

Forsvarets Bildbyrå Andreas Karlsson



UN Photo/Albert Gonzalez Farran

You get what you pay for!

1

year of the world's military expenditures (USD1464 billion 2008)

or

700

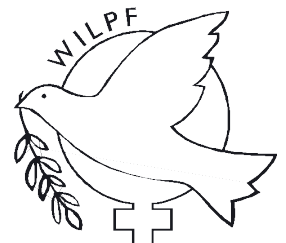
years of the UN regular budget

or

2928

years of the new women's agency

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM





World military spending 2008:
1 464 000 000 000 USD
or 4 000 000 000 USD per day

If you count, one-two-three-four... two hundred... twenty two thousand and one... all the way to one million, it would take 11,5 days without stopping to eat, drink or sleep. To count to one billion it would take 32 years of non-stop counting.

Disarming for gender equality

Achieving universal gender equality is an ambitious goal, one that has been articulated in the UN Charter and many resolutions, conference outcome documents and decisions of governments. It will require a shift in the way we think about gender roles and in the relationship between men and women, boys and girls. Legislation needs to be changed, as well as social attitudes and norms.

Serious financial resources will need to be made available. Compared to military spending, however, the amount required seems ridiculously small. In 2008 the world's military expenditure was

[Funding gender equality, as set out in the Millennium Development Goals, costs less than 20 percent of military spending.](#)

estimated to be US\$ 1,464 billion USD or 217 USD per capita. Funding gender equality, as set out in the Millennium Development Goals, costs less than 20 percent of military spending.

The cost of achieving gender equality

The World Bank has estimated that it would cost US\$ 7-13 per capita to finance interventions directly aimed at achieving gender equality in low-income countries. The amount spent on French military equipment in one year would cover this need for a whole year. The amount that the USA spends on military research and development in one year would be enough to cover this need for five years.

Reducing the gender gap at all levels of education is one indicator of gender equality. Meeting the target of gender parity in secondary education would cost



Khalid tank, riksdom, flitekr.com (Creative Commons)

The annual cost for a basic package of sexual and reproductive health services is estimated to be US\$ 36 billion³, which is only slightly more than what the UK spends on military personnel and equipment in a year.

occupying Iraq (or four days depending on who you ask). Providing sexual and reproductive health services is also essential to expand the life choices available to women, as well as to reach the goal of reduced maternal mortality.

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The Millennium Development Goals and gender equality

The goal of increased gender equality is tightly connected to the other Millennium Development Goals; in fact, gender equality is integral to the achievement of each of the development goals.

According to the World Bank, 35-52 percent of the

about US\$ 3 billion in additional resources.

This equals to less than the cost of 9 days

total funding required to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals will directly or indirectly facilitate the achievement of gender equality objectives.

Investments aimed at increasing gender equality need to be directed towards all sectors of society. The World Bank estimates that over 90 percent of the costs associated with achieving gender equality and women's empowerment are in fact implemented through sector programs, and it is absolutely necessary for governments to invest in gender equality interventions if they hope to achieve the other Millennium Development Goals.

It is possible to reach the Millennium Development Goals, but in order to do so, governments have to fulfill their promises

to increase their official development assistance. The amount necessary for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals

was estimated to be US\$ 135 billion in 2006, rising to US\$ 195 billion in 2015. These figures are respectively equivalent to 0.44 and 0.54 percent of donor GNP.

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In 2007 the USA spent 4.0 percent of its GDP on the military. The UK, France and China are not far behind, spending 2.4, 2.3 and 2 percent of GDP respectively for military purposes.⁹ Governments have undertaken to increase their overseas development assistance to 0.7 percent of national GDP, but in fact we have not witnessed any significant increases of aid since 2004.¹⁰ Instead the world's total military spending continues to increase, and is now almost on the same level as it was by the end of the Cold War.

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Gender aware budgeting

Budgeting is not just a financial exercise; it is a method of planning, prioritizing and decision making that has consequences for people and their environment. Gender budgeting is a tool that takes into account the needs of women and men in their different social and economic positions and therefore helps determine how the prioritization, allocation and spending of resources can contribute to achieving equality between women and men.

As demonstrated above, the enormous amounts of money spent on militarism would be more than enough to finance gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals. This does not mean that cuts in military expenditure would automatically lead to increased resources for gender equality and the advancement of women. To accomplish this, governments in all parts of the world need to introduce gender aware budgeting and reallocate resources spent on the military towards efforts that benefit women and humanity at large. Gender aware budgeting can also help offset some of the negative effects on gender relations caused by militarized societies, by fostering alternative norms, perspectives, and attitudes. Now is the time for governments to meet the challenges of eradicating poverty and achieving gender equality. They can either continue to invest in war and destruction, or they can invest in the future.

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Arms transfer agreements with development nations, Leading Suppliers 2005-2008	Agreement value in millions of USD
USA	55,085
Russia	33,500
United Kingdom	16,800
France	10,500
China	6,100
Germany	3,500
Israel	3,500
Italy	3,500
Spain	2,100
Sweden	1,600

Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 2001-2008
(Congressional Research Service, 7-5700, www.crs.gov)

Top 10 Military Spenders ^a	Spending USD ^b	Spending per capita USD ^c	Contribution to UN regular budget ^d
USA	607 000 000 000	1 967	598 292 101
China	84 900 000 000	63	72 529 320
France	65 700 000 000	1 061	171 356 297
UK	65 300 000 000	1 070	180 629 824
Russia	58 600 000 000	413	32 634 115
Germany	46 800 000 000	568	233 252 334
Japan	46 300 000 000	568	452 091 268
Italy	40 600 000 000	689	138 123 890
Saudi Arabia ^e	38 200 000 000	1 511	20 341 931
India	30 000 000 000	25	12 237 793

a, b, c) SIPRI Yearbook 2009

d) Assessment of Member States' contributions to the United Nations regular budget for the year 2009, ST/ADM/SER.B/755

e) The figures for Saudi Arabia include expenditure for public order and safety and might be slightly overestimates.

References:

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<http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2009/files/SIPRIYB0905.pdf>

<http://www.globalissues.org/article/75/world-military-spending>

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<http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/mdgassessment.pdf>

What would you buy?

One year of the world's military spending



Forsvarets-Bildbyrå
Lasse Sjögren

Over 24 years of the additional foreign aid required to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015



Mauritanian School Class,
John Spooner, flickr.com
(Creative Commons)

43 years of the annual cost required to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health services



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

2928 years of the budget for the new UN women's agency



UN Photo/Marie Frechon

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

www.wilpfinternational.org

WILPF projects:
www.ReachingCriticalWill.org
www.PeaceWomen.org

