May 1, 2009

Marta Santos-Pais
Special Representative to the Secretary-General for Violence against Children

Dear Marta,

We are delighted to congratulate you on your appointment as Special Representative to the Secretary-General on violence against children, and are writing to express our desire to work closely with you on this vital and demanding mandate.

As you know, the international NGO Advisory Council was formed nearly two years ago to pursue follow-up to the UNSG’s Study on violence against children and in particular to work with the SRSG once appointed. We campaigned strongly to urge member states to call for a Special Representative.

The Council consists of nine members representing international NGOs and nine representing NGOs in the nine regions in which consultation were held as part of the Study process. All are actively involved in challenging violence against children. We have also developed sub-groups to consider follow-up on particular recommendations, including law reform, children’s participation, gender dimensions, etc. We have also been represented at the meetings of the Inter-Agency Group.

We would very much like to schedule a discussion with you as early as possible, perhaps arranging a conference call, to discuss the immediate issues around the location and formation of your office and recruitment of staff. We hope it will also be possible to arrange for the next full meeting of the NGO Advisory Council at a time and place that would allow for adequate discussion with you, with an agreed agenda which could include such items as your overall mandate; engagement with NGOs and with children; priority activities, etc.

We assure you of our strong support in ensuring that this challenging mandate achieves real change for children.
With all good wishes,

Peter Newell
Co Chairs, NGO Advisory Council

Roberta Cecchetti

Jo Becker

International representatives
Sara Austin
World Vision International

Jo Becker
Human Rights Watch

Roberta Cecchetti
International Save the Children Alliance

Virginia Murillo Herrera
Defense for Children International

Peter Newell
Global Initiative to End all Corporal Punishment of Children

Theo Noten
End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT)

Cecile Trochu Grasso
OMCT/World Organization Against Torture

Ann-Kristin Vervik
Plan International

Veronica Yates
Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)

Regional Representatives
Katherine Covell
Cape Breton University Children’s Rights Centre, Canada
Representative for North America

Gauri Pradhan, Child Workers Concerned Center in Nepal
Representative for South Asia

Mally Kwadjo Essediaba
WAO Afrique (Action to stop child exploitation), Togo
Representative for West and Central Africa

Gilbert Onyango
The CRADLE, Kenya
Representative for Eastern and Southern Africa

Gerardo Sauri
Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en México
Representative for Latin America

Hellen van der Wal
Child Helpline Aruba
Representative for the Caribbean

Irene Folacier Felizar,
Center for the Promotion, Advocacy and Protection of the Rights of the Child Foundation,
The Philippines
Representative of East Asia and the Pacific

Thaira Shalan
Arab Council for Childhood and Development (ACCD), Yemen
Representative of the Middle East and North Africa