Topics for discussion (continued)

2. Military transparency in post-conflict settings
The more insecure an environment, the more important it is for countries to be open about national intentions and strategies. States in regions coming out of conflict, and newly independent countries and their neighbours may particularly benefit from using the UN Report on Military Expenditures.

For countries where defence sector reform is planned, reporting current military spending by category of expenditure may provide a baseline assessment of military priorities, which can constitute a sensible and transparent start of the reform process.

- Should peacemakers include military transparency in their toolbox?
- Can a government's report on military expenditures kick-start its Security Sector Reform?

3. Building trust within a region by discussing military budgets
Sharing military expenditures is important for increasing trust between governments anywhere in the world. But having this information available is only the first step in confidence building. As a follow-up measure, authorities from different countries may wish to meet and discuss their respective military budgets, e.g. within their regional contexts.

- Is discussing military matters in a regional context appropriate in any region in the world?
- Is there a role for the UN to encourage such regional discussions?
- How do regional organizations fit in?

Programme

1:15pm Opening by Ms. Virginia Gamba, Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

1:30pm Presentation of new UN military expenditures database

1:45pm Roundtable discussion on military expenditures, with introductions by Mr. Randy Rydell, Head, Strategic Planning Unit, UNODA

2:30pm Closing remarks

www.un.org/disarmament/convarsms/Milex

Roundtable on transparency in military spending

Wednesday, 16 October 2013
1:15 - 2:40m
United Nations, Conference Room 7, NLB

At an estimated $1 750 000 000 000 in 2012, global military spending remains at historically high levels.

But all countries have agreed to the principle that military spending should be so low that it would least impact ‘human and economic resources’.

Excessive military spending has vast hidden human and social costs.

Since the 1980s, the UN has collected and published military expenditures data provided by governments. All of this data is now available on an interactive, easy-to-use UN Web platform.

It’s a good occasion to reflect on why we do this. How important is it to be transparent on military spending? Who benefits? How can the submitted information be put to use?

UNODA’s round-table discussion will seek the views of anyone interested in the topic: representatives, NGOs, academics, and others.
The UN Report on Military Expenditures\(^1\) was established in 1981 to enhance transparency in States’ military spending. Annually, governments are invited to send to the UN their military expenses of the previous fiscal year. We then make this information available through reports and our website.

\(^1\) Originally known as the UN Standardized Reporting on Military Expenditures

### Topics for discussion

1. ‘Excessive’ military spending

States have the sovereign right to determine what is needed for their self-defence and for an effective national contribution to peacekeeping.

At the same time, restraint in military spending is a commitment shared by all countries: by signing up to the UN Charter, they have agreed to “the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources” (Article 26).

- What could be avenues for determining better the military needs of a country?
- Are there other ways to identify when military spending is excessive?
- How can transparency assist in bringing down defence budgets?