

The Canadian government's current consultations on the issue is a way of "taking it seriously." The views of a broad range of governments, individuals and NGOs are being solicited to develop options for pursuing its policy objective to:

"enhance the impact and effectiveness as of development assistance by promoting effective budgetary allocations oriented to sustainable development and corresponding reductions in military expenditures in developing countries."

Your paper will be an important contribution to this consultation effort. To that end I would ask you to provide analysis which clarifies the arguments of the NGO community in your region, either in support of or against proposals for aid conditionality related to levels of military spending in aid recipient countries.

Your paper should provide a basic non-governmental assessment of the feasibility and desirability of applying conditions to development assistance as a means of promoting reductions in military spending in developing countries. Several additional and related questions could be addressed as well:

1. How should military spending be defined? There is not uniformity on the kinds of expenditures included in military budgets (e.g., distinctions between spending for national defence as compared to spending for domestic security; spending on other security institutions, intelligence agencies, national police, and so on).
2. What constitutes "excessive" military spending? Is it possible to develop objective measures for determining appropriate or legitimate levels of military spending, taking into account the regional security environment, levels of military spending by other countries in the region, the degree of civilian control over military priorities and operations, levels of resources available for economic and social development, and so on. Or, if a clear objective measurement is not possible, are there ways of making subjective measurements less arbitrary?
3. What measures can be taken to reduce the level of demand for military equipment and arms imports (and production) in developing countries?