

Statement by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
On the Global Day of Action on Military Spending
13 April 2015

As we commemorate the fifth Global Day of Action on Military Spending, we continue to note an alarmingly high level of military expenditures, at 1.78 trillion US dollars in 2014.¹

Many countries and regions are increasing, not decreasing, their military spending.

At the same time, the global crises we face – imploding states, environmental degradation, epidemics, extreme poverty, lack of education to name a few – threatens social fabrics and even our very existence. Spending and assistance focused on turning that negative spiral around is still low: the world spent less than one-twelfth of annual military expenditures on development aid.²

States have a sovereign right to self-defence, enshrined in the United Nations Charter – but excessive military spending must be curtailed. The very same Charter advances “the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources”.

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 good education for all. Democratic institutions, in which all citizens feel represented. A functioning rule of law, protecting people against corruption and crime. Finally, intense cooperation between neighbouring and other countries, building confidence and trust in international relations.

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.

This Day of Action should encourage political leaders to reassess their country's defence needs, and consider shifting priorities and resources for social, economic and human development.

¹ Preliminary figure from 2014 SIPRI data

² OECD Newsroom (2013), US\$133.5 billion by OECD/DAC