



**Statement by Cyril Ritchie, CoNGO First Vice President
(Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations)**

at the

**President of the United Nations General Assembly (PGA)
Consultation in Geneva with NGOs, February 27, 2023**

Mr. President,

Having heard your statements at the similar NGO Consultation that you held in New York, I express deep appreciation for your positive and supportive comments on the shared relationship of NGOs with the values and activities of the United Nations. You have reiterated this encouragement today.

In your original Vision Statement, Mr. President, you wrote, "Solidarity within societies and among countries has an impact on social and economic stability and security." And you rightly added, "honouring commitments to jointly make our world a safer place is more important than ever."

For governments to honour commitments they have made within the United Nations System is indeed of the highest importance and significance, legally and morally. Governments make commitments when they adopt, sign, and ratify Conventions, Treaties and other legal instruments. When ratified, these commitments are, in fact, equivalent to promises that governments make to their own populations to observe and adhere to the highest standards of conduct that the international community has devised through the negotiating mechanisms of the United Nations System. And as the UN Secretary-General said recently when addressing governments: "Promises made must be promises kept."

Civil Society, which reflects and serves the world's populations every day and everywhere, is saddened and dismayed when governments fail to live up to their promises by not implementing the texts they have negotiated and adopted. This is surely a breach of good faith. We trust, Mr. President, that you may exercise the full authority of your Office to urge, cajole and persuade governments to live up to the expectations they have generated by ratifying standard-setting Conventions and Treaties. Fulfilling this elementary obligation would enhance - to use your own words - "solidarity within societies and among countries" and would "make our world a safer place."

You are the world's Trustee, Mr. President, in reaching this goal. We thank you for your current and future initiatives.

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