

Military Spending: \$ 1500 Billion of Lost Opportunities for a Safer World

Global Day of Action against Military Spending: 12 April 2011

Statement of Pax Christi International

In 2009, global military expenditure rose to \$ 1536 billion. This enormous amount tops a decade of continuous growth of military budgets around the world: since 2000, military spending increased by 49% to an all time high in 2009.

At the same time, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) remains in doubt, in large part because promised funding, which is only a fraction of global military expenditures, has not materialised. Pax Christi International denounces this prioritization of the military over human needs and calls for a redirection of spending towards sustainable development.

Today the world is confronted with numerous crises. Still facing the consequences of the global financial crisis, the precarious effects of environmental degradation compound the stress felt by millions of people at the front lines of climate change. We face great social challenges – not least among them extreme poverty, lack of access to education, healthcare and shelter.

For decades, a large part of the world's population has lacked the capacity to meet basic needs, creating a situation of human insecurity that can lead to instability and violence. Repeated appeals to world leaders have asked for a firm commitment to just and sustainable development. In the Millennium Development Declaration (2000), world leaders committed themselves and their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty. A series of time bound goals, the Millennium Development Goals, were set out as a framework.

Progress has been made in the last ten years, but the achievement of the MDGs by 2015 is highly uncertain, in part because promised funding has not materialised. In 2009, official development aid from donor states reached \$ 126 billion or 0,3% of the Gross National Income. This is far from the 0,7% promised in 2000. While many states blamed the economic crisis for this shortfall, we would note that this was not the case for military spending. In global military expenditures were more than ten times official development assistance.

The September 2010 UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals stressed the fact that additional funding is essential to achieving the MDGs by 2015. In 2009 the extra annual investment needed to meet the MDGs was calculated at \$ 329 billion. This amount is 20% of the global military spending or the equivalent of the military expenditure in Western and Central Europe in 2009.

The Global Day of Action against Military Spending (GDAMS) is a worldwide moment for action, where people in many countries will join to focus the attention of public, politicians and press on the costs of military spending and the need for a renewal of priorities. Pax Christi International is a strong supporter of this action and encourages all its members to engage in this campaign. In an era of crisis, where resources are scarce, spending \$ 1536 billion to build militaries and weaponry means omitting essential resources to meet the basic needs of people all over the world.

Brussels, 8 April 2011

More Info:

www.demilitarize.org

www.ipb.org

www.sipri.org

www.ips-dc.org

www.armscontrolcenter.org

www.armsdown.net

On 11 April 2011, SIPRI will launch its updated world military expenditure data for 2010 with the public release of comprehensive information on global, regional and national trends in military spending. On 12 April, the Global Day of Action on Military Spending (GDAMS, <http://www.demilitarize.org/>) will occur, initiated and founded by the International Peace Bureau (IPB) and the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS). Pax Christi International is a member of the IPB and Paul Lansu of the International Secretariat is a member of the IPB Board.

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