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**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL LETTER TO UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE
NEXT HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

Amnesty International today sent a letter to United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Kofi Annan, concerning his appointment of a new High Commissioner for Human Rights. The organization is urging Mr Annan to ensure the new incumbent is a champion of human rights who will be creative and bold in working to protect all victims of human rights violations.

The letter sets out Amnesty International's concerns at the process of recruitment and urges the Secretary-General to make this process transparent, by publicly announcing the experience and qualities he is looking for in a candidate.

The new High Commissioner should have a breadth of practical human rights experience and be independent. He or she should have a clear vision of the challenges facing human rights and be able to tackle them in areas such as women's rights, the universal application of human rights and their role in social and economic development, and impunity.

The letter also includes the qualifications and experience that Amnesty International believes candidates should have if they are to effectively carry forward human rights promotion and protection globally into the next millennium.

Amnesty International believes the new High Commissioner should be:

- Committed to confronting governments that violate human rights, publicly if necessary
- Committed to working with the media in supporting country and thematic strategies and willing to promote maximum transparency of the work of the office, to ensure accountability and effectiveness
- Committed to working with non-governmental organizations
- Committed to continuing the restructuring of the UN Centre for Human Rights in Geneva and willing to strengthen substantially the High Commissioner's office in New York
- Committed to defending against attacks on the UN human rights machinery

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For more information, to receive a copy of the letter, or to arrange an interview, please call:

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