The CTBT is More Important than Ever:
WILPF Press Statement at the CTBT EIF Conference, 2005

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. Women mobilize support for disarmament and peace and are increasingly sitting at the international peace table, assisted by the gradual implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325. WILPF has worked since 1915 to abolish war, the causes of war, and to promote a culture of peace. Genocidal, ecocidal and suicidal nuclear weapons threaten the very existence of life on this planet. No person can live in peace or be secure, as long as any country holds the threat of nuclear annihilation as central to their construction of national security. No nation can have true security as long as these weapons are in existence.

The nuclear situation we face is unacceptably dire. In May, States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty failed to produce any substantive outcome at the NPT Review Conference. Last week, the world’s governments, at the highest level, failed to include a single sentence on nuclear weapons in an Outcome Document that is supposed to comprehensively address the “new security environment”. Two days ago, the 6 party talks on DPRK’s nuclear program came to an “historic” agreement that defers addressing the main bone of contention, the light-water reactor, and this week EU officials have been pressuring the IAEA to refer Iran’s nuclear activities to the UN Security Council.

There are existing rational already-negotiated and largely committed to solutions to these problems. The CTBT, whose entry-into-force conference is taking place right now, makes progress on both disarmament and non-proliferation. However, it is being actively opposed by the United States and passively ignored by China, Colombia, DPRK, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and Vietnam. The US has openly declared that they do not support the CTBT, and insisted on its removal from the Outcome Document of the UN Summit. Meanwhile, the current U.S. administration is seeking funding for a program of research on a new generation of high-yield earth-penetrating nuclear warheads, as well as new types of so-called "replacement" warheads, and may even be considering a return to full scale testing.

The reason practical solutions are not working is because key governments are refusing to implement them, not because of any failure in the solution. We do not have to reinvent the wheel, or go to war to address the problems of disarmament and non-proliferation, we just have to support, use, and reinforce the pre-existing viable and effective tools we have already created.

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. In the two years since the last conference on hastening the entry-into-force of the comprehensive test ban treaty, only the Democratic Republic of the Congo has ratified their signature, and between 2001 and 2003 conferences only Algeria ratified. Do governments want to continue like this, one new ratification every two years? If not, what concrete action is being taken to bring about the early entry into force of the CTBT?
We applaud Kazakhstan for having decommissioned the Semipalantinsk test site, and we congratulate France for having decommissioned it’s test site in the Pacific, however, the residents of these areas will forever, bear a nuclear signature from years of testing. It is absolutely imperative that the voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing remain in place, and that it be codified as soon as possible by universal ratification of this treaty. Only through the full application of its verification and monitoring capabilities, can the world move somewhat closer to the abolition of nuclear weapons, and true peace and 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 instead of relying on military force. 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. The CTBT, a cornerstone of true international peace and security, must enter into force so we can make progress on disarmament and non-proliferation.