



**High Representative's statement for
Global Day of Action on Military Spending**

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The Charter of the United Nations makes clear that Member States must achieve international peace and security “with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources”.

In 2015, the international community recognized, through the Sustainable Development Goals, the detrimental impact that weapons have on sustainable development.

These two commitments – one enduring, the other more recent – exemplify the importance that Member States have placed on constraining military spending and better utilizing national treasuries to promote socially constructive activities.

As the Secretary-General has aptly summarized, “Bloated military budgets promote proliferation, derail arms control, doom disarmament and detract from social and economic development”.

We, at the UN, find it, therefore, extremely disappointing that so many countries and regions continue to expend exorbitant sums on their militaries. Global military spending totaled almost US 1.7 trillion dollars in 2015. Contrary to their stated commitments, many countries and regions are increasing, not decreasing, their military spending.

At the same time, there has been a worrying downward trend in transparency in military expenditures. On average, less than one third of UN Member States provide reports on military expenditures to the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures (MILEX). These reports are requested by a General Assembly resolution supported by the vast majority of States.

In a world where resources are increasingly finite, real security must be found in the peaceful settlement of disputes, in establishing good governance, in strengthening the rule of law, and in providing livelihoods for all.

On this Global Day of Action on Military Spending, we call on government leaders to remember their commitments under the UN Charter and reassess their country's security needs. We encourage them to consider shifting priorities and resources further towards social, economic and human development. We ask them to recall the importance of showing transparency to boost mutual confidence. Finally, we urge them to take into account the full possibilities of creating sustainable security through non-military means.