Mr. Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This statement is delivered on behalf of a wide range of non-governmental organisations. It has been drafted in consultation with, and aims to reflect the diversity of views of, the NGO community.

Efforts to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus are welcomed by NGOs as it could result in more impactful programming with better leveraging— and potentially even help shrink humanitarian needs. In general, NGOs are not debating this. Quite a few NGOs have historically had a mix of humanitarian, development, state-building, peace and security programming. Stronger links between humanitarian and development work is also increasingly promoted, particularly by the UN through the ‘New Way of Working’ and by UNHCR within the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework approach.

Many NGOs and networks – especially in Asia – are focusing on ‘mainstreaming’ humanitarian preparedness actions into their work – including principles, Sphere and the Core Humanitarian Standard, coordination, etc. Member States should seek to support this process. Emergency preparedness saves money and lives.

Many NGOs and networks are working to promote early solutions planning – especially in East Africa – which includes steps to build the self-reliance and resilience of refugees and host communities and to prepare refugees for future durable solutions in the early stages of displacement. This means involving development actors from the onset of the emergency to complement humanitarian interventions. In this perspective, the international community should provide adequate long-term and predictable political and financial support in ways that expand and improve inclusive access to services, economic opportunities and infrastructure for all. Pooled funding mechanisms supporting humanitarian, development, and resilience elements should be particularly used.

The NGO community recognizes efforts from UN agencies, UNHCR especially, in shifting wording and thinking towards strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus. It is now
crucial that the system finds a way of moving itself towards what it is saying and advocating for in a faster manner. In this perspective, we would like to draw attention to important elements to keep in mind while the international community moves forward on this topic:

- Care should be taken to avoid the introduction of any processes and bureaucracy that might slow down response, reduce effectiveness, or restrict access to rapid funding at the start of a crisis.

- While we recognize the need for more synergy and complementarity between humanitarian and development programming, we should proceed with caution and maintain and reaffirm humanitarian principles of humanity, independence, neutrality and impartiality. Thorough analysis of the risks and benefits of including non-humanitarian actors, such as private sector companies or peace building/keeping actors, must be carried out in order to ensure humanitarian principles and independent humanitarian action are safeguarded. Humanitarian response must be articulated and designed in order to ensure clear principled humanitarian action and that all actors delivered in this frame.

- NGOs see the value of governments and UN agencies sharing their analyses to help NGOs make better decisions on priorities in their area of interest and link them with partners in these areas (education, health, water, etc.)

- The New Way of Working offers an opportunity to change the dialogue and reinforce inclusive partnership approaches. In this perspective, reinforcing the humanitarian-development nexus should provide more – not less – space for collaboration with non-humanitarian actors, including non-traditional donors. The ‘whole of society’ terminology should be applied through a broadening of the partnership space, placing local actors, civil society and refugees at the centre.

- A significant change is required to ensure that reducing vulnerability is a key driver for the UNDAF and other development programmes. This will require a shift in geographic and sectoral focus, and an increased role for social protection. In countries where humanitarian and resilience needs are included within the UNDAF plans, such as in Burkina Faso and Mauritania, efforts should be made to avoid losing sight of humanitarian issues within other development issues, and thus not giving them the required attention and budget.

- As part of UNHCR’s efforts to develop the Global Compact on Refugees, the ‘whole of society’ terminology used in the Annex 1 must be further defined. For it to be central to the Global Compact on Refugees, the operational implications should be highlighted through the Programme of Action. In particular, the ‘whole of society’ approach should be articulated in a way that goes beyond simply including new actors such as private sector and financial institutions; highlighting principles underpinning the approach and delineating how to avoid potential pitfalls and maximize the
approach.

- Strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus must take place in line with the Principles of Partnership, endorsed 10 years ago, where equality, responsibility, complementarity must be at the center of the New Way of Working and the CRRF. Where relevant and appropriate, joined up needs assessments, planning and programming should be pursued in a way that avoids slowing down the speed of operational responses and maintains humanitarian principles.

Finally, Mr. Chair, the NGO community would like to highlight that across the humanitarian and development spectrum, solutions remain in governments’ hands. Their will to tackle root causes of crises is crucial.

This statement will be made available on icvanetwork.org.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.