KRT plans rule changes for victims
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The Khmer Rouge tribunal, the first international war crimes court to allow direct participation by victims, convened a plenary session yesterday in which rule changes for victim participation and reparations will likely be adopted.

Acting plenary vice president Motoo Noguchi said the court was "eager to learn from our past experience and keep improving so that we can remain confident that our procedures are fair and meaningful".

"The majority of this week will be devoted to discussions to amend internal rules concerning victims' participation and reparation, in particular with a view to making the existing reparation system more meaningful and effective for real and sustainable benefit for victims," Noguchi said.

Under the current rules, the court is empowered to grant "collective and moral" reparations to accepted civil parties. As part of July's judgment against former Tuol Sleng prison chief Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, the court's Trial Chamber granted a pair of reparations requests from civil parties: It printed the names of accepted civil parties in the verdict and pledged to collect and publish all statements of apology made by Duch during the proceedings.

Civil party lawyers and court monitors criticised these reparations as unimaginative and insufficient, though the judges said in the decision that they did not have the power to fund projects or make recommendations to the government.

At a press conference on reparations and victim participation yesterday, Thun Saray, president of local rights group Adhoc, said rule changes adopted this week should allow the court to implement reparations in collaboration with civil society organisations and make recommendations to the government.

Although the Duch decision has been appealed to the tribunal's Supreme Court Chamber, where a decision is expected next year, UN court spokesman Lars Olsen said any rule changes on reparations adopted by the plenary this week will not be applicable to Case 001.