

INTGLIM - International NGO Task Group on Legal and Institutional Matters
c/o WFM/IGP • 777 UN Plaza • New York, NY 10017 • Tel. 212 599 1320 • info@wfm.org

October 25, 2004

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan
United Nations Headquarters
New York, NY 10017

Cc: Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette
Director Ms. Marta Maurás
Senior Officer Mr. Adrian Hills

Dear Secretary-General Annan,

We are writing in response to your recent report on the Implementation of the Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on UN-Civil Society Relations (A/59/354). As you are aware many of the recommendations in the reports are considered quite controversial by governments, civil society NGOs, the members of the ECOSOC NGO Committee, and others.

We are concerned that the controversies surrounding this report are threatening to undermine the work of one of the most valuable UN-NGO liaison body in the UN; the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS). NGLS is one of the most efficient and widely supported programs within the UN, and many NGOs believe that the independence and autonomy of NGLS should be protected.

Both the Cardoso Panel's report as well as your response, Mr. Secretary-General, set out to strengthen NGLS by ensuring it a greater institutional standing and funding stability. We greatly appreciate these intentions. However, we are concerned that NGLS is experiencing increased difficulty raising voluntary funding from the UN system and external donors pending the outcomes of the intergovernmental debate of the two reports. As you know, this debate will very likely require many months of consultations, which threatens to leave NGLS with insufficient funding to finance its core programs and thus inflict serious wounds on its ability to provide services to the NGO community and the UN system.

Mr. Secretary-General, it would be very unfortunate if one of the first outcomes of these reports is the weakening of the work of the NGLS. Accordingly, we hope that you will take the necessary steps to reinforce the relatively small budget for NGLS for 2004-2006 while the longer term questions of NGLS's institutional setting remain to be resolved.

In appreciation of your continuous efforts to improve the UN organization, we turn to you to assure the continuing viability of the NGLS and circumvent a potential deterioration of the UN-civil society relations.

Yours sincerely,

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More...

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