



**Message by High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu
On the Global Days of Action on Military Spending**

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Each year, the Global Days of Action on Military Spending challenge us to pause and reflect on the choices we are making, and the world those choices are shaping.

We are living through a period marked by geopolitical tensions, deepening mistrust, and accelerating crises that affect every region of the world. Conflicts continue to devastate communities. Inequality is widening. Climate change is intensifying displacement and instability, and humanitarian needs consistently outpace our collective response. Amid these challenges, global military spending continues to rise.

This troubling trajectory is clearly reflected in the figures released today by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), which show that world military expenditure reached \$2887 billion in 2025, an increase of 2.9% in real terms from 2024, and the eleventh year of consecutive growth.

In 2025, official development assistance (ODA) totaled \$174.3 billion, representing a 23.1% decrease from 2024. Global military spending was more than 16 times higher than total ODA. By comparison, the United Nations regular budget for 2025 was \$3.72 billion, while global military spending exceeded that amount by 776 times.

These trends should give us pause and prompt serious reflection.

We are just four years away from the 2030 deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals. Yet only one in five SDG targets is currently on track, while the annual global financing gap for sustainable development has reached four trillion dollars.

This is not simply a resource gap. It is a priority gap.

As the Secretary-General made clear in his report “The Security We Need: Rebalancing Military Spending for a Sustainable and Peaceful Future”, rising military expenditures are not delivering greater peace or stability. Instead, they risk undermining the very foundations of long-term security and sustainable development.

History has shown us, time and again, that arms races do not lead to peace. They fuel escalation, deepen distrust, and increase the risk of miscalculation. A cycle emerges in which insecurity justifies militarization, and militarization, in turn, breeds further insecurity. Meanwhile, the most pressing threats to humanity such

as climate change, inequality, and food insecurity, remain chronically underfunded.

The opportunity costs are stark.

Every dollar diverted to militarization is a dollar not spent on preventing famine, building schools or strengthening climate resilience. It is a dollar that could be spent on diplomacy, conflict prevention, and advancing human security. The cost of inaction is not abstract. It is measured in lives lost, futures foregone, and trust eroded.

The question before us is not whether States have the right to invest in their militaries to increase their security. They do. Nor is it whether real security threats exist. They certainly do. The question is: what kind of security are we building and at what cost?

True security cannot be measured solely by the size of our arsenals, but by the well-being of our people and the health of our planet. A militarized approach alone cannot address the root causes of conflict, instability, and violence.

The path forward is clear. We must reimagine what security means in the 21st century—and we have the tools to do so. The Secretary-General's report outlines practical steps: placing diplomacy first, strengthening confidence-building measures, ensuring transparency in defence budgets, and redirecting even a fraction of military spending toward sustainable development.

On these Global Days of Action on Military Spending, I urge all of us - governments, civil society, and global citizens - to heed these warnings.

We must champion a human-centered approach to security, rooted in prevention, good governance and aligned with the principles of the UN Charter.

Let us make this moment a turning point. A moment when we choose diplomacy over escalation. Human security over excessive militarization and long-term peace over short-term calculations.

The world does not need more weapons. It needs more trust. It needs more cooperation and more solidarity.

And above all, it needs more peace.