

# You get what you pay for!

**1** *year of US military research*  
*US\$ 69 billion*

or

**5** *years of promoting gender equality*  
*US\$ 65 billion*

## Disarming for gender equality

Achieving universal gender equality is an ambitious goal, one that was 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 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 amounts required seem ridiculously small. In 2006 the world's military expenditure was estimated to be US\$ 1,204 billion or US\$ 184 per capita.<sup>1</sup> 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 year while 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 about US\$ 3 billion in additional resources.<sup>2</sup> This equals to less than the cost of 9 days 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. The annual cost for a basic package of sexual and reproductive health services is estimated to be US\$ 36 billion<sup>3</sup>, which is only slightly more than what the UK spends on military personnel and equipment in a year.<sup>4</sup>

### 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.

Top 5 military spenders	Military spending in US\$ (2006) <sup>5</sup>	Contribution to the UN regular budget in US\$ (2006) <sup>6</sup>
USA	538.7 billion	423.5 million
UK	59.2 billion	104.6 million
France	53.1 billion	102.9 million
China	49.5 billion (estimated)	35.0 million
Japan	43.7 billion	346.4 million

According to the World Bank, 35-52 percent of the 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. According to the World Bank, 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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup> The USA is spending 4.1 percent of GDP on the military. The UK, France and China are not far behind, spending 2.7, 2.5 and 2 percent of GDP respectively for military purposes.<sup>9</sup> Governments have under-



taken 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.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup>

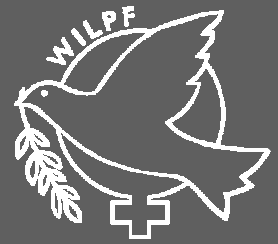
### **Gender aware budgeting**

Budgeting is not just a financial exercise; it is a method of planning, priority setting 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 automatically would 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 take a stand. They can either continue to invest in war and destruction, or they can meet the challenge of eradicating poverty and gender inequality and invest in the future.





# What would you buy?

**US\$ 613 million**

One Litoral Combat Ship (LCS)<sup>12</sup>



**OR**

**US\$ 613 million**

Sending 6.8 million children to school in Afghanistan for nine years<sup>13</sup>



**US\$ 1.7 billion**

US annual spending on unmanned vehicles per year<sup>14</sup>



**OR**

**US\$ 1.7 billion**

Saving the life of 7.4 million women or infants in the case of complications during pregnancy or delivery in low income countries<sup>15</sup>



**US\$ 34 billion**

UK military personnel and equipment per year<sup>16</sup>



**OR**

**US\$ 34 billion**

Approximated required annual cost by 2015 to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health services<sup>17</sup>



**US\$ 1,204 billion**

World's total military expenditure 2006<sup>18</sup>



**OR**

**US\$ 1,204 billion**

The United Nations regular budget for almost 600 years (annual budget 2006: US\$ 1.9 billion)<sup>19</sup>



Endnotes: <sup>1</sup> SIPRI; <sup>2,3</sup> The Financial Requirements of Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, paper prepared for the World Bank; <sup>4</sup> SIPRI; <sup>5</sup> SIPRI; <sup>6</sup> UN; <sup>7</sup> The Financial Requirements; <sup>8</sup> MilleniumProject - Commissioned by the UN Secretary General and supported by the UN Development Group; <sup>9</sup> SIPRI; <sup>10</sup> The Millennium Development Goals Report, United Nations, 2007; <sup>11</sup> SIPRI; <sup>12,14</sup> Executive Office of the President of the United States: Department of Defense; <sup>13</sup> The Hunger Site Store; <sup>15</sup> Maternal mortality at a glance, paper prepared for the World Bank; <sup>16</sup> SIPRI; <sup>17</sup> The Financial Requirements; <sup>18</sup> SIPRI; <sup>19</sup> United Nations Association of the USA

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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