

Statement by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

Global Day of Action on Military Spending, 12 April 2011

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set measurable, time-bound goals in eight critical areas to eradicate poverty by 2015.

The funds needed to fulfil these goals are substantial – up to \$60 billion per year.

But this is a fraction when compared to what countries annually spend arming themselves.

Military spending has risen by half over the past decade only; such expenditures reported to the United Nations now total over 1.2 trillion dollars per year.¹

Less than one-tenth of annual military expenditures would be enough to achieve our agreed development goals, lifting all people out of extreme poverty by 2015.

At this Global Day of Action on Military Spending, I call on governments to consider the full possibilities of creating security through non-military means. Decent health care and a good education for all, providing confidence in one's future. Democratic institutions, in which all citizens feel represented. A functioning rule of law, protecting people against crime and corruption. Finally, intense cooperation between neighbouring and other countries, building confidence and trust in international relations.

Our United Nations Charter calls for “the establishment of international peace and security through the least diversion of the world's human and economic resources to armaments.” Instead, military spending continues to rise as the deadline to achieve the MDGs draws closer.

The discussion on military expenditures will intensify in the coming years. The Global Day of Action on Military Spending should serve as a catalyst for shifting global and national priorities from massive military spending to creating human security and safety for all.

¹ <http://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/Milex/html/MilexIndex.shtml>