The National Commission on Restorative Justice: A Review and Plan for Development

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Abstract: The National Commission on Restorative Justice operated from 2007 to 2009, with the final report being published in December 2009. In this article the background to the setting up of the Commission is outlined, along with its terms of reference. A synopsis is given of its deliberations and resulting recommendations in the key areas: what restorative justice means, stages in the criminal justice system, criteria for application and preferred models, service delivery, national co-ordinating structure and legislation. An overview is given of proposals for implementation and national roll-out, including estimation of costs, projected offender participation, consequential recidivism and diversion from custodial sentences. Some concluding comments reflect on the place of restorative justice two years on.

Keywords: Restorative justice, Commission, Courts, victims, adult offenders, community, state, mediation, conferencing, reparation.