governments of individual countries. Standardisation of questionnaires used and other aspects of data collection provide more reliable comparisons than separate surveys conducted differently in different countries at different times. Since the victimization survey method was first developed in the 1960s, it has provided an invaluable barometer of crime trends that are often obscured by victim and police behaviors in reporting and recording crime. Their use has thus lent far greater credence to the claim that crime in so many nations is declining, often in the face of a sceptical news media and general public.

Jan van Dijk holds the Pieter van Vollenhoven Chair in Victimology, Human Security and Safety at the University of Tilburg, where he serves as programme director of INTERVICT (International Victimology Institute Tilburg). He received a law degree from Leiden University in 1970 and holds a PhD in criminology from the University of Nijmegen in The Netherlands (1977). He has been elected President of the International Society of Victimology and was the founding Director of the Crime Prevention Directorate in the Dutch Ministry of Justice. He is one of the world's leading scientists in victimology and research on crime victims.

###

Further information: Chairmen of the Jury, Professor Jerzy Sarnecki, +46 8 16 21 02 or +46 703 72 78 39, and Professor Lawrence Sherman, +1 267 269 17 57.

Information is also available at www.criminologyprize.com

About the Prize: The Stockholm Prize in Criminology was instituted in 2005 in order to recognize outstanding achievements in the field of criminological research or in the application of research findings by practitioners. The Prize is financed by foundations in USA, Sweden and Japan. The principal donor is the Jerry Lee Foundation, USA. Substantial donations are also made by Söderbergs Foundations, Sweden. The Prize winners have been selected by an independent jury comprised of criminologists from Asia, Latin America, North America, Africa, Australia and Europe. The Jury is chaired by Professor Jerzy Sarnecki of the University of Stockholm and Professor Lawrence Sherman of the University of Cambridge.



Address: Prize Office, Brottsförebyggande rådet.
Box 1386, 111 93 Stockholm, Sweden.
Telephone: +46 (0) 8 401 87 00. Fax: +46 (0) 8 411 90 75
E-mail: prizeoffice@bra.se
www.criminologyprize.com