



**United Nations Office
for Disarmament Affairs**

High-level Exchange with

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**Follow-up on Resolutions and Decisions Adopted at the Previous Session of
the Committee and Presentation of Reports of the Secretary-General**

As delivered



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New York

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

I am honored to participate in this high-level exchange on behalf of the High Representative, who regrets that she cannot be here today. She is traveling.

At the outset, let me say that both the High Representative and myself have followed the general debate of the Committee.

We are heartened by the high level of engagement.

But we also share the sense of concern expressed by many delegations over the current state of the international security environment—from pressure on humanitarian disarmament frameworks to rising nuclear rhetoric.

I also note reflections on the UN80 Initiative and the need for reform that enables the UN to meet current and future disarmament and non-proliferation challenges.

There were also several mentions of growing levels of military spending across regions and the opportunity costs associated with those rising levels.

This brings me to the **topic of global military expenditure**, which I would like to focus on today.

In 2024, global military spending surged to a record \$2.7 trillion.

Spending is increasing across all global regions with the steepest year-on-year rise since 1988.

Over 100 countries increased their military budgets, with the top ten spenders accounting for 73 percent of the total.

To put the sum of \$2.7 trillion into perspective, allow me to make some comparisons.

\$2.7 trillion dollars equates to:

- The size of the entire Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of all African countries
- More than half the GDP of all Latin American countries
- 750 times the 2024 UN regular budget
- Nearly 13 times the amount of official development assistance from the world's wealthiest nations.

And, while military spending soars, our shared promise of sustainable development is in jeopardy.

Only one in five Sustainable Development Goal targets are on track for 2030.

In the face of this very troubling imbalance, the Secretary-General recently launched a new report titled — *“The Security We Need: Rebalancing Military Spending for a Sustainable and Peaceful Future.”*

The report calls on all of us to fundamentally rethink the relationship between security, disarmament, and development.

At the outset, the report recognizes that since its founding, the United Nations has been a forum for advancing international peace and security alongside inclusive and sustainable development.

Article 26 of the Charter embodies this dual commitment—calling upon Member States to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources.

By laying out current trends, as well as the drivers of global military spending, the report presents a startling view of a world where militarization is crowding out resources for health, education, climate action, and gender equality.

And the Secretary-General acknowledges that this imbalance disproportionately affects low-income and fragile States that are already grappling with considerable challenges.

To meet the moment, the Secretary-General proposes a course of correction.

This course requires not only a reverse of the upward tick in global military spending, but a recommitment to multilateralism and diplomacy.

The report urges Member States to act with foresight and resolve.

To this end, the Secretary-General offers a clear five-point agenda for action.

First, prioritize diplomacy, peaceful settlement of disputes and confidence-building measures that address the underlying causes of growing military expenditure.

Second, bring military expenditure to the forefront of disarmament discussions and improve links between arms control and development.

Discussions such as this one in the First Committee are helpful in contributing to this objective.

Third, promote transparency and accountability around military spending to build trust and confidence between States, while also increasing domestic fiscal accountability.

Fourth, reinvigorate multilateral finance for development.

As the financing gap grows, so does the cost of inaction.

Fifth and finally, advance a human-centered approach to security and sustainable development.

True security is multidimensional and best achieved through a human-centered approach grounded in rights, equity, and sustainability.

We need a new vision of human-centered security that safeguards people, not just borders, and prioritizes institutions, equity, and planetary sustainability.

It is my hope that this report will serve as a catalyst for renewed dialogue, one that challenges the status quo and inspires bold, transformative action.

Before concluding, I wish to address the traditional topic of **“Follow-up on Resolutions and Decisions Adopted at the Previous Session of the Committee and Presentation of Reports of the Secretary General.”**

In line with recent practice, I will forgo providing a detailed account of the views received pursuant to requests by the General Assembly.

Those details will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in an annex to this statement.

Nevertheless, allow me to provide a few brief observations.

16 reports of the Secretary-General inviting information and views of States were prepared for the 80th session of the General Assembly.

The reports containing information by Member States relating to military expenditures and transfers of conventional arms continue to elicit a large number of submissions—62 and 67, respectively.

The number of reports submitted to both transparency instruments has increased this year compared to the previous year, which is a welcome development.

This year, the first-time report of the Secretary-General on “Artificial intelligence in the military domain” received 32 submissions from States.

Several additional submissions were made and received after the publication deadline.

As has been mentioned in this briefing before, States clearly assign value to reports on so-called “new” issues— insofar as no report to the General Assembly had been prepared on the topic previously.

A compilation of views on such topics importantly informs future multilateral deliberation, particularly with a view to further action by the General Assembly.

Similarly, I note that the report of the Secretary-General on “Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification” received 18 replies from States.

This report requested *concrete* views on options for the establishment of such a group, thereby serving as a vehicle for States to express very specific opinions.

With a clear and specific request for views, I believe the report was a useful tool for all States’ further consideration of the group’s possible objectives, mandate and modalities.

In contrast, and for the majority of reports on topics that have been carried over from year to year, the replies have hovered around the same low number for several sessions.

Most of the reports received fewer than 10 replies.

Against the backdrop of the UN80 Initiative, it is especially important to consider the value of such reports.

I thank you very much for your attention.

Table I. Reports of the Secretary-General presented to the First Committee at its eightieth session that include a mandate to request information from or views of Member States

	Title	Symbol	Substantive content	Responses to requests for information and views ¹	
				Replies	Proportion of Sponsors & Co-Sponsors
1	Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East PART. I	A/80/130 (Part I)	Views from Governments	7	1/1
2	Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels	A/80/160	Views from Governments	7	0/4
3	Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context	A/80/161	Views from Governments	6	0/11
4	Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region	A/80/123	Views from Governments	5	3/24
5	Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons	A/80/163	Views from Governments	5	5/64
6	Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security	A/80/78	Views from Governments	32	2/2
7	Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction	A/80/164	Views from Governments	9	6/90
8	Relationship between disarmament and development	A/80/125	Views from Governments	4	0/1
9	Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control	A/80/124	Views from Governments	7	0/1
10	Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and nonproliferation	A/80/126	Views from Governments	8	0/1
11	Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament	A/80/127	Views from Governments	5	0/1
12	Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification	A/80/93	Views from Governments	18	2/2
13	Comprehensive study of the question of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in all its aspects	A/79/950	Views from Governments	17	9/56
14	Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation	A/80/165	Views from Governments	9	7/86

¹ Group submissions and European Union is counted as one State; late submissions are not reflected.

15	Transparency in armaments (UNROCA)	A/80/226	Information from Governments	67	37/47
16	Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures (MILEX)	A/80/225	Information from Governments	62	28/32