

Statement submitted by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) was among the first group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to receive consultative status with the United Nations and has monitored every session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The 52nd Session offers an opportunity for Member States to demonstrate their commitment to the broad goals of women's empowerment, human rights and gender equality, goals WILPF has continually worked towards since its inception in 1915 as part of its ongoing work to prevent armed conflict and to establish the conditions for sustainable peace on a global scale.

WILPF recognizes the many commitments expressed by Member States and applauds the concrete achievements by governments and the UN system towards realizing equality between women and men as outlined in the preamble of the Charter. Unfortunately a significant gap between policy and practice still remains. We look forward to the Commission addressing the persistent gaps in implementing policy commitments, particularly to the role played by the failure to allocate adequate human and economic resources devoted to implementation of gender equality goals.

WILPF looks forward to Member State's evaluation of their prior commitments from the 48th Session of the CSW on "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding." While laudable work is being undertaken, particularly through efforts to implement Resolution 1325, much remains to be done. Women remain excluded from or marginalized in decision-making on the full spectrum of security issues, within peace processes and within the UN system itself.

In the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, it is unclear whether commitments to include women in post-conflict peacebuilding have made a practical difference on the ground. While there is a lack of demonstrated political will to ensure women's participation, more tangible still is the poor commitment of resources to these issues. This despite agreement in the 48th Session to "continue to make resources available nationally and internationally for prevention of conflict and ensure women's participation in the elaboration and implementation of strategies for preventing conflict."

WILPF thus welcomes the Commission's consideration of the important theme of Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. In developing policy in this area, it is critical that the clear and strong connections be drawn between this issue of financing and resources and the realization of all other commitments to development and gender equality made by the Commission and Member States more broadly; including commitments to women's full and equal participation. It is not simply that women have the right to participate as equals. It is also that without women's participation and empowerment and without gender equality, sustainable peace, sustainable development and true human security are unattainable.

As then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan repeatedly articulated:

"study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, or to reduce infant mortality. No other policy is as sure to improve nutrition and promote health – including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. No other policy is as powerful in increasing the chances of education for the next

generation. And I would also venture that no policy is more important in preventing conflict, or in achieving reconciliation after a conflict has ended.”¹

WILPF welcomed the recognition of the links between participation, equality and development in the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit. In particular WILPF welcomed the recognition that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly “is an essential contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.” This contribution is not possible without resources and gender-centered financing policy. The failure to finance gender equality is the failure to finance development and human security.

The consideration of Financing for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment requires providing direct, sustained and increased financial and human resources to discrete budget lines, as well as support to women’s groups and organizations. It is, however, critical also to look beyond this level and type of support. Financing for Gender Equality is not just about adding more resources to existing efforts. It is also about how resources are spent by government in the economy as a whole. WILPF welcomes the work done by some governments to engage in gender responsive budgeting and calls on all governments to do so and to enhance these efforts. This involves not only analyzing the differential impact of government spending on men and women but also offers a means to critically reflect on government spending priorities and to prioritize human security and gender equality.

WILPF finds it unacceptable that despite the many commitments made to gender equality and women’s empowerment the figures tell a different story:

- Women make up 70 percent of the world’s poor and 67% of the world’s illiterate. They own just one per cent of assets worldwide;²
- According to a 1995 UNDP study, more than two-thirds of the world’s unpaid work is done by women – the equivalent of \$11 trillion (approximately half of the world’s GDP);
- Out of \$69 billion of overseas development assistance made available in 2003, only \$2.5 billion or 3.6% was earmarked for gender equality as a significant or principal objective.³ Yet, in the three year period from 2002 to 2004, US military aid to Israel alone totaled over \$9 billion with another \$6 billion to Egypt and \$4 billion to Pakistan;⁴
- Of \$20 billion in bilateral aid in 2001-2005, an OECD DAC study reports only \$5 billion was allocated to projects promoting gender equality; that is the cost of approximately 2 weeks of the occupation of Iraq;⁵
- The combined budgets of the UN women’s entities is only \$65 million⁶ only 0.005% of world military expenditure of \$1204 billion in 2006;⁷
- The entire budget of the only operational women’s entity – UNIFEM – in 2006 was only \$57 million only 2 % of the \$2.34 billion budget of UNICEF for the same period;⁸

¹ *Empowerment of women the most effective development tool, Secretary-General tells Commission on the Status of Women*, UN Press Release SG/SM/9738, WOM/1489, 28 Feb 2005

² UNIFEM, World Poverty Day 2007, Investing in Women – Solving the Poverty Puzzle, (2007)

³ Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit (CPSU), *2007 Commonwealth Women’s Affairs Ministers’ Meeting: Policy Brief*, (2007) at 9

⁴ *Collateral Damage*, The Center for Public Integrity, (2007) <http://www.publicintegrity.org/militaryaid/regions.aspx>

⁵ Congressional Research Service, *Report for US Congress, The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan and other Global War on Terror Operations since 9/11*, (9 November 2007), RL33110

Resource Guide for Gender Theme Groups, UNIFEM, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO, Jan. 2005 and Office of the UN Special Envoy for Aids in Africa, *Gender Equality Now or Never: A New UN Agency for Women* (2006) at 16.

⁷ SIPRI, Recent Trends in Military Expenditure, http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_trends.html

- The World Bank estimates the cost of interventions to promote gender equality under MDG 3 is \$7-13 per capita. The world's military expenditure in 2006 amounted to \$184 per capita.⁹

What is clear is that in scales that matter, commitments to gender equality are not yet real. No amount of policy will make a difference unless: gender equality is seen as a critical part of public finance management; is factored into macroeconomic policy and development financing; and is seen as more important than weapons.

WILPF calls on Member States:

- To invest in human security, equality and sustainable peace and to end the prioritization of war and military spending and the impunity enjoyed by war and weapons profiteers.¹⁰
- To strengthen the development and human rights work of the United Nations by strengthening and better resourcing its gender equality architecture as a critical aspect of financing for gender equality.
- To include women as senior decision makers in economic and trade policy including through ensuring their input in the decision making of supra-national institutions such as the World Trade Organization and the Bretton Woods Institutions. WILPF calls on Member States to provide mechanisms by which women are guaranteed an opportunity to input into the decision-making processes of these institutions at a local level and that these processes take account the needs of gender equality and women's empowerment.
- To pressure the Security Council to implement Article 26 of the United Nations Charter, which charges the Security Council with formulating a system to regulate armaments and reduce military expenditures, in order to promote international peace and security and free up human and economic resources for development.
- To participate in the UN Register of Conventional Arms in order to enhance transparency of international arms transfers, procurement through national production, holdings, and relevant policies, and in the UN Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures to enhance transparency of spending on military personnel, operations, maintenance, procurement, construction, research, and development.

WILPF looks forward to the development of policy during this 52nd Session of the CSW that will ensure a gender-perspective in the 2008 follow-up to the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development in Qatar and the follow-up to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in Ghana.

As a 92-year old organization, WILPF continues to work toward collective human security and sustainable peace and away from militarism and economic violence, in collaboration with civil society, governmental and international actors, including within the United Nations system. We look forward to working with others from around the world to dismantle the prevailing culture of militarism and create a culture of peace in which gender inequality, racism and discrimination, economic injustice, violence and oppression are absent and in which women are full and equal participants.

⁸ UNIFEM Annual Report, 2006, UNICEF Annual Report 2006

⁹ SIPRI, Recent Trends in Military Expenditure, http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_trends.html

¹⁰ 1995 UNDP