



## Economic and Social Council

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Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda\*

**Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women**

### **Statement submitted by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* E/2010/100.



## Statement

Considerable financial resources are required for the implementation of universal gender equality. Compared to military spending, however, the amount required seems small. In 2008, the global military expenditure was \$1,464 billion, or \$217 per capita. Funding gender equality, as set out in the Millennium Development Goals, would cost less than 20 per cent of military spending.

The World Bank has estimated that it would cost \$7 to \$13 per capita to finance intervention 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 United States of America 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 \$3 billion in additional resources. This is less than the cost of four to nine days occupying Iraq. Providing sexual and reproductive health services is also essential to improving the life choices available to women, as well as to reaching the reduced maternal mortality goal contained in the Millennium Development Goals.

The goal of increased gender equality is inextricably linked with 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 to 52 per cent of the total funding required to fulfil 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 per cent of the costs associated with achieving gender equality and women's empowerment are in fact implemented through sector programmes, and that it is critical that Governments invest in gender equality interventions if they hope to achieve the other Millennium Development Goals.

In order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, Governments must fulfil their promises to increase official assistance. The amount necessary for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals was estimated to be \$135 billion in 2006, rising to \$195 billion in 2015. These figures are respectively equivalent to between 0.44 and 0.54 per cent of donor gross national product.

In 2007, the United States of America spent 4.0 per cent of its gross domestic product on the military. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France and China are not far behind, spending 2.4, 2.3 and 2 per cent of gross domestic product, respectively, for military purposes. Governments have undertaken to increase their overseas development assistance to 0.7 per cent of national gross domestic product, but there has not been any significant increase of aid since 2004. At the same time, military expenditure continues to increase.

The amounts spent by Governments on their militaries attests to how much money is available for transformative action. In 2009, the Secretary-General reported that while progress had been made, it had been too slow to enable most of the Millennium Development Goals targets to be reached by 2015. Cuts in military expenditure, with proportional increases in funding for interventions that benefit women and wider society, could put achieving these important goals back on track.