



**Statement attributable to the Spokesman of the Secretary-General**

**21 November 2009**

The Secretary-General welcomes the decision by the Government of Sri Lanka to grant increased freedom of movement to internally displaced persons (IDPs) still residing in camps in northern Sri Lanka. The Secretary-General also welcomes the release of over half of the IDPs from the camps, and encourages the Government to continue to prioritise the return of IDPs. These are steps which the UN has long been pressing for in its intensive engagement with the authorities in Sri Lanka, including during the Secretary-General's own visit in May.

The Secretary-General urges the Government of Sri Lanka to continue to work with the UN and other humanitarian partners to improve the quality of the returns process, including through consultation with the IDPs themselves, and to ensure the best possible assistance and services to returnees.