United Nations

The Security We Need

Rebalancing Military Spending for a Sustainable and Peaceful Future

Report of the Secretary-General

The Security We Need: Rebalancing Military Spending for a Sustainable and Peaceful Future

Report of the Secretary-General on the impact of the global increase in military expenditure on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals as requested by Action 13 (c) of the Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1).

United Nations

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Executive summary

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The world has reached a pivotal juncture. As global insecurity intensifies and geopolitical rivalries deepen, global military spending has surged to unprecedented levels. **In 2024, it reached an all-time high of $2.7 trillion.**

At the same time, **progress on the Sustainable Development Goals is faltering. Only one in five targets is on track to be achieved by 2030;** the annual financing gap for the Goals now stands at $4 trillion.

This report responds to the call of United Nations Member States in the Pact for the Future[1] to assess the implications of this imbalance and propose pathways towards a more peaceful, sustainable global order. It finds that rising military expenditure undermines development, heightens insecurity and diverts critical resources away from investments to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

A costly imbalance

Military spending is often justified on the grounds of deterrence and national security. Evidence suggests, however, that **heightened military expenditure does not necessarily lead to greater peace or stability**. Instead, it often exacerbates geopolitical tensions, fuels arms races and increases risks of conflict, particularly when coupled with weak governance, rising inequality and systemic mistrust.

Growing military expenditure today is crowding out resources essential for social investment, poverty reduction, education, health, environmental protection and infrastructure – undermining progress on nearly all the Sustainable Development Goals.

Moreover, this imbalance disproportionately affects low-income and fragile States. These countries, already grappling with underdevelopment and in some cases ongoing insecurity, face pressures to expand military budgets at the expense of essential services. This both entrenches their vulnerabilities and slows progress towards stability and sustainable development.

1 United Nations General Assembly resolution 79/1, (Action 13.c).

Amplifying this challenge, in the international arena, development financing has not kept pace with rising military expenditures. Official development assistance has stagnated even as the development financing gap widens.

Fragile States and the poorest countries suffer disproportionately from both the direct and indirect effects of rising military expenditure, including reduced official development assistance, economic volatility, debt distress and development reversals.

The need for a course correction

To meet a moment of interlinked crises, **this report calls for a fundamental shift in how we understand and pursue security**. Rather than defining security narrowly in terms of military capability, the **report advocates for a human-centred, multidimensional approach rooted in dignity, human rights and sustainable development.**

This reconceptualization is consistent with the United Nations Charter, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[2], and a growing body of evidence linking social inclusion and economic opportunity with peace and stability.

To implement this shift, **it is imperative to recalibrate global approaches to security and development**, reversing the dual trends of rising military expenditure and widening development financing gaps. This requires a human-centred approach building on sustained investment in institutions and partnerships that promote dialogue, strengthen resilience, and advance inclusive and sustainable development for present and future generations.

A five-point agenda for action

The report outlines a five-point agenda for Member States and the international community:

1. **Prioritize diplomacy, peaceful settlement of disputes, and confidence-building measures** to address the underlying causes of growing military expenditure through 2030.
2. **Bring military expenditure to the fore of disarmament discussions**, and improve links between arms control and development.

2 United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1

3 **Promote transparency and accountability** around military expenditure to build trust and confidence among Member States and increase domestic fiscal accountability.

4 **Reinvigorate multilateral finance for development**.

5 **Advance a human-centred approach to security and sustainable development**.

The security we need

At this critical juncture, the international community must confront the stark reality that **rising military expenditures are not yielding greater peace. Instead, they are undermining our shared vision for development and a sustainable future**. The challenge is to reverse the trends of higher military spending and falling finance for development, and to recommit to multilateralism, integrating peace and development agendas and recalibrating global financial priorities. This report urges Member States to act with foresight and resolve. **Rebalancing global priorities is not just a matter of fiscal prudence. It is an imperative for humanity to survive**.

1. Introduction

1. Introduction

International cooperation is fundamental to address the realities of today and the challenges of tomorrow. The Pact for the Future is a wide-ranging agreement adopted in 2024 by Member States. It is intended to support the United Nations and other multilateral institutions to rise to the demands of a drastically changing world and deliver for generations now and in the future. Under Action 13 of the Pact, Member States voiced concern about the potential impact that the global increase in military expenditures could have on investments in sustainable development and sustaining peace. To this end, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide analysis on the impact of the global increase in military expenditure on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by the end of the seventy-ninth session. This report is the response to that request. It forms one part of the Pact's implementation.

The world is changing. **A new world order, dictated by fragmented geopolitical dynamics, is emerging. Interlocking threats demand new approaches beyond narrow security perspectives**, as articulated in the New Agenda for Peace. They also require, as this report argues, a detailed understanding of the links between increased military expenditure and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Rising military spending runs counter to the very objectives, principles and purposes of the United Nations, namely, to resolve conflicts peacefully and without recourse to arms and through the non-use of force. Reducing military spending is one of the most direct and concrete disarmament objectives embedded in the Charter of the United Nations. Article 26 instructs the Security Council to promote and maintain international peace and security *"with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources"*. At the same time, we need to recognize that millions of people live in fear and personal insecurity due to arms and their proliferation, and that States are required to guarantee the integrity and security of their citizens.

Advancing peace and sustainable, inclusive development go hand in hand. Both sustainable development and peace require respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights. One cannot exist without the others.

Sustainable development, peace and security, and human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Peace requires guaranteeing food security, education, skills and opportunities, healthcare, social safety nets and

respect for everyone. It calls for addressing climate change and supporting adaptation. Fostering peace implies bridging the digital divide and leveraging the advantages of technology while guarding against its risks. It depends on equal power and opportunities for women and youth, and their full participation at all levels of society.

Context matters: Some regions and countries, suffering from historic underinvestment in development, are left with no option but to use financial resources and investments in military security to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16 and its commitment to peaceful, just and inclusive societies with accountable institutions for all.

Trade-offs between military expenditure and sustainable development have short- and long-term consequences. **Global military spending has risen for 10 consecutive years, reaching an all-time high of $2.7 trillion in 2024**. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic, the rising number of armed conflicts, economic volatilities, trade disputes and the ever-worsening effects of climate change have left the Sustainable Development Goals in peril. Progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is severely off course. **Only 35 per cent of targets are on track or making moderate progress**. Forty-eight per cent show insufficient progress and 18 per cent show regression compared to the 2015 baseline.

While this is happening, **we face a severe and widening financing gap for sustainable development**. The resource chasm for the Sustainable Development Goals has been increasing for years and currently stands at $4 trillion a year – more than the gross domestic product (GDP) of the world's fifth largest economy. Recently, several Member States announced a drastic reduction in official development assistance. Some estimates project that the financing gap could reach $6.4 trillion per year by 2030. The connection is stark: **As military budgets increase, the financing gap for sustainable development grows, endangering collective progress for all of humanity**.

Increased military expenditure most obviously affects the Sustainable Development Goals through budget allocations. Devoting more financial resources to military endeavours crowds out sustainable development investments. But the interactions are more complex than just simple trade-offs. **Reorienting economies towards the military changes the long-term outlook for public finance; affects long-term social investment in health and education, including as demographics change; and locks countries into military-centred policies, sometimes for decades**. The reallocation of resources alters sustainable development outcomes now and in the future

through the diversion of public and private resources, reshaping societies at a structural level. **Over time, the entrenchment of defence-oriented economies fosters networks of political, economic and social influence primarily dedicated to sustaining high levels of military expenditure and moving away from civic and developmental governance**. Finally, the shifting of resources to military expenditure signals a world with less cooperation, lower levels of multilateralism and weaker solidarity, when the opposite is what we sorely need.

This report is urgent at a moment when vast numbers of people feel insecure, new and interconnected risks are emerging fast, and inequalities continue to worsen. Despite the past trend of rising military spending and a worsening geopolitical and security environment, 2025 may be a watershed moment. **Global military expenditures are expected to continue increasing in coming years, likely at an accelerating rate. Development assistance is projected to decline, while trade flows and economies overall face enormous uncertainty**. Announcements on funding military expenditures at the expense of international cooperation, aid and social expenditure mark a dramatic change in mindset, one that threatens to undermine our shared principles and values.

It is important to identify the opportunity costs and trade-offs of current choices, while restating and recommitting to the original principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. To live up to the foundational promise of the United Nations – to protect succeeding generations from the scourge of war – our efforts and commitments must keep pace with geopolitical challenges. With risks to international peace and security amassing, we must strengthen the multilateral system and its institutions, with the United Nations and its Charter at the centre. We must abide by international law and make full use of the instruments and mechanisms set out in the Charter, intensifying our diplomacy, recommitting to resolving our disputes peacefully, refraining from the threat or use of force or acts of aggressions, respecting each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, upholding the principles of political independence and self-determination, strengthening accountability and ending impunity.

2. Historical context and current trends in global military expenditure

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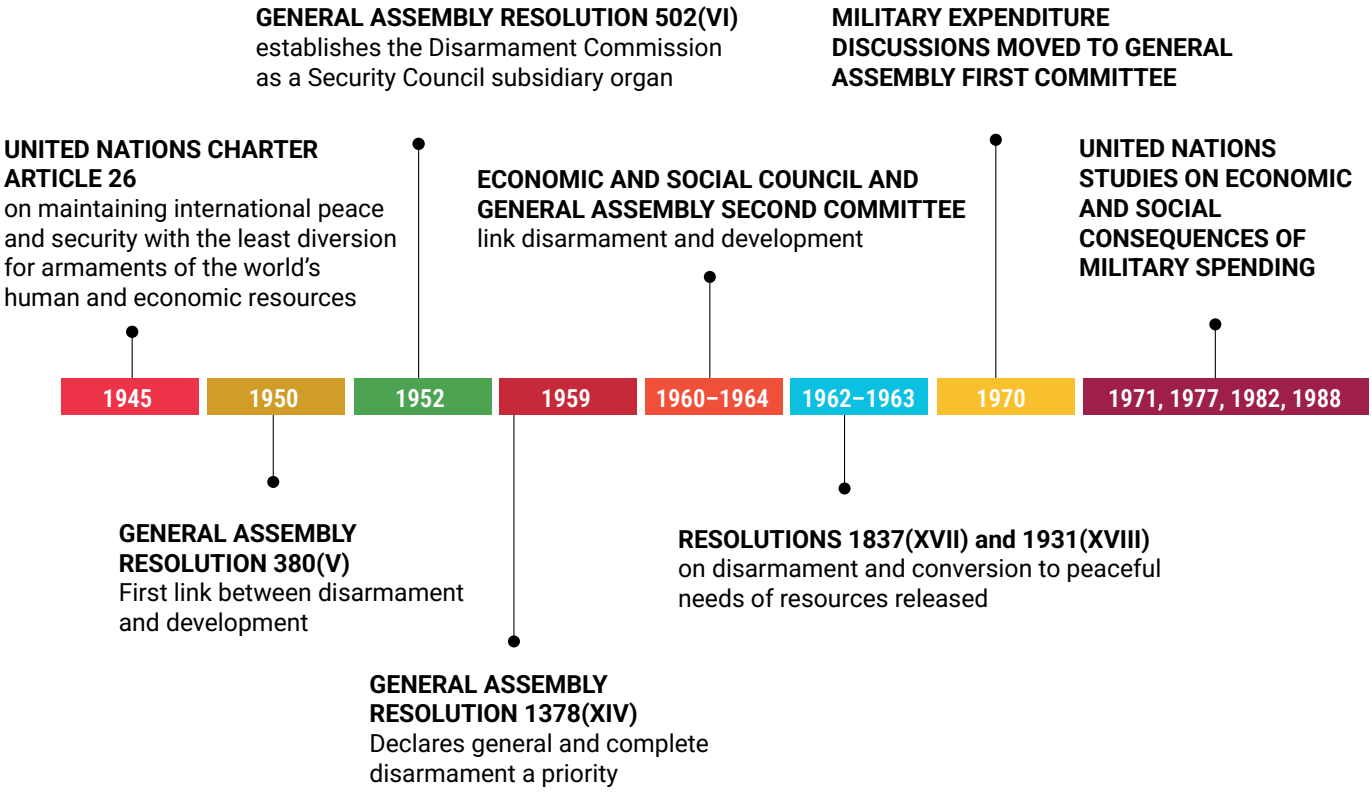
2.1 Historical perspectives on military spending

Since its founding, the United Nations has been a forum for advancing international peace and security alongside inclusive and sustainable development. This dual commitment is enshrined in Article 1 and Article 26 of the United Nations Charter, which calls on Member States to maintain international peace and security and to do so collectively and with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources.

From its first session, the General Assembly recognized disarmament as essential for lasting peace. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 380(V) in 1950 marked a milestone, linking disarmament to development, and calling on nations *"to reduce to a minimum the diversion for armaments of its human and economic resources and to strive towards the development of such resources for the general welfare, with due regard to the needs of the under-developed areas of the world"*. Although consensus could not be reached amid divisions between Western States and the Soviet Union, both sides nevertheless made proposals to freeze or reduce military expenditures.

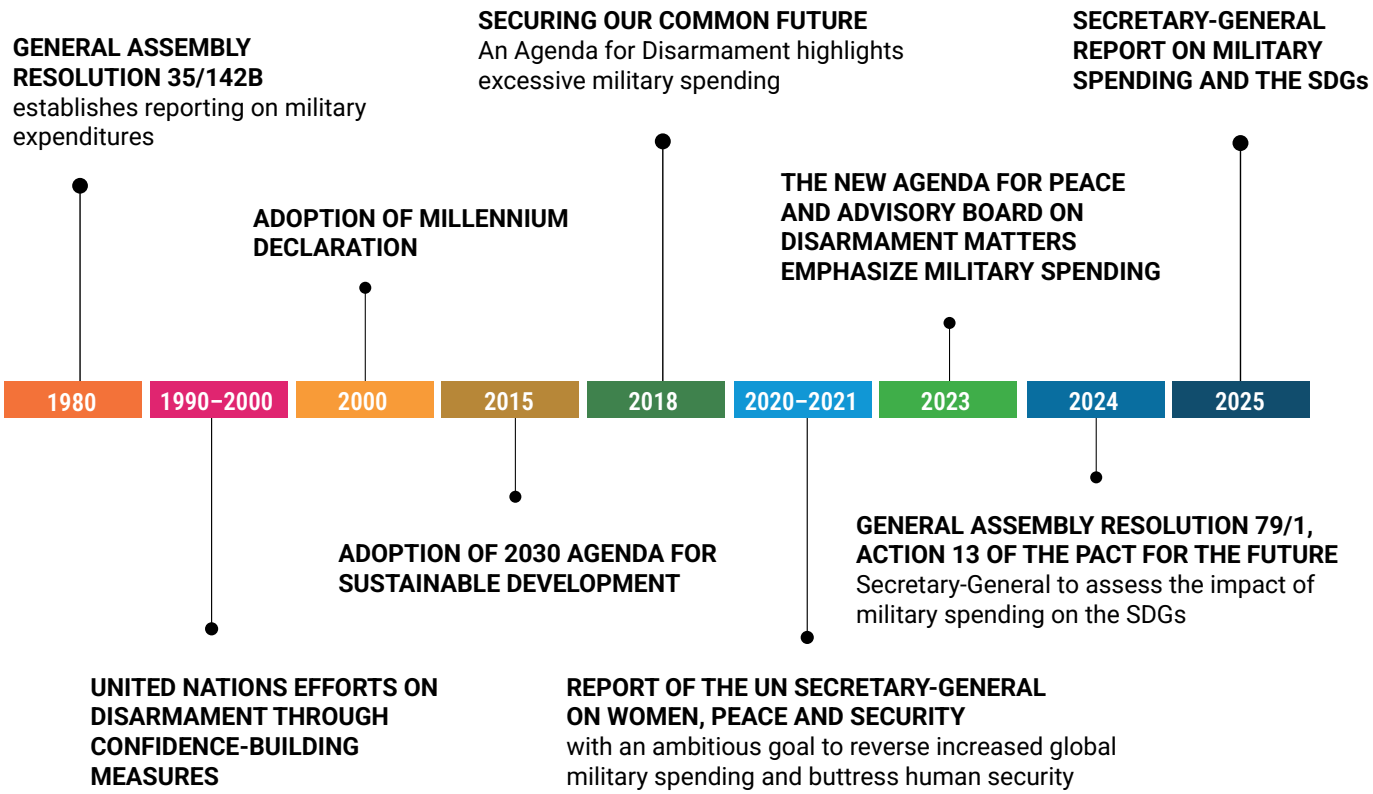
Figure 1: Key milestones in military expenditure discussions



Growing concern over the escalating cold war arms race led to the landmark adoption of General Assembly resolution 1378(XIV) in 1959, declaring *"general and complete disarmament"* a top priority of the Organization (Spies, 2019, p. 4). Negotiations in the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee of the General Assembly (1960–1964) further solidified the enduring principle that disarmament must advance broader development goals, a principle that remains central to current discussions on military expenditures.

By the 1970s, disarmament issues were increasingly addressed in the First Committee of the General Assembly, resolution 38/71, where concerns over the economic and social costs of high military spending gained prominence. Between 1971 and 1988, four United Nations studies carried out on behalf of the Secretary-General, the First Committee and the General Assembly examined trends in military expenditure, opportunity costs, research and development, and macroeconomic effects on taxation, debt and inflation. The studies proceeded in parallel with Member States seeking, albeit with limited progress, to forge a clearer connection between disarmament and development. One reason for the lack of progress was the absence of a standardized concept for measuring military expenditures (Spies, 2019).

In 1980, the General Assembly adopted resolution 35/142B, introducing the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures as a standard instrument for international transparency. This was intended to underpin future discussions on reductions of military expenditures by providing reliable and comparable data. Throughout the 1980s, the General Assembly pursued a dual-track approach: enhancing transparency through the report and seeking substantive agreement on principles to reduce military budgets in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Yet divisions, between Western States and the Soviet Union over whether reductions should precede or follow verification prevented further progress.

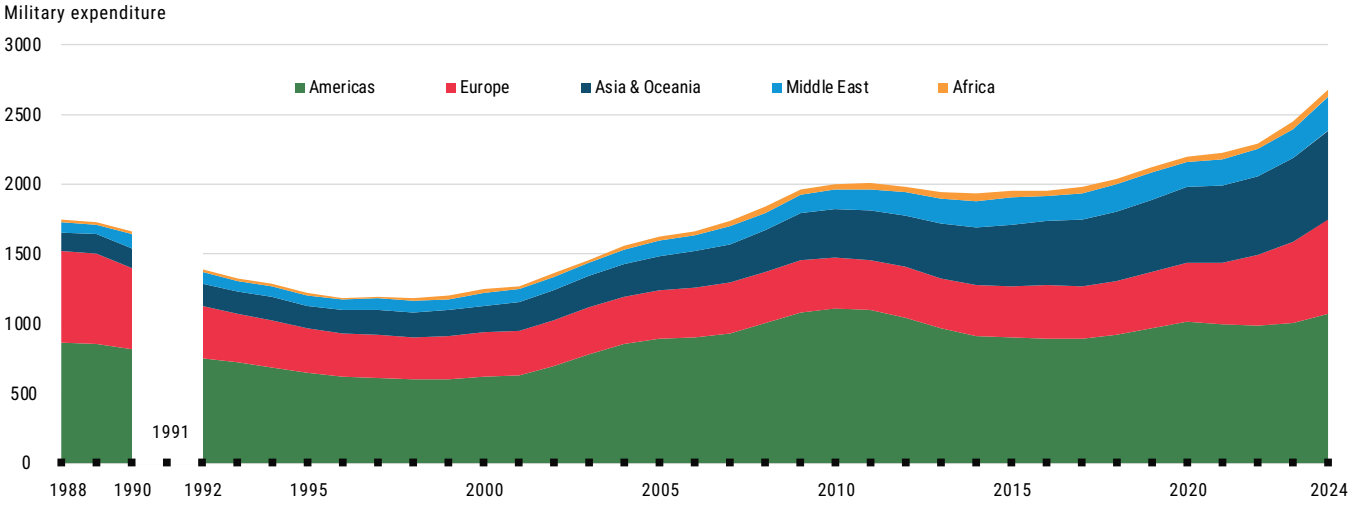


Following the end of the cold war, military spending among major powers and their allies declined significantly. Reductions in the 1990s, however, were not driven by international agreement on arms control, disarmament or cuts in military spending in favour of development. Instead, they largely emerged from fiscal imperatives to reduce budget deficits (Brzoska, Omitoogun and Sköns, 2022). From the 1990s onwards, a focus on disarmament and development shifted to converting military facilities for productive civilian use. United Nations disarmament efforts moved towards supporting confidence-building measures, such as the military expenditures report, and a broader range of initiatives related to international humanitarian law, conventional arms control, and the regulation of small arms and light weapons, among others.

Between the Millennium Declaration of 2000 and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, formal United Nations processes did not explicitly link reductions in military expenditure to development outcomes. In more recent years, the topic of military expenditure has regained prominence within United Nations disarmament and development fora. A 2018 report, Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament, identified *"excessive military spending"* as a hindrance to economic growth (United Nations, 2018). In 2020, the report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security laid out an ambitious goal to reverse the upward trajectory in global military spending and increase investment in social infrastructure and services that buttress human-centred security and sustainable development. This was one of five women, peace and security goals for the coming decade (United Nations, 2020).

In 2023, the New Agenda for Peace called on Member States to commit to reducing military spending and enacting measures to foster human-centred disarmament (United Nations, 2023a). The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters subsequently recommended an updated study of the social, cultural and economic impacts of military expenditure (United Nations, 2023b). **Most recently, in 2024, the Pact for the Future, requested the Secretary-General to provide analysis on the impact of the global increase in military expenditure on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by the end of the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly**.

Figure 2: Evolution of world military expenditure by region, 1988–2024 (constant 2023 United States dollars, billions)



Note: The absence of data for the Soviet Union in 1991 means that no total can be calculated for that year

Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, April 2025.

2.2 Trends in global military expenditure

The volume of financial resources dedicated each year to military activities has varied substantially since the end of the Second World War, reflecting changes in the global geopolitical and security environment. In the immediate post-war period, many nations demobilized and reduced military expenditure as they transitioned to peacetime economies focused on reconstruction and development. Yet the emerging bipolar order quickly reversed this trend. The cold war era saw rapid escalation in perceived threats, rising military spending and a nuclear arms race. Global military spending nearly doubled between 1960 and 1980, reaching approximately $500 billion annually (United Nations, 1981). By the end of the cold war, the world total had reached an estimated $1.6 trillion (in 2023 prices).

The end of the cold war ushered in declines in military expenditure (1991–1998). Lessening demand for military products and services freed large sums of resources for non-military use. This nearly decade-long period saw global military spending fall by almost 30 per cent to $1.2 trillion. Worldwide, military procurement spending fell by almost half. Global employment in the arms industry shrank from over 17 million jobs to less than 9 million, and the number of soldiers declined from about 29 million to 22 million (Brzoska, 2007). By the late 1990s, however, this downward trend had reversed, and spending began to climb once more. In the 2000s, military expenditure trends were largely influenced by the United States, particularly through spending for operations conducted as part of the so-called "war on terror" after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. Between 2001 and 2009, global military expenditure rose an average of 5 per cent annually (SIPRI 2004, 2012 and 2024a).

Over the past 10 years, world military expenditure has risen even further. Continuous increases culminated in a record $2.7 trillion in 2024, the steepest year-on-year increase since at least 1988. Military spending climbed across all five global regions, even though a small group of countries, including the world's greatest powers, largely drove this upward trend. High and sustained growth in military expenditure has unfolded alongside the adoption and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The heavy concentration of global military spending reflects the unequal distribution of power among States. In 2024, the 10 largest spenders were responsible for about 73 per cent of total expenditure. This group includes all five permanent members of the United Nations Security

Figure 3: Global trends in government military spending, 2022–2024

2022–2024
Global trends

Military spending as a share of GDP rose **from 2.2–2.5%**

The military share of total government budgets increased **from 6.6–7.1%**

Regional highlights

Europe

Military spending as a share of GDP rose **from 2.3–2.9%**

The military share of total government budgets increased **from 5.9–7.3%**

Middle East

Military spending as a share of GDP rose **from 3.6–4.0%**

Asia and Oceania

The military share of total government budgets increased **from 6.8–7.5%**

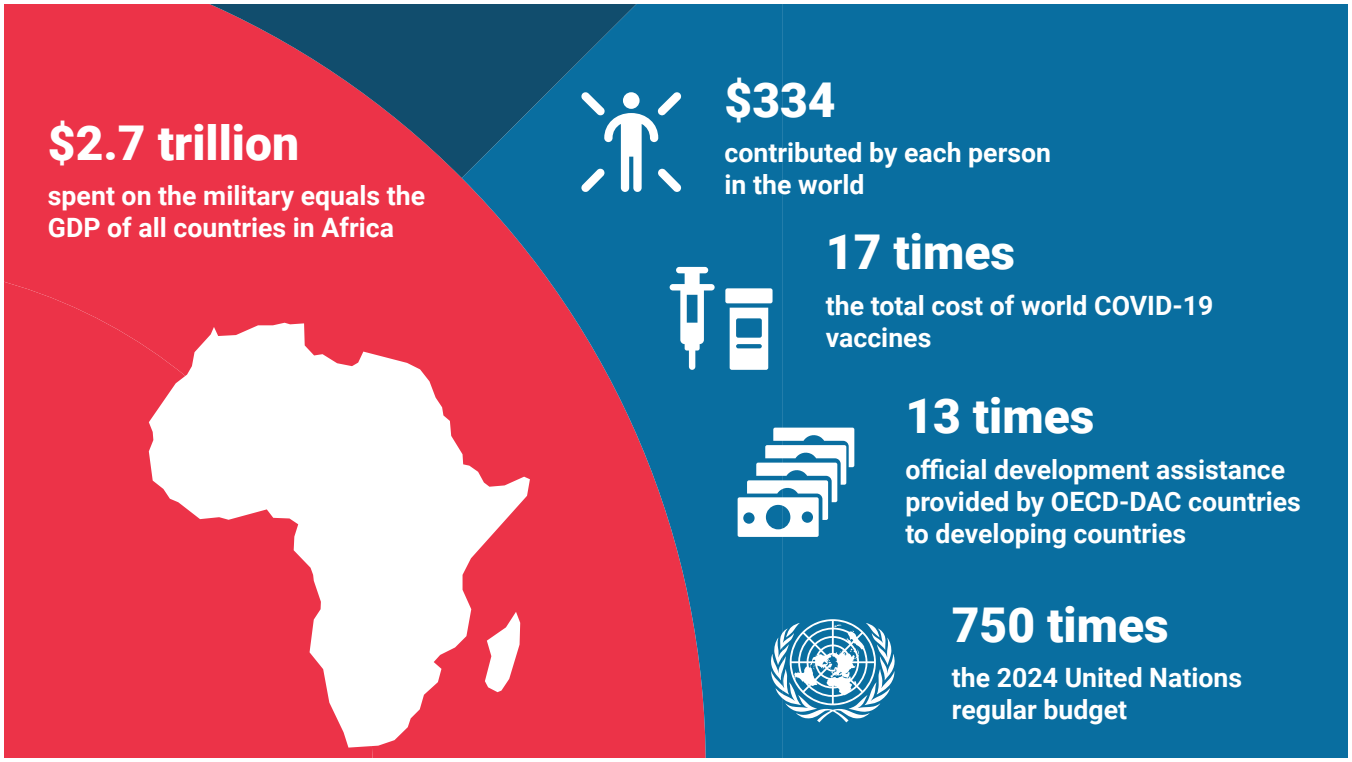
Council. They alone spent roughly $1.6 trillion, close to 60 per cent of the global total. The 10 largest-spending countries have driven most of the annual growth in global military spending, accounting for nearly three quarters of the absolute increase in 2024. An uneven distribution is also evident among regions. **Despite comprising about one quarter of Member States and nearly 20 per cent of the world's population, African nations collectively account for only 1.9 per cent of global military spending, less than that of the world's tenth-largest military spender alone.**

Beyond measuring military spending in **absolute monetary values**, a widely used indicator of the economic burden of military-related activities entails comparing military expenditure to economic output. One common measure is military expenditure as a percentage of GDP. In many countries, with noteworthy exceptions, the share of GDP going to the military has declined substantially in recent years compared to periods during the cold war and the early years after it. In 2024, global military expenditures accounted for 2.5 per cent of world GDP, substantially less than estimates during the cold war, when States collectively allocated about 5 to 8 per cent of the world's disposable resources to military activities.

As with the absolute value of military spending, military expenditure as a share of GDP varies considerably across geographic regions. In the Middle East, abundant oil revenues have allowed States to spend an average of 4 per cent of GDP on their armed forces, funding both expansion and modernization. By contrast, countries in the Americas have devoted, on average, just 1.3 per cent of GDP to military budgets, reflecting a region characterized by relatively fewer inter-State conflicts and rivalries. These stark differences reveal how both strategic priorities and fiscal capacity can affect military spending and subsequently the military burden.

Another important perspective comes from the share of total government expenditure devoted to the military. This measure offers insights into a government's annual budget priorities and highlights trade-offs between military outlays and civilian investments in areas such as health, education and infrastructure. Following the cold war, military allocations fell from approximately 11 per cent of government budgets to 7.1 per cent in 2024. Over

Figure 4: How much is global military spending in 2024?



a similar period, social spending claimed a steadily larger slice of national budgets. In countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), for example, social outlays rose from about 40 per cent of general government expenditure in 1995 to 49 per cent in 2022 (OECD, 2024). While the same measures are not available for other country groups, a similar trend can be observed. In lower-middle-income States, health spending climbed from 4.6 per cent of government budgets in 2002 to 5.1 per cent in 2018.[3]

Although these long-term trends point to declining military spending as a share of GDP and government expenditure, both measures have ticked upwards since 2022. Globally, military spending as a share of GDP edged up from 2.2 to 2.5 per cent between 2022 and 2024, reflecting faster growth in military expenditure than in overall economic output. Europe and the Middle East saw the most pronounced rises, with military burdens rising from 2.3 to 2.9 per cent of GDP and 3.6 to 4.0 per cent, respectively. The proportion of government budgets allocated to the military climbed from 6.6 to 7.1 per cent worldwide during the same period. The largest increases were in Europe (from 5.9 to 7.3 per cent) followed by Asia and Oceania (from 6.8 to 7.5 per cent) (SIPRI, 2024a).

The recent rise of military expenditures on all three measures underscores the powerful influence that major conventional conflicts and geopolitical tensions exert on national spending priorities. Even as many countries maintain lower military burdens than in the 1980s and 1990s, recent spikes reveal how security concerns can swiftly reassert themselves, shifting government priorities, and propelling regional and global military expenditure upwards.

Although today's military budgets represent a smaller proportion of national budgets and economic output than during the height of the cold war or other periods of polarization, absolute sums devoted to military activities have reached unprecedented levels. Sustained global economic growth means that even a smaller share of GDP or government expenditure devoted to the military now amounts to trillions of dollars spent on personnel, procurement, research and development, bases and operations – far exceeding levels in earlier decades (Armstrong, 2022).

To better comprehend the $2.7 trillion allocated in one year to global military spending, this amount equates to every person in the world contributing $334. It is equivalent to about 17 times total global spending on COVID-19 vaccines (including vaccination programmes), the size of the entire GDP of all African countries, almost 13 times the amount of official development assistance provided by OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries in 2024, and 750 times the 2024 United Nations regular budget (OECD 2025b, IMF 2025a, Mishra, 2021; UN News, 2023).

Table 1: Projected world military expenditure for 2025, 2030 and 2035 (in billion US dollars)

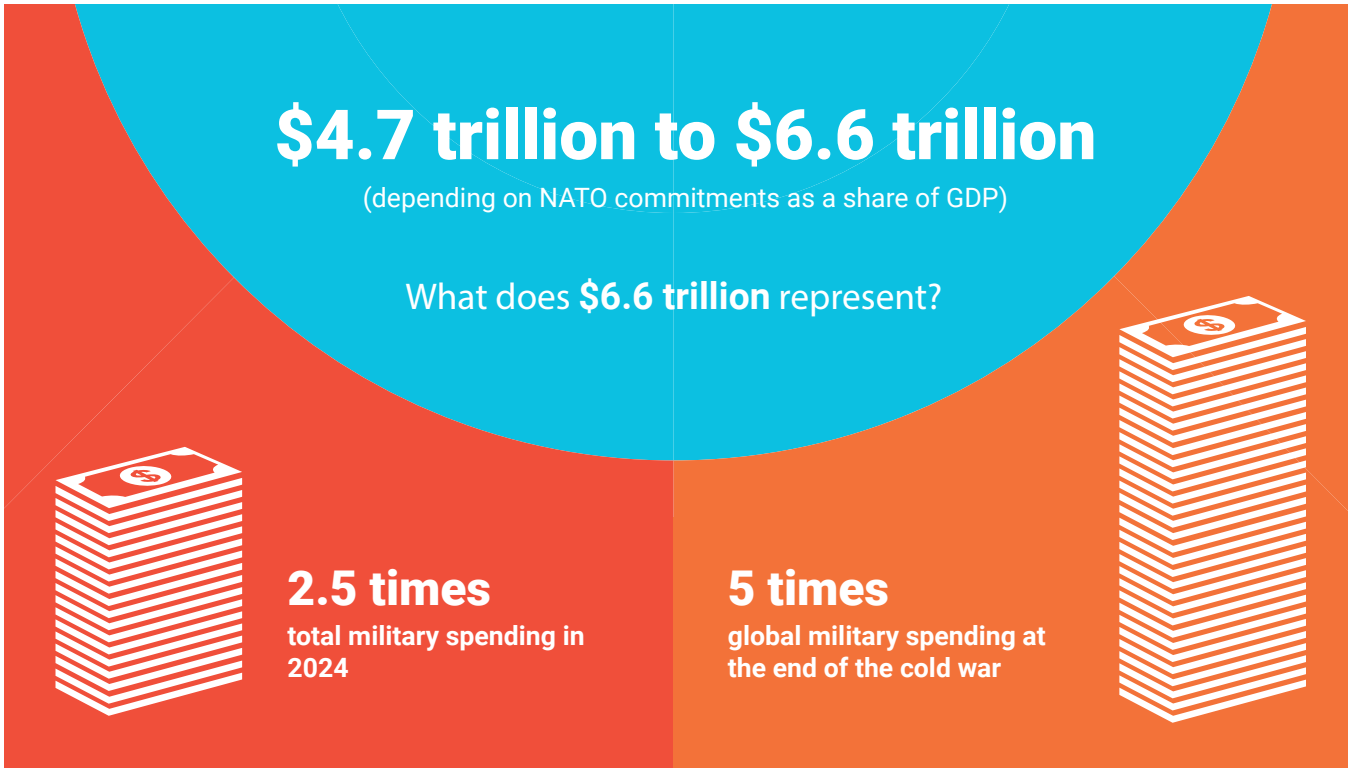
	AVERAGE 5 YEAR GROWTH	3 PER CENT OF GDP	4 PER CENT OF GDP	5 PER CENT OF GDP
2025	2,793	3,003	3,579	4,155
2030	3,513	3,733	4,453	5,174
2035	4,419	4,749	5,686	6,624

Notes: 2023 prices. Average growth of NATO and rest of the world spending as a percentage of GDP.

Source: Based on United Nations estimates.

3 See the World Health Organization's Global Health Expenditure database at apps.who.int/nha/database. Data were retrieved on 4 April 2025.

Figure 5: Projected world military expenditure by 2035



The total estimated cost to lift 700 million people out of hunger and malnutrition by 2030 would require an additional $93 billion per year or roughly $550 billion for the next six years (von Braun et al., 2024). The resources allocated to the military worldwide in 2024 alone were 29 times what is needed per year and almost five times the total amount needed until 2030.

Despite record levels of world military spending, strong indications suggest that this trend will continue to tick up. Table 1 presents illustrative projections for 2025, 2030 and 2035. While these scenarios are not precise forecasts, none appear unlikely given current security or economic conditions. Assuming an average annual growth rate of 4.7 per cent (average growth rate in global military expenditure over the last five years), military spending could reach $3.5 trillion in 2030 and exceed $4.4 trillion by 2035.

Considering the current geopolitical and security architecture and announced medium- to long-term spending commitments by numerous Member States, notably those in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), global discussions have taken up the possibility that global military expenditure will cross the $6 trillion mark by 2035 (table 1). For all non-NATO countries, the average military spending growth rate of 4.3 per cent for 2020–2024 was used to project spending until 2035. This was combined with NATO member State military spending reaching 3, 4 and 5 per cent of GDP, in line with the commitment made at the 2025 NATO Summit to invest 5 per cent annually by 2035 (NATO, 2025). In these scenarios, world military spending would reach between $4.7 trillion and $6.6 trillion by 2035, depending on the exact percentage of GDP that NATO countries commit to their militaries. **The possible $6.6 trillion in world military expenditure is almost five times the level at the end of the cold war, six times the lowest global level (1998) and two and a half times the level spent in 2024**.

The evidence presented underscores the massive scale of these resources. It also points to shifting priorities that reflect the evolution of the global security architecture and social spending. **Despite rising expenditures, however, global security has continued to deteriorate, calling into question the effectiveness of more military spending to enhance security**.

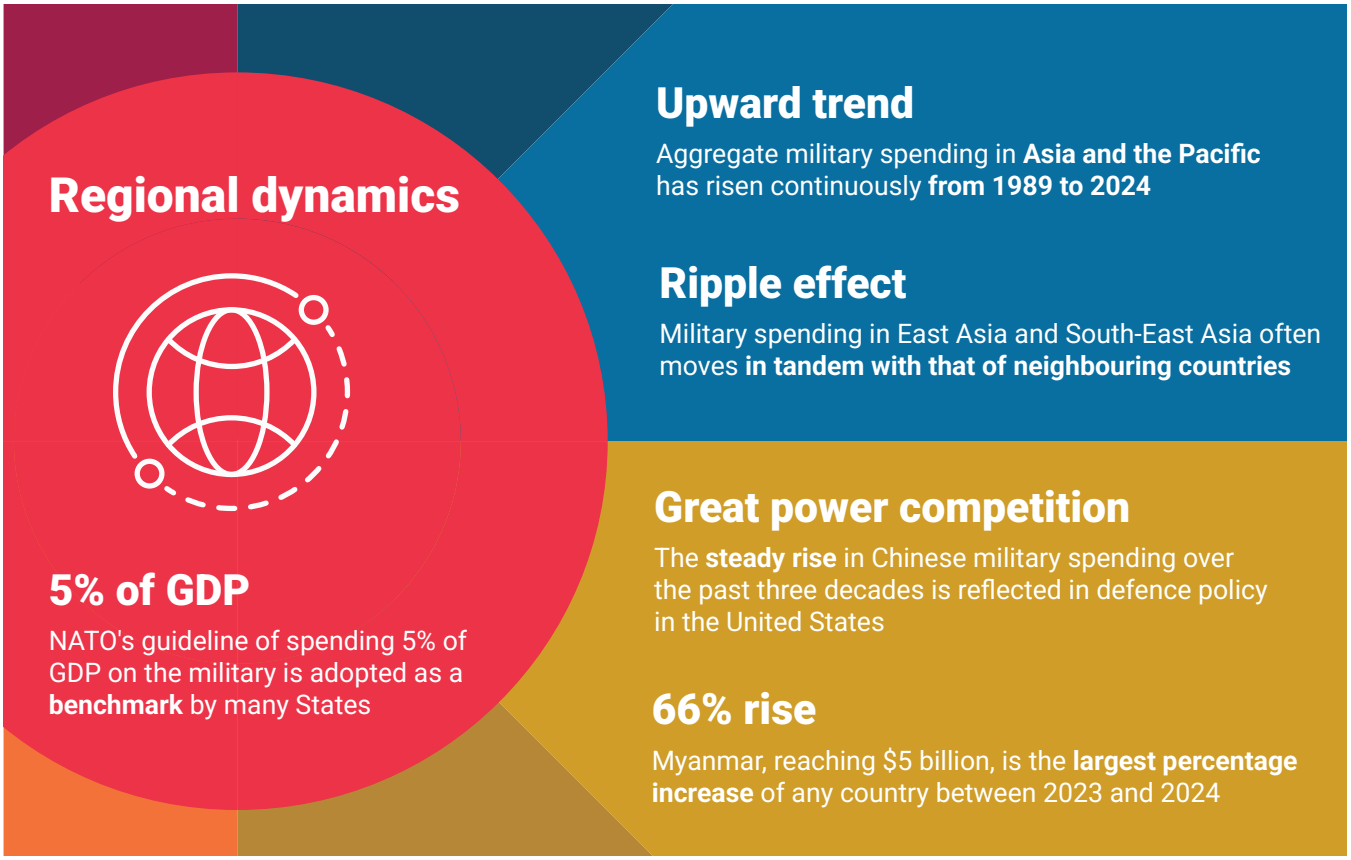
3. The drivers and composition of military expenditure

3. The drivers and composition of military expenditure

3.1 An evolving security landscape

Recent surges in military expenditure result from a series of mutually reinforcing shocks that have reshaped the strategic outlook of many States (SIPRI, 2025b; United Nations, 2023a). The full-scale invasion of Ukraine has prompted the most significant rearmament in Europe since the end of the cold war (European Commission, 2025a). In the Middle East, ongoing wars, cycles of instability and broader regional tensions continue to fuel military build-ups. In the Indo-Pacific, intensifying rivalries, renewed frictions among States and increasingly assertive postures have heightened what, for many countries, constitute not only threat perceptions but existential security concerns, driving military expenditure to regional highs. Rapid advances in technologies such as autonomous weapon systems, cyberwarfare, hypersonic missiles, outer space capabilities and artificial intelligence are galvanizing costly modernization cycles in major and emerging military powers. Alliance benchmarks, most visibly the NATO guideline of allocating 5 per cent of GDP to the military, have converted pressures to share the collective security burden into multi-year budgetary commitments that drive military expenditure to record national and alliance-wide levels (McInnis et al., 2024). As a consequence, global military spending now exceeds earlier peaks with expectations of further increases in the years to come.

Figure 6: Multiple drivers of rising military expenditure



3.2 Interlocking drivers of military spending

Military expenditures are influenced by an intricate mix of economic, political, institutional and security factors operating at national, regional and global levels (United Nations, 2023b; Albalate, Bel and Elias-Moreno, 2012; Bove and Nistico, 2014; Dunne and Perlo-Freeman, 2003; Smith, 1989). These drivers rarely operate in isolation. Security assessments, alliance commitments, industrial interests, decision-making cultures and economic capacity combine differently in each national context. Appreciating how these elements interact is essential in understanding present spending patterns and identifying opportunities to balance resources between military expenditure and sustainable development.

Security considerations remain the most consistent influence on global military expenditures. The current environment is marked by overlapping threats, including growing competition among major powers, unresolved inter-State disputes, protracted intra-State conflicts, and the persistence of organized crime and terrorism. In 2024, more than 100 of 149 countries with available data increased their military spending.

The war in Ukraine alone propelled spending to record levels in both the Russian Federation and Ukraine. It prompted many European countries to raise military expenditure in response to heightened regional insecurity and threat perceptions. In the Middle East, ongoing wars, cycles of instability and broader regional tensions have not only driven up military spending by warring parties but also prompted neighbouring countries to increase military expenditure to mitigate external risks of conflict spillover. Comparable dynamics are evident elsewhere. In Myanmar, the junta's campaign against internal opposition forces pushed military expenditure to $5 billion in 2024, a 66 per cent increase over the previous year and the largest percentage rise worldwide (SIPRI, 2024a). The conflict has heightened the risk of violence and refugee flows into Bangladesh, India and Thailand (Ratcliffe, 2025; Graceffo, 2024). In Africa, ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has propelled substantial increases in national military spending and expenditure by countries in the surrounding region and beyond, notably, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania. Terrorist activities across the Sahel and Horn of Africa, by groups such as the Islamic State West Africa Province, Al-Shabaab, Jama'Atu Ahlis-sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-jihad (Boko Haram) and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, have severely undermined internal stability. In response, countries, including Algeria, Burkina Faso and Kenya, have notably increased military allocations (Cordesman, 2018; SIPRI, 2024a). Until the recent withdrawal of French forces, international responses such as Operation Barkhane and the G5 Sahel Joint Force similarly strengthened military strategies, influencing military expenditures, including by France (Ndiaga, 2023; Doxsee, Thompson and Harris, 2022).

Political factors add another layer of complexity. Country rivalries (e.g., the escalation of hostilities between India and Pakistan), great power competition and ongoing tensions also make military expenditure rise. In regions with persistent rivalries, such as East Asia and South-East Asia, military expenditure often moves in tandem across countries, so that when one nation boosts its military spending, neighbours tend to follow (Skogstad, 2016; Yesilyurt and Elhorst, 2017). This action-reaction cycle has driven continuous growth in aggregate regional military expenditure in Asia and Oceania since 1989 (SIPRI, 2024a). The steady rise in Chinese military spending and capability over the past three decades is now reflected in defence policy in the United States, where military expenditure decisions specifically relate to great power competition and deterrence (Schramm, 2024; United States of America, Department of Defense, 2022 and 2023).

Recent geopolitical uncertainties have led many Governments to prioritize security through deterrence and military strength. Governments once hesitant to increase military spending now endorse long-term increases and multi-year procurement plans – with broad political support. In this environment, military expenditure is seen as a necessity to manage an increasingly unpredictable world. While rising military expenditure is not a new phenomenon, its recent intensification poses the risk of it becoming "normalized" and regarded as inevitable.

Economic circumstances are equally significant. A strong economy provides the fiscal space required for larger military allocations, helping to explain why States with the largest GDPs are also the biggest military spenders. Growth in GDP and growth in military spending tend to move together over time, as illustrated by China, India and Japan (SIPRI, 2024a). Conversely, economic contraction often restrains military expenditure. During the global financial crisis of 2008, many advanced

economies facing declining output and fiscal austerity reduced expenditure on the military.

Today, rising military spending is taking place amid high debt burdens and fiscal constraints in both developed and developing countries. For developing countries in particular, the impact is twofold: scarce domestic resources are diverted away from development priorities, even as international support through official development assistance is simultaneously reduced.

The political economy of the military industrial complex further shapes military allocations. In 2023, the revenue of the world's 100 largest arms companies amounted to $632 billion (Scarazzato et al., 2023). Through lobbying, political contributions and revolving door employment, major arms companies exercise influence to sustain large-scale acquisition programmes beyond immediate strategic needs (Reaching Critical Will, n.d.). Many also sponsor research institutes that amplify perceptions of threats and advocate additional procurement, which ultimately leads to greater military expenditure (Alsbergas and Shankar, 2020; Freeman, 2023).

Linked to the arms industry and production of weapons is technological advancement and the push by States, partly genuine and partly through the military industrial complex, to gain military superiority. As new technologies such as artificial intelligence, hypersonics and quantum computing emerge, militaries are pressured to modernize. Illustrative examples include the United States allocating roughly $55 billion in 2025 to developing emerging technologies in space and command, control, communications, computers and intelligence (C4I) systems, and Japan investing about $3.6 billion on missile defence against hypersonic and ballistic missile threats (Villano, 2024; United States of America, Department of Defense, 2024; Daisuke, 2024).

A growing number of States seeks self-reliance in arms production. A self-sufficient arms industry is seen as important for security, as arms delivery is not subject to supply side constraints such as embargoes, sanctions and other disruptions linked to political interdependence (Bitzinger, 2015). Building such capacity demands long-term investment in industrial infrastructure, however, adding further upward pressure on military budgets.

3.3 Erosion of collective arms control agreements

Interlocking drivers of military expenditure have emerged as the arms control architecture has weakened. Renewed and intensified geostrategic competition has eroded the bilateral strategic arms control regime between the Russian Federation and the United States. The same competition has stymied progress in multilateral instruments aimed at ensuring the non-proliferation, non-testing and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. The resulting deficit of trust underscores the urgency of revitalizing collective security instruments, if the international community is to prevent further escalation and reverse the upward trend in global military spending.

3.4 Compositions of military expenditure

Not all military spending serves the same purpose. Based on circumstantial, strategic security needs, increases in some components can be the main contributors to a rise in aggregate spending. Generally, spending can be divided into four categories: personnel, operations and maintenance, procurement and construction, and research and development. Examining the level of and changes among these categories can reveal much about a State's force structure and strategic priorities as well as wider social and economic effects.

3.4.1 Personnel expenditure

Military expenditure on personnel covers salaries, pensions and social services for both uniformed and civilian staff. **In most countries, this is the largest single item. It absorbs over two thirds of the military budget** in many developing States in Africa and parts of Asia,[4] while falling to around 38 per cent on average among developed countries and members of NATO (NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2025; Wuthnow and Saunders, 2017).

4 Countries in Africa include Gabon, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania. Countries in Asia include India, Malaysia, Philippines, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka.

3.4.2 Operations and maintenance expenditure

Operations and maintenance spending finances the daily functioning of armed forces, including training, fuel, logistics, base support and extra costs of deployments abroad. Such expenditure is essential to readiness and the reliability of existing capabilities. The share of spending devoted to this category is normally second only to personnel, yet it varies widely by country and priorities (Becker, 2021). **States with extensive overseas operations or global military bases may spend over 40 per cent of their budgets on these running costs**.

3.4.3 Procurement and construction expenditure

Procurement and construction comprise capital investment in weapons, equipment and military infrastructure, whether sourced domestically or imported. Because **major acquisitions occur in cycles, this share can fluctuate sharply from year to year, rising above 60 per cent during peak purchase periods and falling to zero when programmes conclude**. For instance, Bulgaria allocated approximately 2 per cent of its military budget to procurement and construction in 2014. This figure surged to 61 per cent in 2019 before receding to around 15 per cent in 2020 (NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2025). Sudden spikes are most visible in lower-income States, where even modest equipment purchases translate into large one-year increases. For example, when Uganda acquired a fleet of armored personnel carriers in 2020, its procurement share leapt from 25 per cent of total military spending to 68 per cent (SIPRI, 2024a).[5]

3.4.4 Research and development expenditure

Research and development expenditure supports next-generation systems and the integration of emerging technologies. Although it is usually the smallest spending category, it can be substantial for major military powers that prioritize strategic advantage and force projection. By contrast, in many low-income countries, annual military spending on research and development remains minimal or absent.

Figure 7: Categories of military expenditure

5 See also various budget expenditure documents of the Government of Uganda, 2018–2020, available at https://budget.finance.go.ug/.

4. The impacts of military expenditure

4. The impacts of military expenditure

Rising global military expenditure marks a shift in how conflicts, rivalries and geopolitical tensions are managed. It implies moving away from diplomacy and multilateralism and towards more protectionist and militarized strategies. Rather than fostering development or security, such policies risk deepening instability – for both present and future generations.

4.1 Military expenditure and space for prevention, diplomacy and sustaining peace

The steady rise in global military expenditure is reshaping the international security landscape in ways that constrain both fiscal and political space for prevention, diplomacy and dialogue. While States cite national security concerns to justify these increases, the cumulative effect has been to weaken multilateralism, sideline preventive mechanisms and narrow channels for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Drift from multilateralism

With more resources and political capital spent on armaments, fewer opportunities remain for cooperation. This represents not only a shift in national spending priorities but also a broader drift away from multilateralism and collective security principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Disputes once mediated through dialogue and cooperative security arrangements are increasingly addressed through unilateral action and military posturing. Such trends weaken international institutions, reduce the space for collective bargaining and undermine frameworks designed to manage tensions before they escalate into open conflict.

Fiscal trade-offs and protectionist agendas

Rising military expenditure carries major fiscal trade-offs. The diversion of public resources to defence often comes at the expense of investment in prevention and peacebuilding agendas essential for stability. In many contexts, this dynamic is compounded by protectionist agendas in which national resilience is narrowly conceived in terms of self-sufficiency and military power, rather than through inclusive growth, regional cooperation and international solidarity. Yet history has shown that military build-ups do not guarantee security. Rather, they frequently fuel arms races, increase risks of miscalculation and crowd out investments that create conditions for peace and resilience.

Prevention and sustaining peace

Prevention yields substantial dividends over time, measured both in terms of stability and cost savings. When preventive capacities are underfunded or politically marginalized, the international system defaults to short-term crisis responses rather than sustained engagement, risk reduction and de-escalation. The imbalance created by rising military expenditure compounds these tendencies by further narrowing channels for preventive diplomacy.

Diplomatic engagement, confidence-building measures and inclusive dialogue platforms require predictable resources and long-term political commitment. When these remain weaker than military tools, disputes intensify more rapidly, opportunities for dialogue contract, and paths back to negotiation become more difficult and costly.

Erosion of trust and cooperative security

Trust among States is a critical enabler of international cooperation. Rising military expenditure combined with diminished cooperative security frameworks undermines predictability and transparency, reducing mechanisms for States to communicate, manage incidents and avert escalation. As these arrangements erode, mistrust deepens and festers, and the multilateral system loses credibility at precisely the moment when it is needed most. The absence of functioning channels for dialogue, verification and transparency increases uncertainty, fuels perceptions of threats and heightens risks of inadvertent escalation.

Taken together, these dynamics produce a tighter, more brittle operating environment for multilateral cooperation. Rising military expenditure, declining investment in preventive capacities, and the erosion of arms control and confidence-building frameworks are pushing the international community further from multilateralism and cooperative security. The net effect is not greater safety but heightened insecurity. The current environment is one in which risks escalate quickly, peaceful solutions become harder to sustain, and resources are systematically diverted from addressing the structural drivers of instability – namely, poverty, inequality, exclusion, climate change and environmental degradation.

Ultimately, higher military budgets and more weapons risk entrenching mistrust, undermining dialogue and weakening institutions that safeguard peace. By moving away from multilateralism, States increase both the fragility of cooperation and the costs of confrontation. Reversing this trend calls for a renewed commitment to diplomacy, prevention and sustaining peace as collective instruments that remain the most effective guarantees of security for present and future generations.

4.2 The world is lagging on sustainable development for all

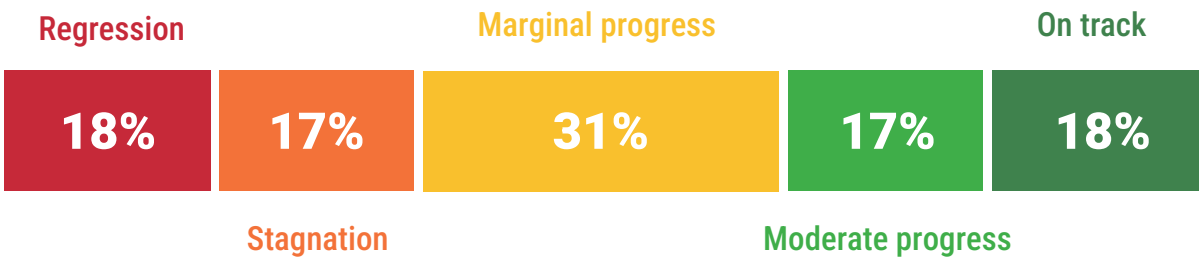
At its core, **sustainable development is about meeting present needs while safeguarding the ability of future generations to meet their needs, a principle increasingly strained by current policy choices and financing gaps**. The 2030 Agenda translates this broad vision into tangible goals and targets, providing a global roadmap: *"This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom"* (paragraph 1, preamble).

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025 highlights significant roadblocks to achieving the goals by their 2030 deadline. Only 35 per cent show adequate progress – 18 per cent are on track and 17 per cent are making moderate progress. In contrast, 48 per cent of targets show insufficient progress, including 31 per cent with only marginal gains and 17 per cent with no progress at all. Most concerning, 18 per cent of targets have regressed below 2015 baseline levels (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2025).

These headline measures do not imply the world is getting systematically worse. They do, however, mean that we, as humanity, are falling short on ambition. For example, while poverty rates are expected to decline across all regions, only one in five countries is on track to meet the target of halving the national poverty rate by 2030. School completion rates are improving and gender gaps in education are narrowing. Yet learning outcomes in many countries are declining. In 2023, 273 million children and youth remained out of school. Globally, 9 in 10 people now have electricity, yet some regions experience persistent gaps in connectivity that leave nearly half the population without access (ibid.).

The uneven nature of progress signals that despite some gains, structural challenges and persistent inequalities undermine broader development advances. Furthermore, the promise of the 2030 Agenda lies not only in advancing individual goals but in integrated progress across all of them, leaving no one behind.

Figure 8: Overall progress on the Sustainable Development Goals



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2025.

4.2.1 A significant financing gap

The 2030 Agenda promises more peaceful, inclusive societies, an aspiration calling for sustained political will, financial investment and global cooperation.[6] **Wide financing gaps, however, threaten to turn this promise into an empty one**. Current estimates by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) point to a $4 trillion annual shortfall in finance to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, with nearly half related to energy and climate-related needs (UNCTAD, 2023a). OECD projections suggest that the financing gap for the Goals could reach $6.4 trillion by 2030 if it continues to grow at the rate from 2015–2022 (OECD, 2025a). The shortfall persists despite commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and reaffirmed in the 2025 Sevilla Commitment and Platform for Action. Both agreements recognized that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires mobilizing diverse resources, spanning public and private finance.

Figure 9: Additional allocations in military expenditure in 2024 and 2030

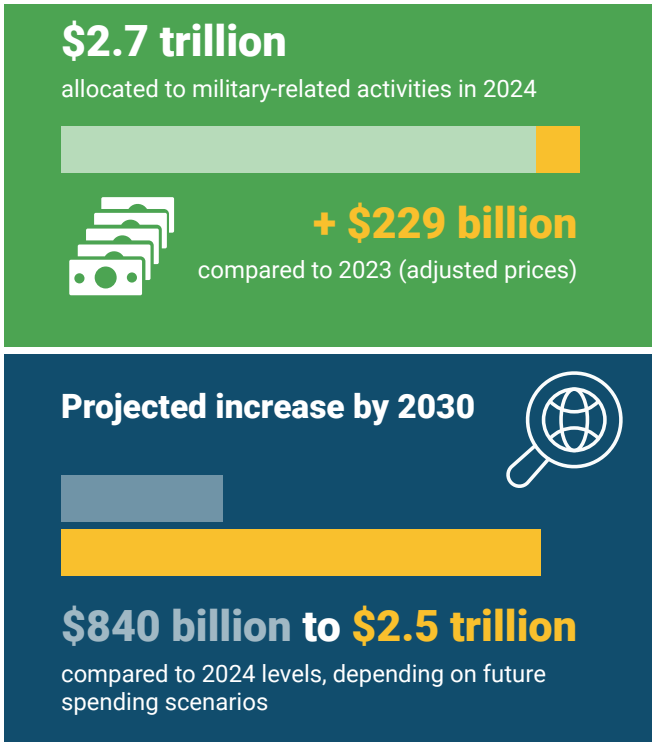
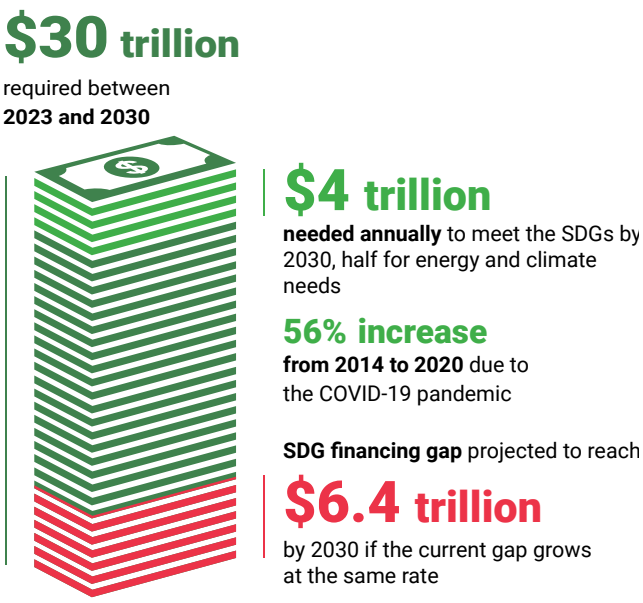


Figure 10: Financing gaps impede the Sustainable Development Goals



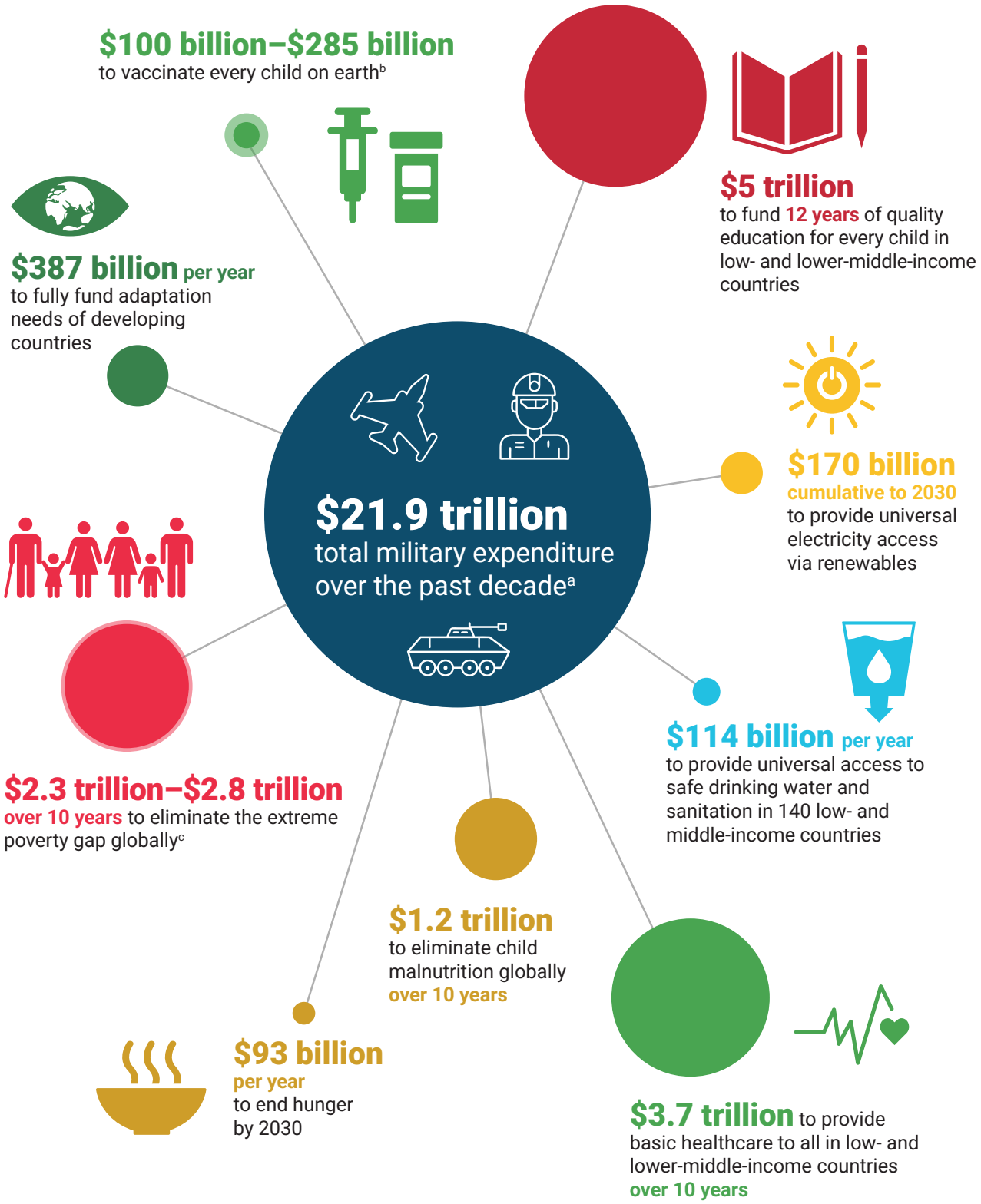
> **The world's total military expenditure over the past decade, estimated at $21.9 trillion, could have a transformative global impact if applied to development** (figure 11).

Financing challenges for sustainable development are not new. Even before the 2030 Agenda, developing countries faced significant funding gaps[7] (figure 12). Five years into the Agenda, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically worsened the situation, creating a "scissors effect" of dramatically increased needs and declining resources. Pandemic-driven revenue losses and surging emergency

6 The 2030 Agenda included means of implementation under Goal 17: mobilizing financial resources, enhancing technology transfer, and building capacity across countries, through collaboration among Governments, civil society, the private sector and international organizations. These commitments were further anchored in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which outlined a framework for resource mobilization from the private and public sectors, and detailed commitments on finance for sustainable development and a range of cooperation issues.

7 According to OECD, the annual financing gap neared $2.5 trillion for developing countries in 2014, before the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted. By 2020, the gap surged to $3.9 trillion, a 56 per cent increase, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic's pressure on financial resources (OECD, 2025a).

Figure 11: The world's total military expenditure over the past decade



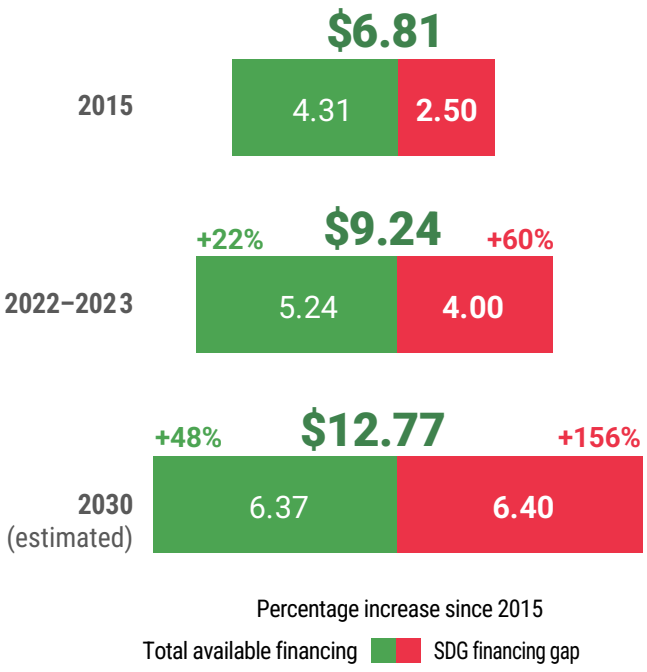
Note:

a Total military expenditure over the past decade estimated at $21.9 trillion (2015-2024 in constant 2023 dollars).

b The range is $45.51 to $129.57 per child (UNICEF, 2024).

c Estimate uses the World Bank's revised international poverty line of $3.00/day (June 2025 update), and the Our World in Data "total shortfall from extreme poverty" series (values in 2021, international dollars), which sums the global poverty gap or the theoretical cash transfers needed to bring everyone to the line. The latest global nowcast (2024–2025) implies around $230 billion to $280 billion per year.

Figure 12: Total financing needs for the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030 (in trillion US dollars)



Source: OECD, 2025a, p. 26.

spending[8] forced many Governments to reprioritize budgets. Limited public and private investments, high debt levels and constrained fiscal space compounded the negative effects of the pandemic (OECD, 2025a).

Domestic financing for sustainable development has come under mounting pressure from debt burdens. Greater military expenditure is likely to add to already high levels of public debt, projected to reach 100 per cent of global GDP by 2030.[9] Governments are already loosening fiscal safeguards to accommodate military expenditure, a move that risks crowding out financial resources for development and heightening the risk of economic insecurity.

Trade disputes around the world put pressure on another important source of finance, especially for developing countries. The full scope of ongoing trade disputes is not yet known, but they could diminish global GDP as well as the GDP of countries dependent on trade. The combined shocks of smaller economies, reduced tax revenues and decreased resources from exports could further exacerbate pressure on financing for sustainable development.

In the five years between now and the deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals, the combination of increased military expenditure, declining official development assistance and budget reprioritizations could present a massive financing challenge. While more resources for the 2030 Agenda are available than in the past, they are still not enough. OECD calculates that funding for the Goals grew by 22 per cent between 2015 and 2022, but the financing gap widened by 60 per cent (OECD, 2025a). Recent announcements by several donors of cuts in official development assistance (Loft and Brien, 2025; Ravelo, 2023) have brought attention to the role of these funds as fundamental to the international commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. Even though such assistance represents only a small portion of total financing flows to developing countries, for many low-income countries, the impact is significant. ODI Global has estimated that recent decisions imply a 31 per cent reduction in official development assistance volumes over 2024–2029 (Pudussery and Gulrajani, 2025). Only four donor countries have met or exceeded the global goal of allocating 0.7 per cent of gross national income to official development assistance. Among OECD-DAC members, the share is only 0.37 per cent (OECD, 2025b).

According to the latest OECD data on development finance, DAC member countries cut official development assistance to $212.1 billion in 2024, a 7.1 per cent fall in real terms compared to 2023. This marked the first decrease in five years. Further, while such assistance had increased consistently until 2023, this growth was heavily influenced by flows to Ukraine. It was the largest beneficiary of official development assistance and concessional funding in 2023 for the second year in a row, receiving $38.9 billion (OECD, 2025b). Since 2020, the pandemic response and refugee support have also absorbed large shares of official development assistance (Grynspan and Razo, eds., 2024).

Shifts in official development assistance have impacted developing countries. According to UNCTAD, official development assistance for them fell from a peak figure

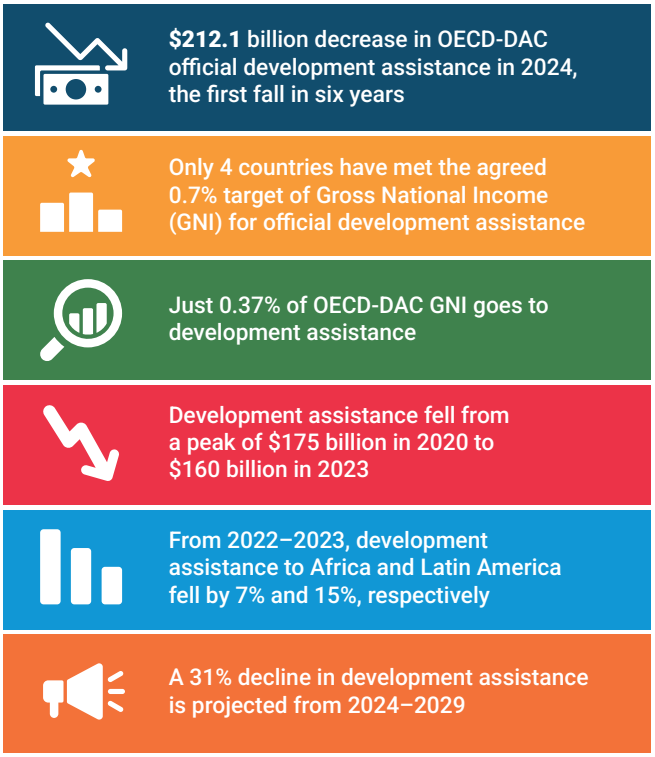
8 Post-pandemic challenges have two main drivers: a $689 billion drop in government revenues between 2019 and 2020, which accounted for over 80 per cent of the financing decline, and a $907 billion surge in emergency spending representing nearly 30 per cent of 2019 government revenues.

9 If current trends continue (IMF, 2025b).

of $175 billion in 2020 to $160 billion in 2023. Trends vary across regions. Official development assistance for Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean fell by nearly $8 billion in total. In 2023, Africa received $74 billion in official development assistance, only slightly above Asia and Oceania at $73 billion. Latin America and the Caribbean received $14 billion. In 2023, however, only Asia and Oceania experienced a rebound from the decline in 2022, growing by $4.8 billion (7.1 per cent). Official development assistance decreased the fastest for Latin America and the Caribbean from 2022–2023, declining by $2.3 billion (−14.5 per cent). Africa saw the biggest drop in absolute terms, losing $5.3 billion (−6.8 per cent) (UNCTAD 2025c).

In 2024, the estimated additional $229 billion (in 2023 prices) spent on military-related activities globally exceeded net additional long-term debt finance advanced to all developing countries, which stood at $204 billion as well as official development assistance (UNCTAD, 2025b). Based on possible projected scenarios of military spending levels, by 2030, the world could allocate between $840 billion and $2.5 trillion more to military spending than what was spent in 2024. This represents an enormous amount of financial resources that, if invested in sustainable development, would contribute significantly to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Figure 13: Trends in development assistance point down



4.3 Military expenditure and its systemic impact on development

4.3.1 Economic development amid uncertainty

Global economic growth has been sluggish over the last decade. According to the World Bank (2024a)**, the world could be on track for its slowest decade of global economic growth since 1960**. Lower global economic growth affects the economic prospects of developing countries (UNCTAD, 2025a). Global turbulence resulting in tighter financial markets disproportionately affects poorer countries. The situation is particularly worrisome for developing countries, which are on course to increase their debt from 70 percent of GDP in 2024 to 82 percent in 2030 (IMF, 2025b).

Greater military expenditure could exacerbate this trend, since a steep increase in such spending typically depresses economic growth (Saeed, 2023; Dunne and Tian, 2013a; Elshafei, et al., 2025). Even in the case of expansionary military expenditure, total GDP expansion might be coupled with a reduction in consumption for civil purposes.[10] Indeed, it can be argued that GDP allocated to "protection" does not provide a direct contribution to well-being, even though it can become an important complement if it provides security (Basu, 2024).

Rising military expenditure is likely to increase public debt, constraining the development prospects of future generations. Such expenditure has historically increased national debt burdens (Durucan and Yeşil, 2022), a pattern already in motion. For instance, the European Commission is allowing countries to use the National Escape Clause to increase military expenditure

10 This is, for instance, the paradigmatic case of the United States during the Second World War.

without breaking European Union fiscal rules (European Commission, 2025b). This potential shock is on top of worrying fiscal sustainability trends. First, the level of public debt is at the greatest level in recent history, and projected to reach 100 percent of GDP by 2030 – if current trends persist (IMF, 2025b). Second, public wealth is at historically low levels, shrinking to negative values in several developed countries.[11] Third, military expenditure could worsen already low and declining rates of economic growth. Combined, these trends could increase economic vulnerability and volatility (through rising credit risks and interest rates) and amplify policy uncertainty (including around inflation, new taxes or further cuts in non-military public spending).[12] **Global uncertainty is already at its highest level since the end of the cold war (figure 14). Additional uncertainty stemming from increased military expenditure is likely to deter investment** (Li and Sun, 2024), threatening potential growth (IMF, 2024), decent employment, public revenues and social spending (Karimi and Fan, 2025).

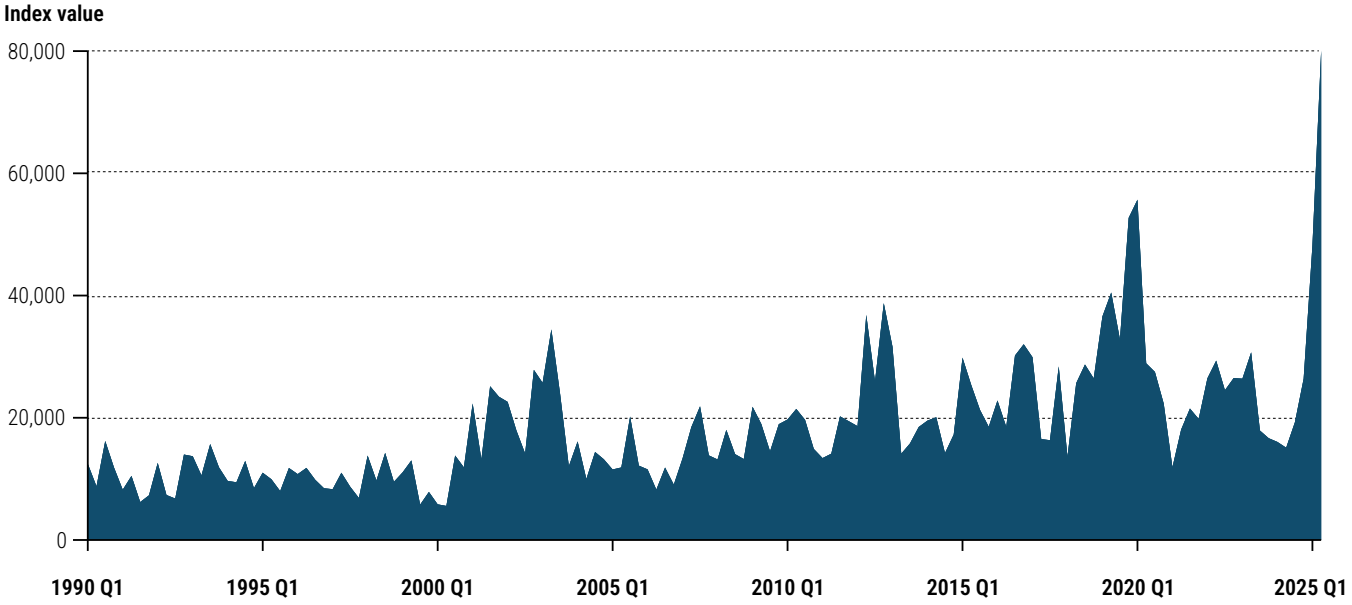
In conflicts, higher military expenditure is directly associated with destruction and economic losses. On average, countries involved in high-intensity conflicts experience a 50 per cent drop in GDP growth and a 30 per cent increase in inflation (Rother et al., 2016).

4.3.2 Social development under stress

Increased military expenditure is likely to crowd out social investment, affecting education, health, housing and different social insurance mechanisms.

Evidence from around the world confirms that on average, countries with greater military expenditure devote a lower share of government expenditure to social investment (figure 15). Government expenditure is not a fixed part of the economy. It can be expanded through additional revenues (mainly taxes) and debt. But flexibility is limited with both public debt and tax burdens at historically high levels (IMF, 2025b; UNU-WIDER, 2023).

Figure 14: World Uncertainty Index, 1990-2025



Source: based on Ahir, H, Bloom, N and Furceri, D (2022). "World Uncertainty Index". NBER Working paper. 2025q2 is provisional, based on data until May.

11 In several countries, public wealth (defined as the sum of all financial and non-financial assets, net of debt, held by Governments) has turned negative in recent years (Chancel et al., 2022).

12 See, for instance, IMF, 2024.

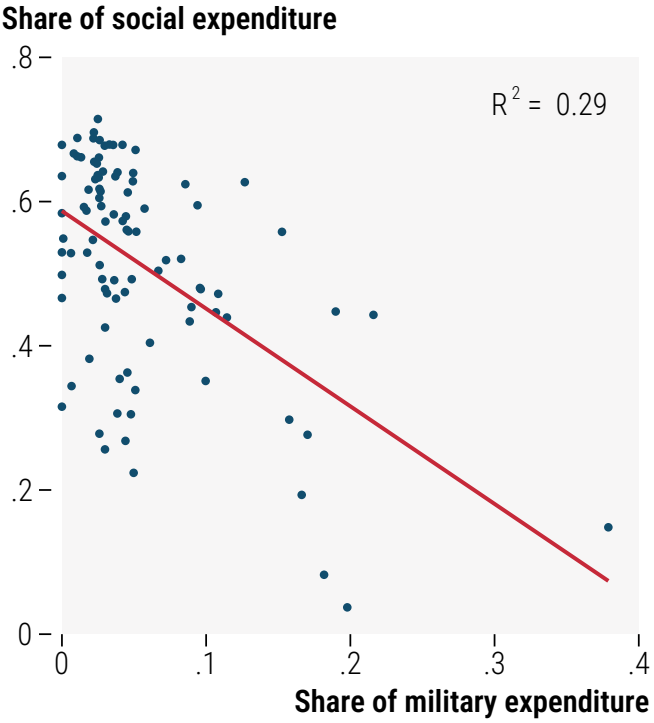
In low-income countries, debt servicing already represents 42 per cent of public expenditure on education and health, compared to 14 per cent in high-income countries (Ecker et al., 2023). Currently, 3.4 billion people live in countries that spend more on debt interest than health and education (UNCTAD, 2025a).

For countries with historical information, there is a clear indication of trade-offs between social and military spending (Clements, Gupta and Khamidova, 2021). In the United States, for instance, the progressive increase in social expenditure after the Second World War coincided with falling military expenditure, which declined from over 30 per cent of GDP during the war to around 10 per cent during the cold war to less than 5 per cent after 1991 (figure 16).

Taken together, global military expenditure is likely to decrease social investment. The negative effects will be local at first, restricted to countries that significantly boost military spending. But these effects can easily become global, touching even countries without expanding military budgets. This could take place through decreased international cooperation, which is on track to experience the strongest decline in history in 2025 after a significant reduction in 2024. If economic contagion spreads, rising interest rates or risk premiums could compound debt burdens, further restrict fiscal space and generate strongly negative consequences for social development (Jensen, 2025).

In armed conflicts, other social costs arise as military expenditure enables the use of force that may result in significant losses of life. Battle-related deaths are statistically associated with greater military expenditure (figure 17). Countries including such as the Central African Republic, Somalia and South Sudan have seen significant declines in overall life expectancy. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, life expectancy dropped by more than 11 years in 2023, likely an underestimation.[13] Beyond immediate fatalities, conflicts generate sharp increases in related injuries and disabilities, both physical and psychological, both of which rise in parallel with greater levels of military expenditure. These impacts deepen long-term development crises, strain health and education systems, and leave lasting social and economic scars.

Figure 15: Correlation between world social and military expenditure



Source: Own computations based on IMF Government Finance Statistics. Country average for 21st century, using available data.

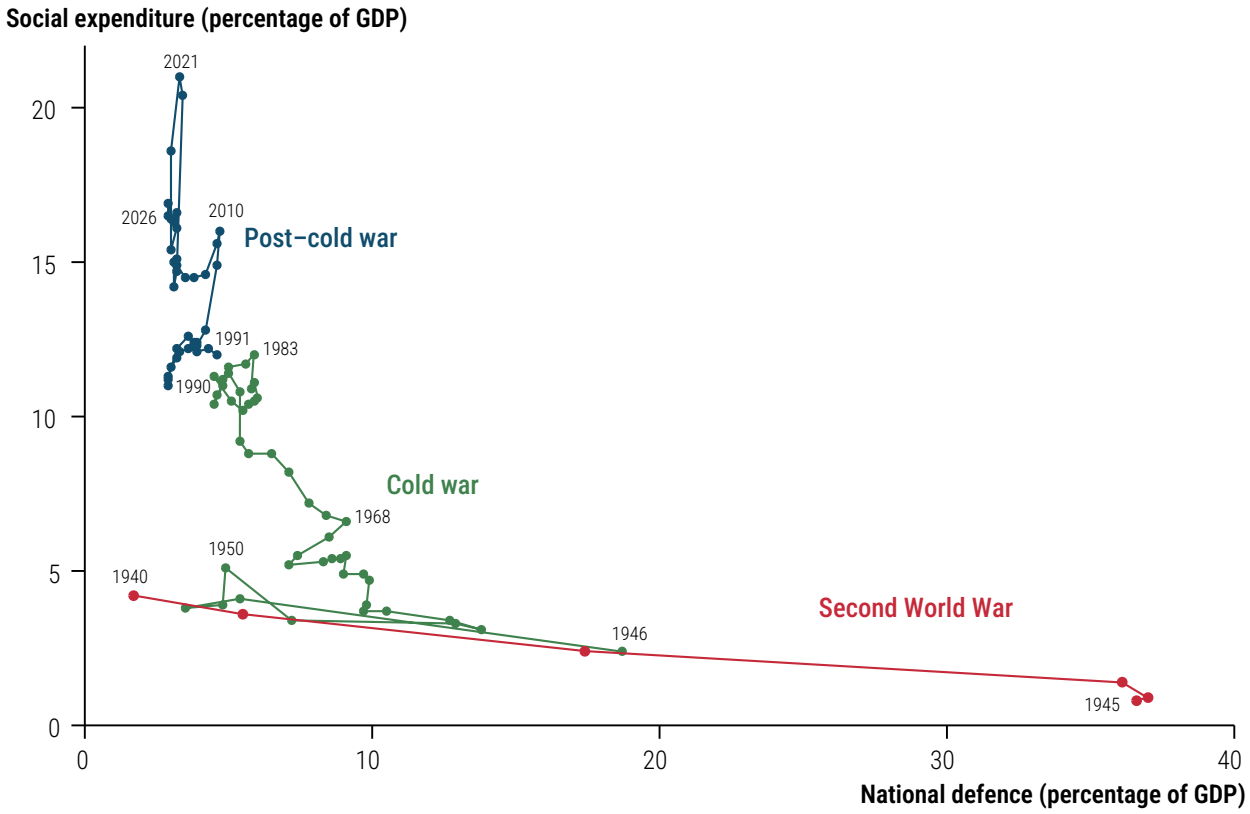
4.3.3 Planetary pressures and limited cooperation

Military expenditure harms the planet because it is emissions-intensive. **Each dollar allocated to the military generates more than twice the greenhouse gas emissions of a dollar spent elsewhere**.[14] Increased spending could therefore be expected to drive global emissions up significantly. A recent study shows that due to the high carbon intensity of military-related production, even if the world otherwise converges on pathways consistent with the Paris Agreement on climate change, a substantial rise

13 The estimate of life expectancy is based only on deaths due to traumatic injury, which are significantly underreported (Jamaluddine et al., 2025).

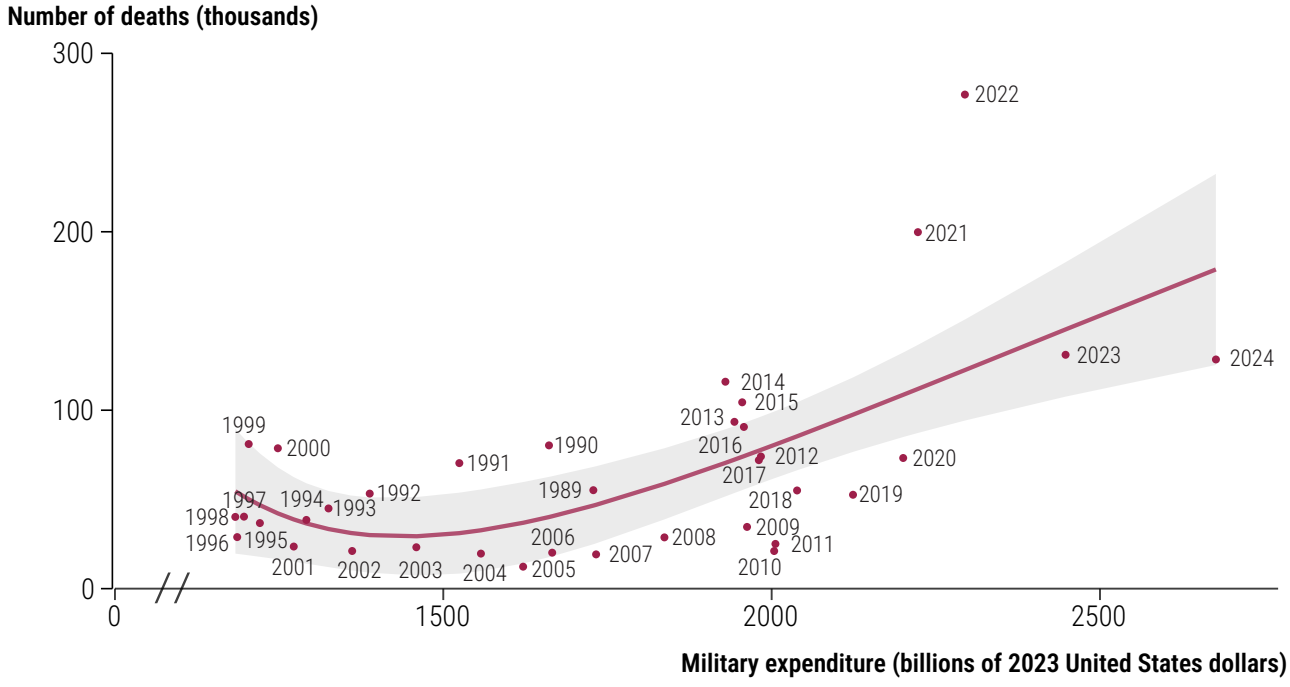
14 Globally, military expenditure represents 2.5 per cent of GDP and generates an estimated 5.5 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. The intensity of emissions from military expenditure is 125 per cent higher than for non-military expenditure (Parkinson and Cottrell, 2022).

Figure 16: Military and social expenditure in the United States, 1940–2025



Source: based on US Government Publishing Office.
Social expenditure ('human resources') includes education, training, employment and social services, health, medicare, social security and veteran benefits.
Based on annual data.

Figure 17: Relationship between battle related deaths and world military expenditure, 1989–2024



Source: Based on data from SIPRI and UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset v. 25.1
Trend constructed using a polynomial approximation, with a 95% confidence interval.

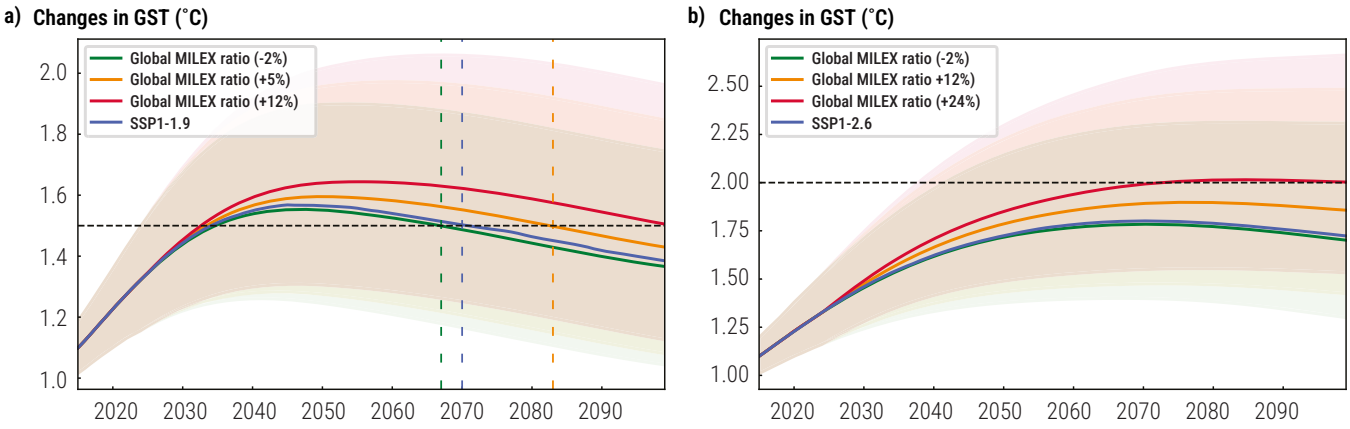
in military spending could render climate goals unattainable (Dong et al., 2025).

Environmental impacts extend beyond emissions. The logic behind increased military spending is often rooted in zero-sum thinking (Różycka-Tran et al., 2019). This erodes trust, fans pessimism about global cooperation and often leads to a retreat from climate action (Davidai and Tepper, 2023). A joint deviation from cooperation on peace and climate action is consequential for global security, as there is a high correlation between military expenditure and greenhouse gas emissions. A relatively small number of countries is mostly responsible for global trends on both fronts. China, India, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the European Union account for over 70 per cent of military expenditure (SIPRI, 2025b) and two thirds of global emissions (Ritchie, Rosado and Roser, 2024). The failure to act will be tragic in its costs. In a scenario of very high emissions, 190 million people could die from higher temperatures during the rest of the current century, mostly in developing countries.

4.4 The impact of increased military expenditure on the Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals face multifaceted challenges, exacerbated by geopolitical tensions, economic instability, declining global solidarity and gaps in finance. Obstacles to harnessing international trade, attracting investment in development, keeping pace with technological transformation and maintaining debt sustainability seriously constrain abilities to finance the Goals. The rapid global increase in military expenditure poses an additional fundamental challenge. While resource allocation is the prerogative of each Member State, including to address national security requirements, especially in fragile contexts, it is important to detail the various opportunity costs and crowding-out effects of military expenditure, which may displace funding for poverty eradication, public health, education and climate resilience (Knight, Loayza and

Figure 18: Projections of global military expenditure track greenhouse gas emissions



a *Projected changes in Ground Surface Temperature (GST) relative to the 1850–1900 mean under the Shared Socioeconomic Pathway 1 (SSP1)-1.9 baseline (blue line), as well as sensitivity scenarios with varying global military expenditure (MILEX) as a percentage of GDP (MILEX ratio): –2% (green line), +5% (orange line), and +12% (red line) compared to baseline.*

b *Similar projections for SSP1-2.6 baseline (blue) and sensitivity scenarios with varying global MILEX ratios: –2% (green line), +12% (orange line), and +24% (red line) compared to baseline. The shaded areas represent 95% confidence intervals for each scenario.*

Source: Dong et al 2025, https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-025-59877-x

Villanueva, 1996; Elgin et al., 2022; Dunne and Tian, 2013a; Dunne and Tian, 2013b; Kollias, Mylonidis and Paleologou, 2007; Deger and Smith, 1983).

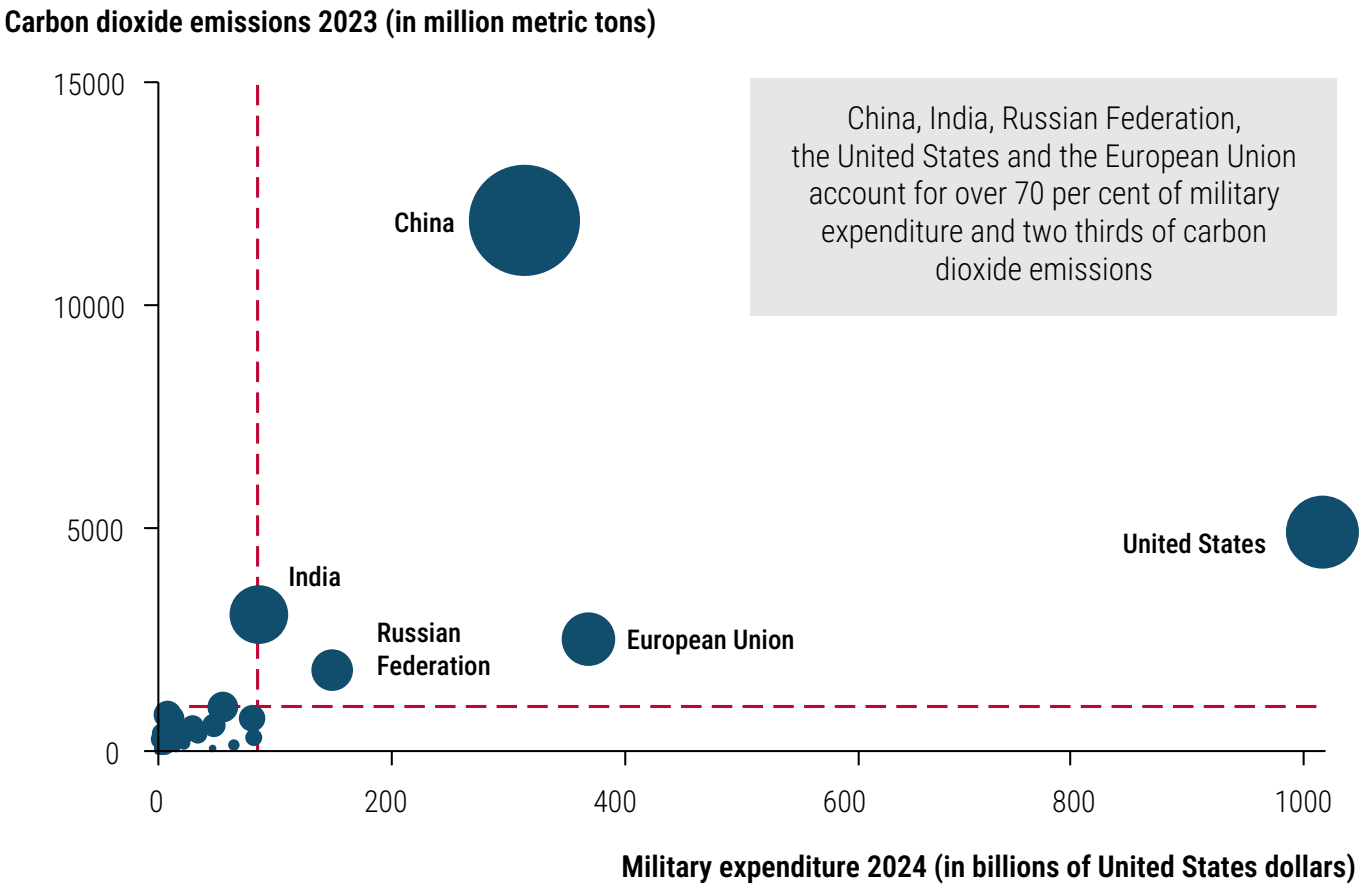
Country-specific settings must always be considered. In contexts of external threats, acute violence, State fragility and underdevelopment, some countries must devote scarce resources to military security to restore basic safety and lay the groundwork for development and peaceful, just, inclusive societies with accountable institutions (Aizenman and Glick, 2006). Experiences in parts of Asia, Latin America and the Sahel, for instance, underscore the critical importance of addressing security and development challenges as interconnected issues.

The challenge, however, is funding legitimate security needs without increasing the risk of military budgets crowding out investment in sustainable development.

Military spending may impact progress on the Sustainable Development Goals through several channels.

First, it crowds out financing for development. These effects are direct and shaped by both budget constraints and the nature of military outlays. The financing gap for the Goals, estimated at $4 trillion per year today, could widen by $2 trillion if current trends in limited financing for development and growing military expenditure

Figure 19: Military expenditure and carbon dioxide emissions



Note: Size of bubble represents emissions

Source: based on SIPRI 2025b and Ritchie, H. et al. (2024).

continue,[15] in line with plausible policies currently under discussion. The negative effects are likely to be permanent, resulting from lower economic growth, increased public debt and heightened instability.

Second, higher global military expenditure undermines the foundations of international cooperation. As military power becomes the dominant tool for security, incentives for diplomacy and solidarity retreat. Even as global challenges such as climate change demand collective action, the decline of multilateralism makes it more difficult to pursue policies rooted in cooperation.

An increase in global military expenditure generates negative externalities for every region of the world. A relatively small number of countries dominates in terms of rising military spending, insufficient reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions and declining international cooperation. Yet the loss of cooperation, dialogue and trust among key players has multiplier effects spanning the entire planet.

Most long-term costs from rising military expenditure and limited climate action are expected to be borne disproportionately by developing countries. While they contribute a relatively small share of global emissions, they may suffer the greatest human and economic consequences. Under a very high-emissions scenario, climate-related deaths could reach 190 million by 2100 (UNDP, 2022), with the vast majority occurring in developing countries. This highlights the profound inequities embedded in both climate and security challenges.

Third, higher military spending is likely to fuel greater insecurity and generate development losses. In an arms race scenario, where most actors increase military expenditures, there is little geopolitical gain but a significant erosion of trust. **This scenario increases both the likelihood of conflict (including proxy wars) and the severity of its consequences**.

In conflict-affected countries, there is a real risk of devastation and reversal of development gains. The potential impact is hard to estimate, but most countries that have experienced a reversal on Human Development Index scores are affected by conflict that has eroded income, education and health (Vesco et al., 2024). The likelihood of human development losses is 50 per cent higher in countries with conflict. Effects on neighbouring countries are often significant.[16] Multiple spillover effects might include the disruption of trade (Glick and Taylor, 2010) and finance (Lu et al., 2020) as well as abrupt migration flows (Shaver, 2021).

These impacts mean that further increases in global military expenditure are likely to shift the Sustainable Development Goals from achievable by 2030, with necessary means and solutions in place, to unattainable. A significant increase in military expenditure could permanently disrupt all areas of sustainable development.

When insecurity threatens lives and livelihoods, military spending can help restore order and create the foundation on which development can take root. Security and development are thus mutually reinforcing, each enabling further progress in the other. The challenge, however, is funding legitimate security needs without increasing the risk of military budgets crowding out investment in sustainable development.

Overall, the evidence points to how **rising military expenditure, although sometimes necessary for immediate threats, is pulling Member States further from the twin aims of peace and sustainable development at the heart of the United Nations Charter**. Article 26 calls for the least diversion of human and economic resources to armaments yet current trends are moving the opposite direction. Left unchecked, rising military expenditure risks diverting more resources from sustainable development, fuelling new cycles of insecurity and eroding the trust that sustains international cooperation. Reversing this trajectory is an urgent priority.

4.4.1 Military expenditure and health and education

Several Sustainable Development Goals focus on social investments and human development, including health (Goal 3) and education (Goal 4). Major progress has been made in recent years in improving health and expanding access to education, resulting in increased literacy rates

15 See table 1 and figure 10.
16 See, for instance, De Groot, 2010; Mignon and Saadaoui, 2023.

and better well-being for millions of people. Benefits from basic health interventions are estimated to be 10 to 30 times higher than the amounts invested. Education investments typically deliver higher lifetime earnings, reaching rates of 8 to 10 per cent (Cintron-Rodriguez, n.d.). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, such investments lifted literacy, extended life expectancy and pushed the Human Development Index steadily upward.

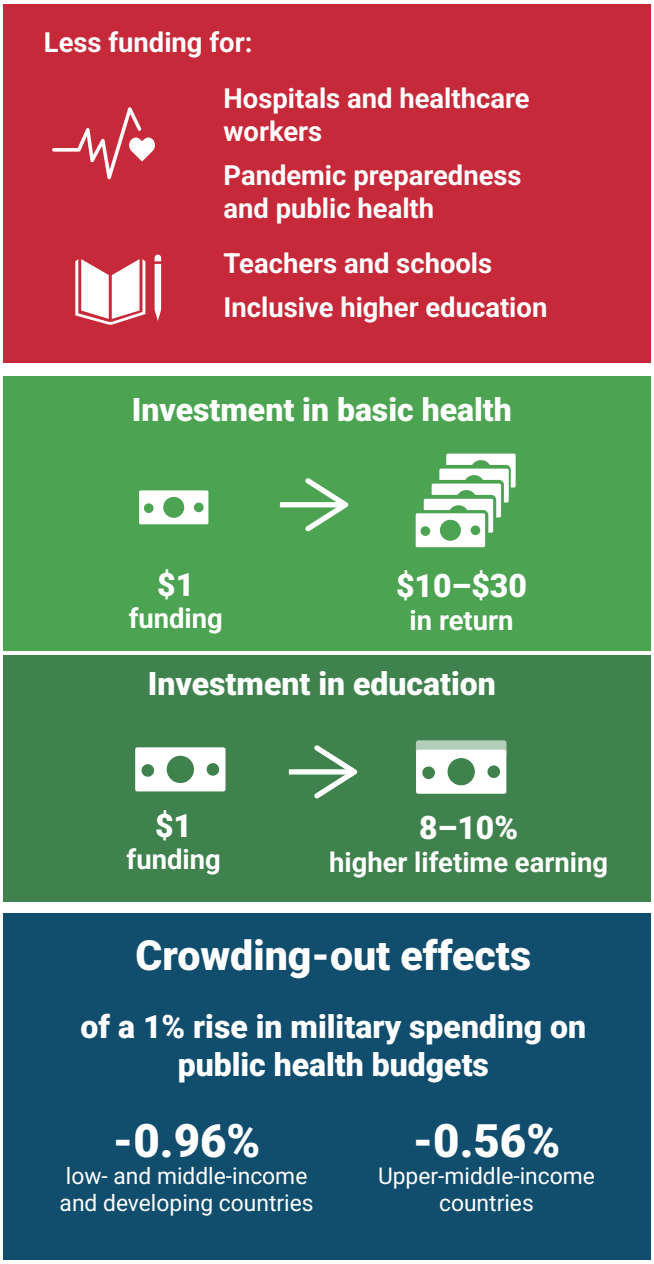
The pandemic revealed how fragile those gains were with global declines on the Human Development Index in 2020 and 2021, followed by an uneven recovery around the world (UNDP, 2025). Childhood immunization rates fell to their lowest point in three decades, deaths from tuberculosis and malaria rose above pre-pandemic levels, and prolonged school closures erased years of learning. These issues underscored the urgency of rebuilding resilient systems for Goals 3 and 4 (UNESCO, 2023a).

Rising military expenditure, even when prompted by genuine security concerns, risks drawing resources away from human-centred priorities. This crowding out has been recognized by different States, including Cuba, Mexico, Pakistan and Tunisia, as well as by the Holy See.[17]

In low- and middle-income and developing countries, higher military expenditure is associated with lower public health and education financing (Tian et al., 2025; Jesmy, Karim and Applanaidu, 2015). For example, a 1 per cent increase in military expenditure is linked to an almost equal reduction in publicly financed health services. The same crowding-out effect is less severe in upper-middle-income countries, where a 1 per cent increase in military expenditure correlates to cuts in public health spending of about 0.5 per cent (Grigorakis and Galyfianakis, 2024; Fan, Liu and Coyte, 2017).

This crowding-out effect leaves countries less equipped to handle future pandemics, resulting in shortages in hospital facilities, qualified healthcare workers and public health programmes, along with fewer teachers, declining investment in education infrastructure and limited access to higher education. Human capital investments, such as those made through health and education, are critical drivers of development outcomes such as greater

Figure 20: Military spending weighs on development



life expectancy in developing countries (Iheoma, 2012; Ikegami and Wang, 2023; Ndaguba and Hlotywa, 2021). A more limited effect for higher-income or developed countries suggests that conditions such as better fiscal space, more supportive social welfare programmes and resilient health and education systems limit the impact of military allocations on education and health spending

17 Official submissions in response to a call for papers.

(Lin, Ali and Lu, 2015). Such differing outcomes reflect variations in fiscal and institutional capacity rather than shortcomings in policy intent.

Since the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine three years ago, for instance, many European countries have increased military spending without reducing domestic social expenditure. This dynamic may not be sustainable, however. In the United Kingdom, recent decisions to fund higher military expenditure by reducing social spending highlight the growing risk that prolonged increases in military budgets could erode social commitments. Proposed reforms in the United Kingdom to tighten eligibility for the Personal Independence Payment and the health component of Universal Credit could affect up to 1 million people, including those with mental health conditions or physical disabilities. These measures have raised significant concerns that the continued prioritization of defence spending may undermine inclusive social protection systems, with potentially severe consequences for vulnerable populations. The longer that elevated military budgets persist, the greater the risks of adverse impacts on education, health, disability inclusion and broader social outcomes, even in countries with stronger fiscal capacities.

The scale of unmet financing needs for Goals 3 and 4 is stark. Low- and lower-middle-income countries face a $97 billion annual shortfall to reach national Goal 4 targets by 2030 (Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, 2025). Sub-Saharan Africa alone must mobilize about $70 billion each year, more than triple its current aggregate military expenditure. Achieving universal access to basic health services for low- and middle-income countries will require from $100 billion to $400 billion per year (UNCTAD, 2023b). Active hostilities widen these gaps. In Ukraine, large-scale military mobilization has sharply reduced the domestic capacity to fund hospitals and schools. International partners have supplied an estimated $115 billion in budgetary support to sustain essential services, yet national Sustainable Development Goal targets remain at risk.[18] Other conflict-affected States confront similar pressures as emergency security needs crowd out long-term social investment.

Redirecting even a portion of annual increases in military spending, totaling $229 billion in 2024 alone, could finance the entire education gap for low- and lower-middle-income countries twice over and cover a lower estimate of the health gap in full. Using shared military expenditure savings for universal access to education and basic healthcare would illustrate international political will to support countries in need. This would be in line with the principles of the United Nations Charter and the 2030 Agenda commitment to leave no one behind.

4.4.2 Poverty, economic development and military expenditure

Military spending influences poverty reduction, sustainable growth and decent work, the focus of Goals 1, 8 and 9.

Greater global military expenditure could further compromise the target of eradicating poverty in all its dimensions. First, the fight against poverty has stalled. In 2025, an estimate 808 million people live in extreme poverty, only 23 million less than in 2019. In 2025, the annual reduction in extreme poverty is estimated to be only 8 million. If this trend continues, it will take 90 more years after 2030 to eradicate poverty. In sub-Saharan Africa, the region with the largest number of people in extreme poverty, the figure increased from 468 million in 2015 to 587 million in 2025 (Banerjee, Duflo and Kremer, 2019; World Bank, 2024b).

Greater global military expenditure constrains some of the main determinants of poverty reduction: economic growth and employment, macroeconomic stability and access to credit, and social policies with an emphasis on education and health (Balasubramanian, Burchi and Malerba, 2023).

The incidence of multidimensional poverty is highest in conflict-affected States and three times higher than in countries without conflict (UNDP, 2024). Conflicts both weigh on prospects for poverty reduction and instigate significant reversals in gains already made. For instance, Afghanistan concentrated on heavy military expenditure for many years (the United States alone disbursed $73

18 Official submission of the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations in response to a call for papers.

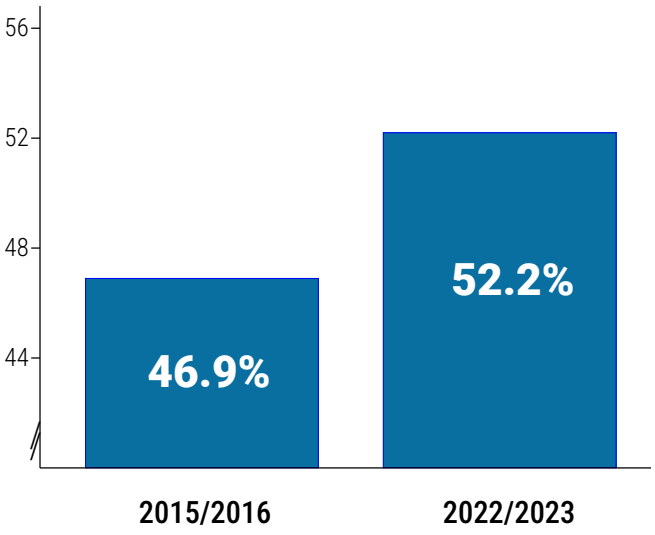
billion in military aid between 2001 and 2020, averaging around 30 per cent of Afghanistan's annual GDP) (Tian, 2021). Yet after an initial stabilization, protracted conflict spurred a jump in already high levels of multidimensional poverty, from 46.9 to 52.2 per cent of the population (figure 21).

The opportunity cost of military expenditure has been recognized since 1971, when United Nations Secretary-General U Thant commissioned the first United Nations study on the economic and social consequences of the arms race (Spies, 2019). It found that even though **military expenditure adds to national GDP through wages and military operations, the same resources would generate stronger and broader economic development if invested in healthcare, education or infrastructure** (Cappelen, Gleditsch and Bjerkholt, 1984; Dunne and Tian, 2013b; Brauer, Dunne and Tian, 2019).

Research on European economies shows that **social programmes generate a return that is more than three times the initial investment. The multiplier for military spending often remains below one** (Stuckler, Reeves and Mckee, 2017; Sheremirov and Spirovska, 2022). Specific components of military spending with particularly large opportunity costs for economic growth are personnel and operations and maintenance (Becker and Dunne, 2023). In NATO countries, making more military allocations to personnel has a dampening effect on the economy. Raising the personnel share of spending by just 1 percentage point could lower annual GDP growth by around 0.026 percentage points (ibid.). If a country increased personnel spending from 20 to 30 per cent of total military expenditure, this could lower GDP growth by 0.17 to 0.26 percentage points, a notable amount.

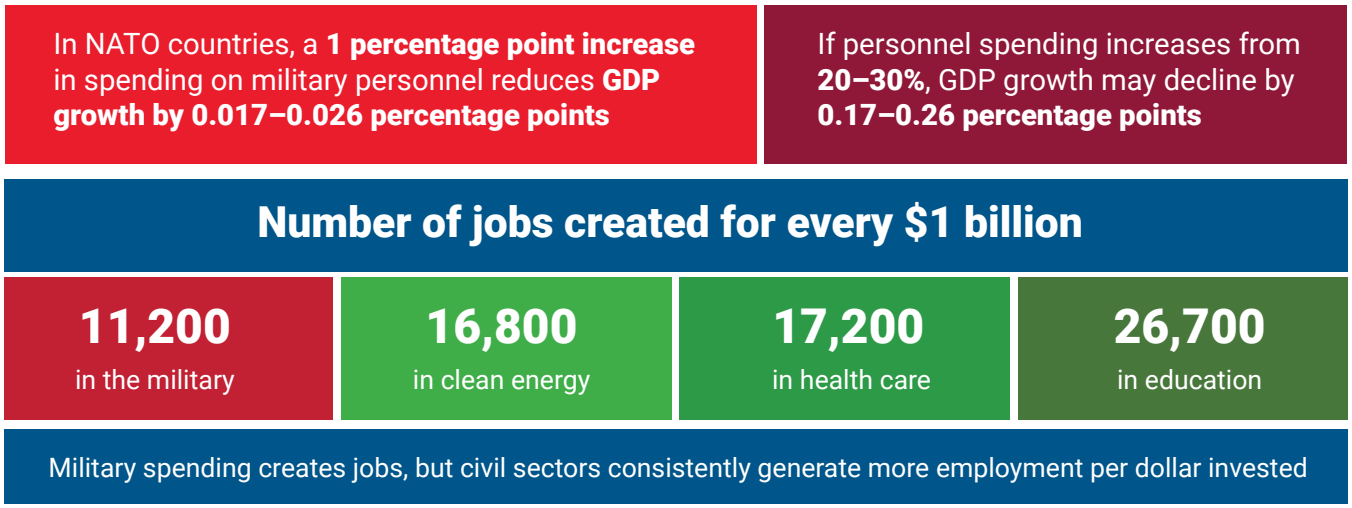
Increasing military investments can also narrow the innovation base and job creation, and lower long-term productivity. A study on the United States found that while military spending generates jobs, other civil sectors

Figure 21: Rates of poverty in Afghanistan 2015–2023



Source: UNDP 2024. Based on harmonized trend data.

Figure 22: Military expenditure and its impact on the economy



generally create more jobs with the same resources. For example, $1 billion in military spending would create approximately 11,200 jobs. This compares with 26,700 jobs in education, 16,800 in clean energy and 17,200 in healthcare based on spending the same amount on each of these sectors (Watson School of International and Public Affairs, n.d.). Significant personnel expenditure also strains the State budget due to long-term obligations such as pensions and wages; these are difficult to adjust during economic downturns or periods of stability and security (Becker, 2021).

In the presence of specific threats, internal or external, military expenditure can contribute to security or stability, which can boost economic growth (Aizenman and Glick, 2006). South Sudan is one example. The State had to increase military spending in 2023 in response to insecurity spilling over from the civil war in Sudan (Tian et al., 2023). The Dominican Republic offers another case. It increased military expenditure for three consecutive years (2022–2024) in response to the political crisis in neighbouring Haiti (ibid.). Armed forces play an important role in protecting citizens from violence from internal sources (non-state actors, terrorist insurgencies, civil conflict) or external threats (other States). Internationally, troop contributions to United Nations-mandated and other multilateral peace operations provide a cost-effective way to increase peace and stability (Hegre, Hultman and Nygård, 2019).

4.4.3 Military expenditure and inequality

Rising military expenditure can widen economic and social disparities. When public funds shift from social programmes to the military, fewer resources remain for measures that reduce inequality, the focus of Goals 5 and 10 (Biscione and Caruso, 2021). The poorest households may lose access to programmes that narrow income gaps, such as quality schools, affordable healthcare, social protection and cash transfers. This weakens both the pre-distribution and redistribution tools that help level access to opportunities, allowing income inequality to widen. When gender disparities increase, they compound economic inequalities, particularly for households headed by women or for women in informal employment.

Higher pay and benefits in the military compared with similar civilian jobs feed widening income gaps (Ali, 2007). Military personnel in some countries may earn 20 to 30 per cent more than people in equivalent public sector roles. Expenditure on military procurement and research and development can also contribute to economic inequality since they tend to create opportunities mainly for more highly skilled workers (Lin and Ali, 2009).

Gender equality and women's rights are integral to sustainable development, peace and security, and the realization of all human rights,[19] as recognized by the United Nations Charter, the 1992 Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, and the recent Pact for the Future. Member States have recognized that even when accounting for national security needs, excessive military spending, the global arms trade and investment in arms production can divert resources from social and economic development and hinder progress for women.[20] This is a clear acknowledgement that military expenditure has a gendered impact.

Higher military spending worsens gender inequality primarily through crowding-out effects on social expenditure, as women and girls disproportionately rely on social programmes (Elveren, 2024). When services for childcare, elder care and support for persons with disabilities are inadequate, women and girls typically fill the gaps. Additional hours on unpaid care diminish access to education, restrict entry into formal employment and limit opportunities for skills development. As social spending contracts, gender gaps in income, labour force participation and economic opportunity widen, setting back progress on gender equality and inclusive growth.

Employment in the military shows a gender imbalance that disproportionately favours men. Data from 55 Member States indicate that despite incremental progress in the participation of women in the military

19 Submission by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to a call for papers.
20 See the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/PFA_E_Final_WEB.pdf.

globally, their representation in armed forces remains relatively low. Women make up roughly 15 per cent of uniformed personnel on average and less than 3 per cent of senior officers (United Nations, 2024a). This trend extends to the arms industry, where women comprise just 20 per cent of employees in major weapons manufacturing companies.

The unbalanced nature of female-to-male employment in the military sector has long-term effects on human capital accumulation, as women are more likely to invest income in health and education for themselves and their children. **Equal opportunities for women in the military sector is a matter of human rights, sustainable development and collective security** (ibid.).

Evidence suggests that **high levels of militarism exacerbate gender-based violence**. For example, while men and boys make up the overwhelming number of those killed by small arms, firearms are used in the majority of femicides and cases of intimate partner violence (United Nations, 2024e). Military and non-state actors use weapons to displace women and children. Numerous studies have documented greater domestic and family violence when demobilized combatants return home (Bradley, 2018). High levels of militarism can feed a culture of violence that normalizes violence against women and girls, with negative consequences for future generations (Steuter and Martin, 2019).

4.4.4 Military expenditure, industrialization and innovation

Military research was once credited with landmark breakthroughs such as global positioning systems and the early Internet. These spilled over to benefit civilians (Azoulay et al., 2019). Today, evidence points in the opposite direction. **The diffusion of technology is currently characterized by "spin-in", "spin-on" or "spin together", where militaries increasingly adopt commercial or civil research and development and innovation**. Prominent examples include cybersecurity, drone technologies, aerospace and artificial intelligence (Feiglin, 2020; Evron and Bitzinger, 2023; Kosciuszko Institute and ECSO, 2024).

Major economies and leading military powers pursue policies enabling militaries to benefit from civilian developments (NBR, 2021; Apostoaie, 2024). Examples include public funding programmes that create new pathways and incentives for universities and research centres to conduct fundamental and applied research with both potential or direct military and security applications (European Commission, 2024).

The shifting nature of "spin-in" from the civil to the military sector is changing the character of the arms industry. Civil companies are increasingly involved in arms production. Multinational technology companies are pursuing direct collaboration with the military establishment. They typically first receive substantial government grants for technological development and then become major suppliers of software components, software services, information technology services, and Internet software and services.

These trends challenge the assumption that military research and development is a significant driver of broad-based innovation, the objective of Goal 9. To build inclusive and sustainable industries, across sectors of the economy, strengthening civilian research and development ecosystems seems to be the best option. This should be based on designing and deploying new technologies in line with human rights and sustainability principles. It should avoid incentives from the military sector that distort innovation agendas (Mashiah et al. 2023).

Even where military expenditure generates positive externalities through research and development, the benefits tend to concentrate in relatively few countries, placing most developing countries at a disadvantage. Arms exports are highly concentrated and dominated by high-income countries (except China, which is considered a high-volume arms-exporting country but not considered a high-income country[21]). In contrast, arms imports are more widely distributed, with significant participation from developing countries (George et al., 2025).

21 Based on the World Bank definition, for the current 2026 fiscal year, high-income countries are those with a gross national income per capita of $13,935 and above; see https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups.

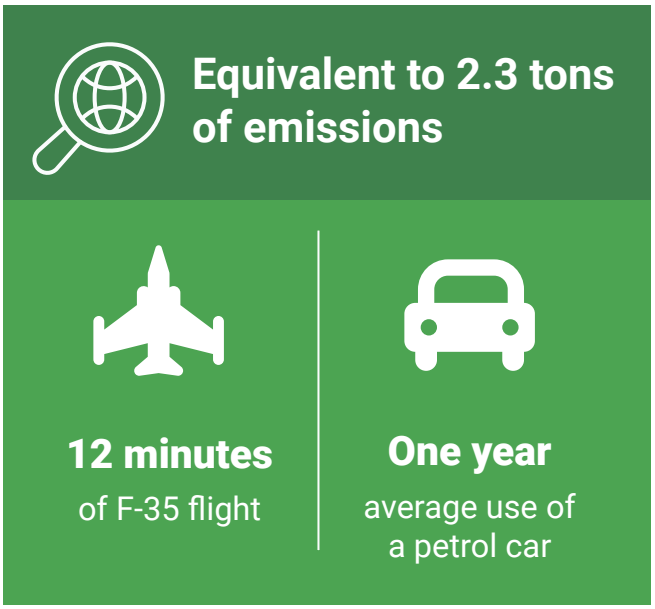
4.4.5 Military expenditure and environmental sustainability

Military activities carry a heavy environmental burden that stands in the way of Goals 13 and 15. Resource extraction (e.g., iron ore, and rare earth and energetic minerals) destroys vegetation and soils and releases significant greenhouse gases (Downey, Bonds and Clark, 2010). Arms production adds more emissions along with solvents, heavy metals and other toxic residues. Once weapon systems enter military service, fuel consumption becomes the dominant source of carbon emissions (Michaelowa et al., 2022; Vuong, Nguyen and La, 2024). After use, the disposal of legacy weapons continues to affect the environment as certain components, such as composite airframes, depleted uranium and energetic minerals waste, produce hazardous products that demand long-term attention.

Despite acknowledgement that military activities may account for a significant share of global carbon emissions, the true extent of military emissions remains elusive. A military exemption in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, followed by voluntary reporting of military emissions under the Paris Agreement, means that national reporting rarely captures emissions from military activities in full (Depledge, 2023; National Security Archive, 2025; Harvey, 2024). Estimates mostly come from the global scientific community. **The current best estimates suggest that the military sector worldwide emits between 3.3 and 7.0 per cent of total global greenhouse gas emissions. The largest militaries may account for more emissions than those from many mid-sized countries** (Parkinson and Cottrell, 2022; Rajaeifar et al., 2022). Operations and maintenance account for the bulk of the military environmental footprint. For example, at cruising speed, an F-35 generates about 2.3 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent in just 12 minutes, roughly the same amount emitted by an average petrol car over an entire year (Crawford, 2019).

Active conflict using conventional weapons devastates the environment and wildlife, with effects lasting long after the fighting has ended (Kotsis, 2024). This is evident in Ukraine and countries with recent wars, such as Iraq and Viet Nam (Yermak and Wallström, 2024; Jaff, 2023; Appau et al., 2021). The legacy of nuclear weapons testing is equally stark, even decades after the tests were conducted. From the Pacific Islands to Central Asia, South Asia and North Africa, affected populations continue to face elevated rates of cancer, chronic health conditions and intergenerational impacts, while fragile ecosystems remain contaminated. **The environmental toll of conflict and military activities further highlights the pressing need for peace, security and stability**.

Figure 23: Carbon dioxide emissions of a combat aircraft compared to a car



Many Governments rely on armed forces to respond to climate-related disasters, such as by deploying troops and equipment for flood relief and logistical support after hurricanes. This demonstrates how militaries can bolster societal resilience (United Nations, 2024b). Adopting measures to green the military can align climate goals with security objectives (European Union, 2023). Reducing the carbon footprint and environmental impact of military forces and using the military for non-military activities, however, could contribute to the normalization of their use.

Greater emphasis must be placed on directing resources towards climate adaptation. The wealthiest countries spend 30 times more on their militaries than on climate finance for the world's most vulnerable countries (Benzing and Geyer, 2024). **The average annual adaptation finance needs for developing countries for 2021–2030 were estimated at $387 billion (in 2021 prices), with a range of $101 billion to $975 billion** (UNEP, 2024)**.** So little could do so much.

4.4.6 Military spending, the proliferation of weapons, and the erosion of peace, justice and strong institutions

Rising military expenditures, particularly in procurement, are increasing the volume of arms purchased, transferred and stored worldwide. Without adequate controls, the risk of arms diversion increases (United Nations, 2023c). Diversion can occur during the transfer, use or deployment of arms, and through gaps in national control and unauthorized cross-border movement (Baldo et al., 2021). The diversion, proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons undermine the rule of law; hinder conflict prevention and peacebuilding; enable criminal acts, including terrorist acts, human rights abuses and gender-based violence; drive displacement and migration; and stunt development (United Nations, 2023c; Silverryd, 2019; Pinson, 2022; Marsh, 2019). The uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons contributed to an estimated 700,000 conflict-related deaths between 2015 and 2021 (United Nations, 2023a; IANSA and IPIS, 2024).

Recent experience shows the risks. The diversion of small arms and light weapons from Libya after 2011 fed armed insurgencies and terrorist groups across the Sahel, eroded State authority, complicated regional counterterrorism efforts and impeded regional development (Conflict Armament Research, 2016). Similar patterns are evident in parts of Asia and Latin America, where illicit weapons flows sustain organized crime and gender-based violence (United Nations, 2021b). **The cascading effects of poorly managed surplus weapons present serious challenges to Goal 16, specifically targets on reducing all forms of violence and illicit financial and arms flows**.

Arms control treaties and instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the International Tracing Instrument, the Firearms Protocol and the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, set out practical measures. These include stockpile management, post-delivery verification, and weapons tracing to mitigate risks of diversion and proliferation (Malaret Baldo et al., 2021). Implementing these steps requires resources yet the cost of inaction is far greater. **Member States should incorporate diversion-prevention policies into arms procurement, increase transparency in arms transfers and allocate financial resources to mechanisms that lower risks of diversion, such as post-delivery verification and weapons tracing**.

The defence sector remains one of the least transparent areas of public spending worldwide, with serious political, institutional and development consequences. According to Transparency International, nearly two thirds of countries face high to critical levels of corruption risks in their defence sectors due to weak oversight, limited

Figure 24: Military expenditure and its impact on climate goals

transparency and inadequate accountability mechanisms (Transparency International Defence & Security, 2021). This opacity facilitates practices such as inflated procurement contracts. In many States, freedom of information laws are routinely bypassed in defence planning, with national security invoked as an exemption – obliterating meaningful public oversight. This lack of transparency undermines institutional integrity and trust in governance (Davis, 2025). It increases the risk of financial mismanagement, illicit financial flows, corruption and resource misuse.

In fragile settings, illicit flows in the defence sector weaken State capacity, sustain patronage networks and delay recovery efforts, exacerbating inequality and undermining the rule of law. Addressing them is essential to safeguarding public resources, strengthening governance, and advancing progress on Goal 16 and the broader 2030 Agenda. This requires greater transparency, independent audits and robust anti-corruption safeguards in both defence planning and procurement.

5. Funding military expenditure and its consequences

5. Funding military expenditure and its consequences

5.1 Military expenditure and official development assistance

Increasing military spending directly impacts achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. **It also entails national opportunity costs and crowding-out effects with substantial impacts on the international community, especially when increases are financed by reductions in official development assistance**. Announcements by OECD-DAC members on curtailing such assistance to finance additional military expenditure raise concerns (Loft and Brien, 2025).

Official development assistance remains a vital pillar of international commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the global Goals. Decisions to divert or reduce it not only undermine this collective pledge but also send a worrying signal about the political will to deliver on the promise of a sustainable, inclusive, equitable future. While such cuts may have minimal direct consequences for the Goals in donor countries, they pose risks of significant, far-reaching, knock-on effects on development, peace and security in recipient countries, especially those where official development assistance may be critical in addressing structural vulnerabilities and fostering stability.

For recipient countries – many of which face overlapping security threats and structural development challenges – official development assistance is an essential external resource (OECD, 2019) that complements limited domestic resources. Its reduction in some cases threatens to force difficult trade-offs between addressing immediate security needs and investing in long-term development, potentially entrenching a vicious cycle where insecurity impedes development and underdevelopment fuels further instability. Lessons from regions such as the Sahel underscore both the indivisible link between security and development and the imperative of sustained international support (Tian and Lopes da Silva, 2020; Tshuma et al., 2025).

5.2 Financing military expenditure and its short- and long-term intergenerational effects

Member States typically finance higher military spending through increased borrowing or adjustments to tax policies (Dunne, Nikolaidou and Chiminya, 2019; Abbas and Wizarat, 2017; Kollias, Manolas and Paleologouc, 2004; Dunne, Perlo-Freeman and Soydan, 2004). **Both methods carry short- and long-term implications, potentially undermining progress in realizing the principle of leaving no one behind** (UNSDG, 2025).

Borrowing allows the rapid mobilization of financial resources and can be a viable option for countries with strong credit ratings and sustainable debt profiles (DiGuiseppe, 2015). For countries already facing debt burdens, additional borrowing exacerbates fiscal pressures, heightening the risk of economic instability. Historical precedents, including Argentina during the debt crisis in the 1980s, Greece after the 2009 Eurozone crisis and the United States following the Budget Control Act of 2011, demonstrate how elevated debt service costs often necessitate austerity measures that compromise public services, thereby adversely affecting human development (Kirby, 1987; Diamond and Engebretson, 2023; Wyrzykowska, 2010). Even in economically stable countries, borrowing shifts financial responsibilities onto future generations, constraining their fiscal flexibility and limiting potential investments in sustainable development.

Adjustments to tax policy offer an alternative financing mechanism, with varying implications for social equity. Progressive taxes on income and wealth could fairly distribute the fiscal burden of increased military spending; however, these taxes require complex administrative systems for effective implementation and enforcement (Kiser and Karceski, 2017; Sausgruber and Tyran, 2005;

Hays, 2003). Conversely, financing military budgets through indirect taxation – such as consumption or trade taxes – may be administratively simpler but disproportionately burdens lower-income groups (Tian, Lopes da Silva and Liang, 2023). This regressive model exacerbates income inequalities, diminishes purchasing power and erodes living standards, undermining inclusive economic growth and equitable development.

Irrespective of the financing mechanisms selected, increased military expenditure inevitably carries intergenerational repercussions. Borrowing transfers fiscal burdens to future generations, limiting their capacity to invest in essential public goods and sustainable development initiatives. Regressive taxation reduces disposable income among vulnerable populations, restricting their ability to invest in nutrition, healthcare and education, all central to breaking cycles of poverty and realizing intergenerational equity.

Insufficient investment in human capital further compounds structural inequalities, constraining social mobility and limiting economic growth. Diminished spending on health, education and social protection negatively impacts productivity, innovation and long-term economic stability. As income disparities widen, structural inequalities become entrenched, narrowing opportunities for subsequent generations and undermining commitments enshrined in the 2030 Agenda (Narayan et al., 2021).

Conversely, well-targeted public investments can foster intergenerational mobility and equitable economic growth through enhanced public services, progressive redistribution and human capital development. Empirical evidence indicates that countries with higher intergenerational mobility exhibit stronger and more sustained economic growth. Investments in education and health, in particular, bolster productivity and innovation, creating positive feedback loops that reinforce economic resilience and social stability (Mauro, 2017; Duong, 2024).

In short, prioritizing inclusive, equitable and sustainable investments over increased military expenditure is essential to upholding intergenerational equity, advancing social mobility and sustaining long-term development progress. This is in line with the spirit and commitments of the 2030 Agenda, including to leave no one behind, now or in future generations.

5.3 Opaque financing options and risks to transparency, oversight and accountability

Increased military expenditures underscore the urgent need for robust transparency, oversight and accountability mechanisms. Too often, military spending is shielded by heightened secrecy or funded through off-budget financing that bypasses parliamentary scrutiny and public accountability. Such opacity erodes political control over public finances; heightens the risks of inefficiency, corruption and mismanagement; and diverts resources from essential public services and sustainable development.

The transparent, disaggregated disclosure of military budgets is not simply a technical matter of sound public expenditure management but an important measure for fostering confidence and trust at both the national and international levels. It is an indispensable foundation for policy-driven resource allocation.

5.3.1 Transparency in military expenditure at the international level

Transparency in military expenditure at the international level is fundamental to promoting peace and security. The United Nations Report on Military Expenditures provides a voluntary mechanism for Member States to submit detailed annual data on military spending. Initially aimed at facilitating reductions in global military expenditures, the report has evolved into a confidence-building measure to enhance transparency and reduce ambiguities and misunderstanding among States. It also contributes to public awareness and advocacy for disarmament (Tian, Wezeman and Yun, 2018).

As global military spending continues to rise, broader participation in the report becomes increasingly urgent. Consistent engagement not only enables the tracking and analysis of military spending trends but also demonstrates Member States' commitment to transparency, accountability and cooperative security. It mitigates the potential for rising military expenditures to exacerbate mistrust, fuel arms races and impede sustainable development.

Member States should further encourage transparency initiatives at the subregional and regional levels. Existing frameworks, such as those within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), should be promoted. Mechanisms that have become dormant, including those previously operated by the Union of South American Nations, should be revitalized. New instruments in Africa and Asia could be developed. Voluntary data exchanges strengthen multilateral cooperation, support informed dialogue on military capabilities, and foster a more stable, predictable international order.

5.3.2 Efficiency, transparency and accountability in military expenditure at the national level

Transparent national military budgeting requires Governments to disclose comprehensive and clear budgetary details, including information on any off-budget funding mechanisms. Such mechanisms, including special funds, external loans or dedicated military accounts, significantly undermine transparency and accountability if not adequately disclosed and overseen (Perlo-Freeman, 2016). Integrating them into standard, transparent budgetary frameworks is essential to good governance and public expenditure management, building confidence between military and civilian oversight bodies (Bromley and Solmirano, 2012).

Parliamentary and civil society oversight is essential for ensuring accountability and influencing national budget allocation. Legislatures are uniquely positioned to scrutinize defence budgets, approve procurement plans and monitor expenditures, helping to align military spending with national priorities and legal frameworks. Effective parliamentary oversight supports the rational allocation of limited public resources, curbs corruption and bolsters the credibility of State institutions. When complemented by informed civil society engagement, it strengthens democratic governance and public trust (Perlo-Freeman, 2016).

Confidence-building measures, military expenditure and security

Confidence-building measures can be critical in aligning military expenditure with security and stability aims. They include the voluntary exchange of information on military budgets, force structures, military activities and cooperation in arms control discussions. The benefits may encompass reducing mutual suspicion and averting unintended escalations.

Beyond sharing spending information, verification mechanisms for military stockpiles, ranging from on-site inspections to aerial observation, help match data and capability deployments, increasing the credibility of reported expenditures. The OSCE's Vienna Document is an example of linking the exchange of military information with compliance and verification. Such activities are integral to strengthening confidence and security.

As part of effective confidence-building measures, military expenditure justified for security purposes should be guided by principles of restraint. An emphasis on direct communication and crisis management tools, such as hotlines, may clarify intentions, prevent misunderstandings and reduce the risk of escalation. These tools enhance transparency and stability by enabling timely, reliable exchanges among States or adversaries, particularly during heightened geopolitical tensions.

An integrated, human-centred approach to security is grounded in the interconnectedness of military and development spending. Applying uniform standards of transparency and accountability across all sectors, including military spending, balances resource allocation between broader security and development goals, mitigating inefficiencies and potential resource diversion (Omitoogun and Hutchful, eds., 2006).

Transparent military budgeting supports comprehensive defence policies based on genuine security needs, avoiding wasteful expenditure driven by inertia or political expediency. Policy-based budgeting that aligns resources with assessed threats and operational needs helps to uphold prudent fiscal management.

Public expenditure and financial accountability and similar frameworks provide structured methods to assess military budgets and off-budget mechanisms against indicators, including budget reliability, predictability, policy-based budgeting, and internal and external oversight (United Nations, 2024c; PEFA Secretariat, 2016). Systematic and rigorous assessments facilitate the identification of transparency gaps and improve efficiency and effectiveness. Given rising military spending and widening development finance gaps, optimizing scarce resources is vital for both safeguarding national security and advancing sustainable development.

Somalia offers an example of how effective public expenditure management reforms can yield substantial savings and improve security provisions. By centralizing the procurement of military rations through competitive contracts, the Government lowered costs by 50 per cent (Elmahdi and Raballand, 2024). At the same time, introducing the biometric registration of troops and replacing cash payments with bank transfers and mobile money drastically reduced leakage in spending on military personnel. These measures demonstrate how when military expenditure is managed with rigorous public expenditure management, resources are used more efficiently. The savings in turn can be directed towards broader development goals.

6.
There is no peace without sustainable development, and no sustainable development without peace

6. There is no peace without sustainable development, and no sustainable development without peace

National security expenditure is fundamental to protect nations and their citizens, but investment in sustainable development provides the most effective foundation for lasting peace.

Traditional security approaches focused solely on military defence cannot address the underlying drivers of instability, from poverty and inequality to environmental degradation. They also cannot resolve the different security threats disproportionately faced by women and girls, such as domestic violence and sexual assault.

When societies meet basic needs; respect, protect and fulfil human rights; and manage resources sustainably, they reduce the grievances that fuel violence while creating viable alternatives to conflict (United Nations and World Bank, 2018). Policies that address the root causes of social instability while promoting human well-being lower the probabilities of conflict and violent behaviour.

Sustainable development accompanied by basic investments to guarantee personal and national security and the rule of law offers a framework to transform security paradigms from reactive protection to proactive peacebuilding.

Investing in peacebuilding, good governance, access to justice and the meeting of socioeconomic needs through sustainable development is a moral imperative. It is also a pragmatic and cost-effective strategy for achieving long-term peace.

6.1 Why military spending does not guarantee security

The premise that increased military expenditure guarantees greater security is misleading. **Security is a multidimensional outcome, whereas military spending is merely an input.**

Military expenditure represents resource allocation but the effective translation of this investment into actual security depends on numerous factors. These may be hard to measure in financial terms, including morale, operational readiness, training, doctrine and organizational efficiency (SIPRI, 2025a). Inefficiencies caused by corruption, poor management, inadequate planning and procurement mismanagement may further diminish the direct relationship between military spending and security.

Advancements in military technology add complexity to the effectiveness of military spending. Investments in sophisticated weaponry, for instance, may not translate directly into enhanced capabilities if a State lacks adequately trained personnel, an appropriate military doctrine or necessary infrastructure to operationalize such technology. Moreover, the development, testing and deployment timelines for advanced weaponry, from missiles to nuclear-powered submarines, typically range from several years to over a decade. Expenditure today therefore rarely yields immediate improvements in security. Instead, it typically requires States to anticipate and respond to the projected capabilities of potential adversaries, launching a cycle that can fuel escalating arms races rather than lasting peace (BBC, 2025; Cancian, 2023; Johnson, Drakeley and Smith, 2025).

A prevalent approach to security based on military strength is deterrence, characterized by two dimensions: denial, which aims to prevent adversaries from achieving their objectives, and punishment, which threatens severe consequences for aggression (Karlin, 2024). **Deterrence depends critically on clear and credible signaling, however. Misinterpretations or unclear signaling can inadvertently lead to escalations rather than containing them, undermining intended protective outcomes**.

Furthermore, deterrence becomes increasingly complex and costly amid rapid technological change. As potential threats evolve, States must expand their defensive scenarios, significantly escalating the cost and complexity of deterrence strategies. Over time, military build-ups intended as deterrents may diminish in effectiveness as adversaries learn to adapt strategically. Additionally, the opportunity costs of maintaining large military budgets are considerable, diverting scarce resources from essential public services and socioeconomic development, and further entrenching inequality and insecurity.

A compelling illustration is the continued investment in nuclear arsenals, which, according to one study, in 2023 alone, cost nearly $100 billion globally (ICAN, 2025). Despite reductions in the overall number of nuclear warheads, the number of operational nuclear warheads has risen steadily (SIPRI, 2024b; Kristensen, 2025a, 2025b). Although proponents argue that nuclear deterrence maintains strategic stability, the continued deterioration in the international non-proliferation architecture has elevated the risks of nuclear escalation to levels not seen since the cold war. (Unal, Afina and Lewis, eds., 2020; Hughes et al., 2024; United Nations, 2024d). **The existential threat posed by nuclear weapons underscores the fact that investments in nuclear armaments do not improve security but rather present a grave threat to international peace and human survival** (United Nations, 2018).

6.2 A human-centred, multidimensional approach to security

The concept of security has evolved for several decades, shifting from a traditional State-centric military perspective to a comprehensive, human-centred approach.

At the heart of this concept lies the recognition, reaffirmed by General Assembly resolution 66/290, that security fundamentally encompasses freedom from fear, freedom from want and the opportunity for individuals to achieve their full potential with dignity. True security, therefore, transcends military strength, encompassing the ability to live free from hunger and destitution, to expand one's opportunities throughout life, and to be treated fairly and with dignity. Security remains incomplete, regardless of military strength, when any of these freedoms are absent.

Over time, conceptions of security have increasingly recognized the intrinsic links between development, peace and human rights, emphasizing that genuine security requires the protection and empowerment of people as well as social solidarity. At the core of this approach is the role of "people not as helpless patients, but as agents of change capable of shaping their own futures" (UNDP, 2022, p. iii).

This evolving understanding of security is increasingly essential given a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape, where institutions grapple with declining trust and credibility amid interconnected threats. Addressing these challenges effectively calls for integrated responses that bridge peace, development and human rights. As global dynamics continue to shift, it becomes more critical than ever to recognize that true and lasting security comes not

Figure 25: Comparing State and human-centred security

only from protecting States but by creating conditions for individuals and communities to thrive.

Despite progress on human development indicators, a recent Human Development Report identifies both growing inequalities and violent conflicts as threats making people feel insecure. It argues that a growing sense of risk and fear of being left behind explain the perception of insecurity globally (UNDP, 2022). Addressing these challenges requires preventative measures, community resilience, and inclusive social and economic empowerment.

The international community's recognition of the human-centred approach to security is clearly articulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By prioritizing investments in education, healthcare, gender equality, environmental sustainability and responsive governance, the Agenda links security directly with long-term development goals. Investments in these areas foster conditions for lasting peace, inclusive prosperity and human dignity.

Given complex, interconnected contemporary threats, the international community must reassess its approach to security. Integrating traditional State and military security with a broader, human-centred approach provides a balanced framework to guide resource allocation. Within this integrated security paradigm, expenditures on military and development sectors are not mutually exclusive but complementary, enabling States to address immediate threats while simultaneously tackling root causes of vulnerability.

An integrated, human-centred security model requires collective action by Member States, as underlined in the United Nations Charter. In this context, international cooperation and multilateralism are essential to ease tensions and cultivate an environment to resolve both human-centred and multidimensional security as well as traditional military concerns. **A comprehensive approach advances international obligations under the Charter and international human rights and humanitarian law as well as commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also sets the stage for inclusive, equitable, sustainable development beyond 2030**.

Ultimately, achieving genuine, sustainable security requires investing as much, if not more, in diplomatic, social, environmental and economic instruments as in traditional military measures. Only by embracing a multidimensional and human-centred view of security can the international community effectively respond to interconnected challenges. This is how we create a new era of enduring global peace and stability on a healthy planet.

7. Pathways to peace with sustainable development

7. Pathways to peace with sustainable development

Humanity lives on one planet but in different worlds. The current global landscape demands an immediate, transformative rethinking of collective security and development strategies. At the heart of this urgency is a critical tension: Ever-increasing military expenditure is diverting funds from sustainable development. As military spending rises, propelled by geopolitical threats and intensifying security challenges, its opportunity costs become increasingly glaring. Member States and the international community should come together and reverse this trend. In many Member States, especially those facing fiscal constraints, every additional dollar spent on the military leaves fewer resources for sustainable development. Diverted investments weaken hopes for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, instead of building opportunities for long-term, inclusive peace and development.

With only a fraction of the targets under the Goals on track and significant financing gaps looming, the misallocation of resources poses a formidable concern.

Historically, the post-cold war era witnessed a peace dividend that allowed States to reallocate military funds to social and economic priorities. New geopolitical realities driven by great power competition and intensified regional conflicts have reversed this trend. **The result is a cycle of escalating military investment that stifles human development and feeds systemic instability, undermining Sustainable Development Goal 16 and all other Goals**. This growing imbalance calls for a bold reevaluation of national budget priorities and a global recalibration of policies.

Member States and the international community would benefit from recovering the principles under which the United Nations was established. Looking towards the Organization's centennial, we must urgently recalibrate global security and development strategies to ensure lasting peace and security for current and future generations. Guided by Member States in the Pact for the Future, the international community could consider the following measures.

7.1 An urgent call for action

1. Prioritize diplomacy, peaceful settlement of disputes, and confidence-building measures to address the underlying causes of growing military expenditure through 2030.

- As emphasized in my New Agenda for Peace, trust, solidarity and universality constitute the foundation for friendly relations and cooperation among nations and within societies. Restoring these principles is essential to curbing the growth of military expenditure.
- Member States should actively expand regional and global confidence-building measures, promoting transparency and dialogue as essential tools for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Strengthening international cooperation through revitalized diplomatic and preventive frameworks is crucial. Sustained investments in diplomatic channels and conflict resolution mechanisms must become the cornerstone of collective security.
- To disrupt the perceived inevitability of escalating global military spending, Member States are encouraged to initiate an annual General Assembly debate dedicated specifically to reviewing the state of global military expenditure and progress on the Sustainable Development Goals until 2030.

2. Bring military expenditure to the fore of disarmament discussions, and improve linkages between arms control and development.

- Key intergovernmental bodies such as the United Nations Disarmament Commission and others should focus some discussions on military expenditure and the links between disarmament and development.

- Member States are urged to integrate disarmament and arms control considerations within broader sustainable development frameworks, particularly the post-2030 agenda.

3. Promote transparency and accountability around military expenditure to build trust and confidence among Member States and increase domestic fiscal accountability.

- Promote regional confidence-building measures, such as the sharing of military expenditure information, to enhance transparency, reduce tensions and miscalculations, encourage restraint and decelerate military build-ups.
- Encourage States to adopt public expenditure and financial accountability standards in the defence sector, including internal and external audits and parliamentary oversight.
- Promote a shift towards more accountable private sector behaviour, including in the arms industry, to support sustainable development and civil society participation in military budgeting. This would help to create a virtuous cycle of accountability that generates public confidence and opens opportunities to redirect savings to sustainable development priorities.

4. Reinvigorate multilateral finance for development.

- Build on momentum generated by the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development to ramp up resources for the 2030 Agenda and beyond.
- Ensure that sources of finance address sustainable development and peace. This requires concrete steps to expand fiscal space, address the debt challenges of developing countries and reduce the cost of capital.
- Along with strong commitment to multilateralism, international cooperation and global solidarity, collective action must prioritize enhancing domestic revenue mobilization while strengthening fiscal systems for long-term resilience. This should include progressive tax reforms, where applicable, alongside intensified efforts to combat tax evasion, illicit financial flows and corruption – particularly by high-net-worth individuals and transnational corporations– to ensure fair and effective taxation. The end objective is to collect and spend necessary resources transparently and efficiently, in close alignment with sustainable development.
- Renew commitment to international cooperation in the face of declining official development assistance. Official development assistance is essential for low-income and developing countries, closing funding gaps in education, health, renewable energy and infrastructure. It could free domestic resources for recipients to both confront security challenges and pursue sustainable development.

5. Advance a human-centred approach to security and sustainable development.

- Recognizing that sustainable development is the first line of defence against conflict, it is crucial to balance necessary military spending with sustained investments in people and the planet. Member States should be guided by a human-centred, multidimensional security framework. The Sustainable Development Goals offer a path forward.
- Lasting peace and sustainable development depend not only on the resolve of States but also on the informed participation of civil society. Under the principles of trust, solidarity and universality, citizen and civil society participation is essential for ensuring that scarce public resources are allocated in ways that advance human dignity, social justice and the 2030 Agenda, for current and future generations.

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