

Statement by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
Global Days of Action on Military Spending
13 April – 9 May 2019

Upward trends in militarization continue unabated. Global military spending is at its highest since the end of the Cold War.

At the same time, the complex challenges facing the world demand innovative solutions – far from dispatching battle ships or launching artillery.

A comprehensive strategy to bring about peace, well-being, and a prosperous future for all was articulated in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Adopted in 2015 by all United Nations Member States, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a common framework for governments, United Nations entities, communities and individuals to take action and work synergistically to make progress.

Critically, the Agenda acknowledges the contribution of effective arms control to economic and social development.

To achieve the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals, a surge in financing is necessary.

For example, the World Health Organization estimates that the “[SDG health price tag](#)”, the costs and benefits of progressively expanding health services to 67 low- and middle-income countries, is up to \$371 billion a year through 2030. Put another way, an additional investment of \$58 per person each year over the next fifteen years is required to achieve a healthier world.

This is no small sum; moreover, it embodies just one dimension of sustainable development.

But \$58 represents just one-quarter of what is currently spent per person on militaries, according to the latest military expenditure estimates.

It is clear that a re-prioritization of resources is necessary.

Reacting effectively to the demands of the Sustainable Development Goals requires not only financial resources, but a global change of mindsets and approaches. The Secretary-General, in his agenda for disarmament, [Securing Our Common Future](#), emphasizes the need to foster new dialogue and cooperation to reduce military spending and build confidence.

In line with the letter and spirit of Article 26 of the United Nations Charter, which calls for ‘the least diversion of the world’s human and economic resources to armament’, the international community must leverage the commitments contained in the Sustainable Development Goals to realign priorities from big militaries to people-centred growth.

On the occasion of the Global Days of Action on Military Spending, I echo the call of the Secretary-General for the international community to “rethink” unconstrained military spending by prioritizing investment that generates growth and opportunity for communities.