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**Written statement* submitted by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom,
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 May 2009]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

WILPF statement on the current situation in Sri Lanka

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) welcomes this Special Session of the Human Rights Council on the situation in Sri Lanka. WILPF is seriously concerned about the next steps to finally end the conflict. While the Sri Lankan government has declared the 26 year old conflict to be over, the next steps – to ensure a lasting peace- have yet to begin. A begin which can only be successfully made when women are fully part of peace building and decision making.

Reports indicate that there are over 275,000 internally displaced persons, and that at least 80,000 people have been killed as a result of this conflict. On May 17, the GoSL placed significant restrictions on humanitarian access to IDP camps and continues to prevent access for U.N. agencies and humanitarian organizations to the former conflict area. On May 19, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported prohibition of non-GoSL vehicles from entering Manik Farms IDP camp, currently accommodating nearly 170,000 IDPs. WILPF calls on the Sri Lankan Government to allow humanitarian assistance, provided by the International Confederation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as well as by international and local non-governmental organizations, to the areas where fighting has been fiercest.

As a member of the United Nations, the Sri Lankan government has a great responsibility to prevent even more suffering and to start a peace process leading to security and dignity for all of its citizens. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 reaffirms “the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stress[es] the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution”. WILPF also calls on the Sri Lankan government to ensure that women are fully and equally represented during all upcoming negotiations towards post conflict peace building.

According to the Asian Human Rights Commission “The Sri Lankan security forces are using systematic rape and murder of Tamil women to subjugate the Tamil population. Impunity continues to reign as rape is used as a weapon of war in Sri Lanka.” WILPF also calls on the Sri Lankan government to respect United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 on gender based and sexual violence during armed conflict and to ensure that the perpetrators of rape be prosecuted.

WILPF also calls on:

All parties to the conflict, whether the Sri Lankan Army or the LTTE (Tamil Tigers), to be held liable for breaches of international humanitarian law.

The inclusion of women in the planning of DDRRR programmes (Disarmament, Demobilization, Re-integration, Repatriation, and Resettlement programmes) to promote sustainable development as well as incorporate the specific needs of women – in line with UNSCR 1325.

Donor governments to ensure that non-emergency funds will benefit conflict affected areas to promote sustainable peace.

The Human Rights Council, to appoint a Special Envoy to the area during this Special Session to follow up on the UN Secretary General's visit and report back to the HRC on the situation of civilians, particularly in the IDP camps.
