23 September 2013

Dear world leaders at the 68th Session of the General Assembly,

We write on behalf of our civil society organizations and long-standing local members and partners with decades of field experience in the area of conflict prevention in developing countries. We encourage your governments to recognize the link between the post-2015 Development Agenda, the subject of the upcoming high-level meeting during the 68th Session of the General Assembly, and human security. Based on our collective experience, we uphold the notion that there can be no development without human security.

It is a tragic fact that conflict-affected countries are four times more likely to miss their basic poverty target and about 40 per cent of post-conflict countries relapse within a decade. Middle-income countries afflicted by violence have also largely stagnated and underachieved. Development efforts in these countries have been effectively derailed by the persistence or resumption of violent conflict. Getting peace right is therefore an essential step to getting development right. This was recognized in the May 2013 report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, particularly in their recommendation to include a stand-alone goal to "ensure stable and peaceful societies" in the post-2015 development agenda.

Although we welcome this development, which reflects human security concerns, we believe that the global development framework is still missing the practical imperatives that mitigate the presence of violence in the long term – prevention. This September, as the General Assembly considers the future of the global economy and its development agenda, it is the means as well as the outcomes that must be kept in mind. A strong human security approach to development is indeed the means through which long-lasting impact is ensured.

For us, the meaningful inclusion of local strategies for peace-building and conflict prevention is central to both solving and preventing conflict. For example, in the DRC, local communities self-organize through the *haki na amani* system, which serves as an interlocutor between the communities and relevant actors in security and development. Community members successfully mediate local conflicts, accompany victims of violence to relevant safe havens or

state institutions, and organize forums where people can vent their frustrations and divert energy away from violence. In Mexico, local groups are the first port of call for victims of violence and their families and are as such indispensable to the government's development of early warning mechanisms against kidnappings and murders. Though localized, the work of these groups has been indispensable to comprehending and tackling the transnational, regional and global drivers of this conflict.

This Wednesday, member states of the UN have a unique opportunity to make history by making human security the organizing logic behind the post-2015 development agenda. We therefore respectfully encourage your governments to reflect upon the fundamental link between human security and a development agenda that delivers long-lasting results in your remarks at the upcoming General Assembly.

Getting it right may take a lot of effort, but the cost of failure is also extremely high. The Global Peace Index estimated that some $9.46 trillion USD was spent in 2012 alone in global efforts to contain violence. Put more poignantly, and in the words of a community member based in Ituri, in the DRC; "peace means work, but peace also means life."

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours,

Alliance for Peacebuilding (USA)
Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (Thailand)
Center for Development of International Law (USA)
Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (Liberia)
Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (Secretariat: The Netherlands)
Coalition for Justice and Accountability (Sierra Leone)
Friends Committee on National Legislation (USA)
Genocide Alert (Germany)
Global Rights: Partners for Justice (USA)
Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, GPPAC (The Netherlands)
Human Rights Institute of South Africa, HURISA (South Africa)
IKV-Pax Christi (The Netherlands)
National Youth Action (Liberia)
Scientific Association of Young Political Scientists (Greece)
United Nations Association of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
Vision Gram International (Secretariat: Canada)
West African Civil Society Institute (Regional Secretariat: Nigeria)
World Federalist Movement, WFM-IGP (USA)
Youth Action for Development (Burundi)