



Women's International
League for Peace and
Freedom
Est. 1915

General Assembly
Human Rights Council
13th Session

Oral Statement: 'You Get What You Pay For- Disarm for Human Rights'

Thank you, Mr President,

The realization of human rights will depend upon a transformation of thinking on security; that is, a shift from a paradigm of security assured by military capacity to one in which 'security' is understood to mean safety from violence, socio-economic and political inequity, poverty, disease and natural disasters. This 'human security' can not be guaranteed by military means alone, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom calls on States to reflect this principle in their budgetary prioritizations.

In 2008, global military expenditure totaled \$1, 464 billion USD, or \$217 USD per capita. There is incredible potential for change if just some of these funds are converted for social use. For instance, the World Bank has estimated that it would cost between \$7-13 USD per capita to achieve gender equality in low-income countries. The amount spent by the French government on military equipment in one year would cover these costs, and the amount spent by the American government on military research and development would cover it for five years.

At the same time, the World Bank has estimated that the annual cost of achieving the Millennium Development Goals will peak at \$195 billion USD in 2015. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned last year that, despite many successes, overall progress has been too slow for most of the targets to be met by this time. Diverting funds away from weapons and military infrastructure and towards providing all those things which we, as global community, have declared to be fundamental human rights could see us on track to achieve the MDGs.

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom calls on States not to be intimidated by the estimated costs of the realization of human rights. The amounts spent by governments on their militaries attests to how much money is available for transformative action. The cost of a single F-16 Fighter stands at \$80million USD, a sum of money which, if converted, could provide meals for over 200million starving people, 92,000 clean water wells, 8.5 million mosquito nets, or over 20,000 schools. The tragic irony is that these are the things which bring real security- but you will always get what you pay for.