

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté

Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad

Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO; Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF.



“No Development without Disarmament”

Written Statement by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom for the 58th Commission on the Status of Women (March 2014)

Militarization, and cultures of militarism, are double-edged swords against peace: with one hand, they exacerbate violence; with the other, they raid the coffers of peace.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) calls for a post 2015 development agenda that invests in gender equality and peace for sustainable development rather than current investments in degenerative development, inequality and violence. It is vital that we change our course to adopt an integrated approach to security that invests in equality, sustainable development and peace rather than inequality, militarism, and war. Therefore, the agenda must be deeply as well as widely inclusive of disarmament, human rights, and the women-peace-security (WPS).

WILPF members around the world call on the Commission and international community to take the following actions:

- Reduce military spending and arms production towards total and universal disarmament
- Redirect resources from military spending to achieve human security, environment sustainability, and economic justice; and
- Promote women's full and equal participation and rights in all relevant processes; and

Total and universal disarmament

Weapons are tools of war, which is used to create a culture of fear and violence. Since our founding in 1915, WILPF has called for total and universal disarmament, in particular through international agreements.

Conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, are used to wreak havoc and take lives. High-tech and emerging weapons technologies such as nuclear weapon and drone are used as political tools to manipulate international relations, destabilize our planet and undermine human rights. Environmental degradation and its incapacitating effect on sustainability and community health is similarly caused and exacerbated by conflict, the military industrial complex, arms production and consumption and moreover by the dangerous use and lasting effects of depleted uranium, the remnants of war and unsustainable mining.

Reduction of military spending and arms production

Military spending and militarism also raid financing and opportunities for women's human rights, development, and peace.

In 2011, global military spending was more than US\$1.7 trillion. This amount is equivalent to over 24 years of the foreign aid required to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. It is also equivalent to 700 years of the United Nation's regular budget, or to 2,928 years of UN Women.

Many countries spend money on weapons and war, or clean-up from war, while struggling to meet their objectives on socio-economic development, or their obligations to equal human rights. The reduction of weapons production and expenditure on military personnel and equipment would help free up resources for human rights based development, and provide a foundation for long term sustainable peace.

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Women's participation

Rather than investing in militarism and arms, we call on states to invest in women's full and equal participation and rights as a foundation for peace. We call on member states to take concrete action and financing to uphold their obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill women's equal human rights, progressively and without retrogression.

Women have paid the cost of militarization and arms proliferation for too long—economically and physically—and they must be included in developing relevant solutions. Disarmament, and a redirection of resources from military spending to gender equitable socioeconomic development, will be crucial in securing that adequate resources are directed towards realizing women's rights to equal participation and ensuring inclusive development and peace for all.

Conclusion

There can be no development without disarmament and women's full and equal human rights.

WILPF reaffirms our commitment to the realization of sustainable peace. We ask governments to strengthen commitments to an integrated approach that promotes people over profit, and human over military security. Human security, not just military security must be the bottom line. In doing so, we can turn our swords to ploughshares and change course from investing in inequality, degenerative development and violence to equality, sustainable development, and peace.