WILPF Press Statement at the CTBT Conference, September 4, 2003

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The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom is the oldest women’s peace organization in the world. With members in more than 37 countries, we strive for multilateral agreements and diplomatic dialogues to prevent the scourge of war.

We are pleased to see so many women at the podium at this conference. As Kofi Annan said “Women, who know the price of war so well, are also often better equipped than men to prevent or resolve it.” Thanks to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, women are beginning to have a place at the international peace table. I address you today as a member of WILPF, as a citizen of the US and as a woman, raised in the nuclear age.

WILPF has worked since 1915 to abolish war, the causes of war, and to promote a culture of peace. Since that time the face of war has changed dramatically. No longer does one meet the enemy of their government’s choosing face-to-face; in today’s world, the push of a button can eradicate an entire civilization. Genocidal, ecocidal and suicidal nuclear weapons threaten the very existence of life on this planet. No person can live in peace, can be secure, as long as any country holds the threat of nuclear annihilation as central to their concept of national security. No nation can have true security as long as these weapons are in existence.

WILPF applauds the efforts of the Provisional Technical Secretariat and the CTBTO in their drive to enter this treaty into force. We urge all states, especially those with nuclear energy capabilities, who have not yet ratified the treaty, to do so immediately.

As a citizen of one of those states, the US, I must say that I am ashamed of the actions of my government. Ashamed that not only have they not yet ratified the CTBT, but that the current Administration is actually considering a return to testing. The people of the US do not want our country to resume nuclear testing. Thousands of us who have grown-up downwind of the U.S. and UK shared test site in Nevada, live daily with health problems and suffering caused by nuclear weapons development. We would not wish these horrors on anyone else, least of all our children, who will also bear a nuclear signature.

It is imperative that the people of the world understand that the people of the US do not all agree with our government’s actions. That we work diligently to influence our representatives to support the CTBT, to support Article VI of the NPT and to support Article VI of our own constitution which reads “All treaties made, or which shall be made under the authority of the US, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges of every state shall be bound thereby.”

Statements made in the UN General Assembly, at the NPT PrepComs and at various public events by the Bush Administration, directly opposing the CTBT, are a sorry thing indeed. Not only the words of the US, but their actions are a threat to global disarmament and nonproliferation. Ongoing subcritical testing seriously undermines the CTBT regime. It is a popular fear in Washington circles that if Bush is re-elected in 2004, the U.S. will withdraw their
signature from the CTBT and resume nuclear testing by 2005. Money has already been allocated by the U.S. Congress to prepare the Nevada Test Site for a resumption of testing, and for the development of a new generation of nuclear warheads. The Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator and so-called “mini-nukes” are not central to the security strategy of the U.S. people, but only to the security of the US military industrial complex.

The citizens of the US will continue to work to emphasize the necessity of the CTBT for our nation’s security. We will continue to demonstrate, to lobby, and to use all means at our disposal to urge the US to take this step forward on the path to global security. Millions of people worldwide have protested against military solutions to the problem of proliferation. All sections of WILPF, in all continents call upon the citizens of the world to continue these efforts- monitor your governments, question them, urge them to support the strengthening of international treaties and agreements, and to adhere to international law. We also call upon the governments of U.S. allies- especially the UK, to emphasize the necessity for the U.S. to ratify the CTBT. Only by working together, through multilateral negotiations, can we continue to build upon the CTBT, a cornerstone of true international peace and security.