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**Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs****ADVISOR APPOINTED FOR THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON GENDER ISSUES IN THE SRI LANKA PEACE PROCESS****PRESS RELEASE**

05 February 2003

At the request of the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Norway has appointed Dr. Astrid N. Heiberg as an advisor to the Sub-Committee on Gender Issues. Dr. Heiberg will be present at the first meeting of the Sub-Committee to be held in March. The parties to the peace process established the Sub-Committee to ensure the effective inclusion of gender issues in the peace process. At the fourth session of peace negotiations in Thailand in January, the parties asked Norway to function as the facilitator for the Sub-Committee, as well as to contribute financial support and appoint a senior expert to advise the Sub-Committee.

Dr. Astrid N. Heiberg has broad experience with gender issues, human rights and humanitarian advocacy from Norway and internationally. For several years she has been involved in University co-operation between Norway and Sri Lanka, with the involvement of leading academics from Colombo, Jaffna and Batticaloa. She was President of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent 1997 – 2001, and President of the Norwegian Red Cross 1993 – 1999. Dr. Heiberg was a member of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1989 – 1993. She also has had a distinguished career in Norwegian politics as Deputy Minister for Health and Social Affairs 1981 – 1985, Chair of the National Conservative Women's Association 1985 – 1989, Member of Parliament 1985 – 1989, Minister of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration in 1986, and First Deputy Chair of the Conservative Party 1990 – 1991. Dr. Heiberg is Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Oslo and is active on the boards of a number of Norwegian organizations. Dr. Heiberg holds M.D. and Ph.D. degrees in psychiatry from the University of Oslo.

