An Open Letter to the High Commissioner

13 February 2013

António Guterres
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
94, rue de Montbrillant
1202 Geneva
Switzerland

Dear Mr. High Commissioner,

On the eve of UNHCR’s Global Representatives meeting we want to thank you for your leadership of the UNHCR-IFRC-NGO Structured Dialogue process. In the words of one of your Directors, the experience has given us the space to communicate directly rather than “take our issues outside of our partnership.”

The 11 December 2012 meeting in Geneva on the Structured Dialogue brought together UNHCR Directors, the IFRC and NGOs from around the world. We agreed on many important next steps, such as: the creation of a mechanism to report and address problems as they arise; the review of current fora for collective dialogue, including the Annual UNHCR-NGO Consultations; a strengthened institutional approach to local partner capacity development; enhanced efforts on, and for, urban refugees; and joint advocacy for protection of persons of concern, including for internally displaced persons and the implementation of pledges made during the December 2011 commemorations of the Refugee and Statelessness Conventions.

As we prepare for the 11-13 June 2013 UNHCR-NGO annual consultations we look forward to working in close collaboration with UNHCR on these next steps as well as working together on the Implementing Framework and on the follow-up to your recent Dialogue on Faith and Protection. We agree with your suggestion that we should all invest more in changing culture and attitudes in a way that celebrates the Principles of Partnership: equality, transparency, and complementarity.

In closing, we have made a great deal of progress in the last year, and much work remains. NGOs are grateful for your leadership, and we look forward to working with you and your dedicated staff in the months and years to come.

Kind regards,
Cc: Global Representatives
    Director, Asia and the Pacific Daisy Dell
    Director, External Relations Daniel Endres
    Head, Secretariat and Inter-Agency Service Khassim Diagne
    Head, Inter-Agency Unit Kemlin Furley