

**Global Day of Action on Military Spending  
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By

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“The world is over-armed and peace is underfunded,” said the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, succinctly summarizing the global imbalance in the allocation of resources between military expenditures and development.

Global military spending continues to grow. According to the data provided by 66 Member States to the UN last year, in total, they spent 1.22 trillion dollars in 2010. According to the World Bank, less than 5 percent of that sum would be enough to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, lifting all people out of poverty.

Excessive military spending has vast hidden human costs. Since financial and human resources in the world are finite, massive military expenditures deprive the world of the resources required to address global challenges such as climate change, food security, natural and man-made disasters, and global epidemics.

Large military expenditures also deny developing countries resources for social and economic development. They sap limited resources for eradicating poverty and illiteracy and for providing basic health care and education. It is no coincidence that the Charter of the United Nations calls for the “establishment of international peace and security through the least diversion of the world’s human and economic resources for armaments.”

Moreover, as countries spend more money on their military forces, this often results in an increased sense of insecurity in other countries, which can create a vicious cycle, undermining regional and international security.

In this context, transparency in matters of military expenditure is of particular importance in building confidence between States. I therefore reiterate the call of the General Assembly for greater openness in military spending, and urge all Member States to report their military expenditures annually to the Secretary-General by way of the standardized reporting system, the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures.

The United Nations wholeheartedly supports the Global Day of Action on Military Spending. It should encourage political leaders to reassess their country’s defense needs, explore confidence-building measures, and consider shifting priorities and resources for social, economic and human development.