



# **Briefing on the Report of the Secretary-General on Human Security (A/66/763)**

6 September 2012

10 – 11 a.m.

Lima, Peru



## What were the key driving forces in the emergence of human security?

- Over the past two decades, there has been growing evidence that **people are threatened** not only by **international war and internal conflicts** but also by **chronic and persistent poverty, climate-related disasters, organised crime, human trafficking, health pandemics, and sudden economic and financial downturns.**
- Moreover, there has been the recognition that these threats, **if not addressed**, can result **in more intractable crisis** that can **spill-over into broader national, regional and international insecurities.**
- Therefore, the guarantee of peace and security, development and human rights for a growing number of Member States required a **new framework** based on the **survival, livelihood and dignity of people.**



## Agreement on human security at the 2005 World Summit

- **Paragraph 143**, entitled, “human security”, the Heads of State and Government recognized:
  - the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair;
  - all individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want;
  - with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential.
- This agreement was pivotal in **galvanizing interest in the notion of human security and its application** at the General Assembly.



## Discussions on human security at the GA

Since 2005, **informal and formal debates on human security have been held at the General Assembly:**

- **Informal debate - May 2008**
- **Formal Plenary** [first report of the S-G] - **May 2010**  
in July 2010, the GA adopted resolution 64/291
- **Informal debate - April 2011**
- **Formal Plenary** [second report of the S-G] - **July 2012**



## Overview of the Report

- The Report **starts with a summary of discussions on human security at the General Assembly since 2005.**
- Based on these inputs, the Report **outlines key aspects** towards forming a common understanding on the notion of human security, **including its core values, scope, application, and the actors responsible** for its advancement.
- From there, **a common understanding on human security is proposed** for the consideration of Member States.
- **Next, the application of human security and its added value to the work of the UN** is presented in four possible areas, as well as the **work of the UNTFHS.**
- The Report **closes with a set of recommendations.**



## Towards a common understanding

- **Core values**

- Ensuring the survival, livelihood and dignity of people.
- Underscoring the universality and interdependence of a set of freedoms that are fundamental to human life.

- **Scope**

- Focuses on widespread and cross-cutting threats facing people.
- Multi-dimensional and comprehensive.
- Does not entail the threat or the use of force.
- Distinct from the responsibility to protect.

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- **Approach**

- Rather than a lofty ideal, it is a practical tool to better assess and respond to threats facing people.
- Addresses root causes as well as structural and behavioral conditions.
- Identifies priorities based on the actual needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of Governments and people.
- Strengthens the protection and empowerment of individuals and their communities through people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented strategies.

- **Actors**

- Governments retain the primary role.
- International community, regional and sub-regional organizations, as well as civil society , local communities and individuals also play a critical role.



## A common understanding on human security

- a) Human security **upholds the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair.**
- b) Human security aims at ensuring the **survival, livelihood and dignity of all individuals, particularly those most vulnerable, to widespread and cross cutting threats.**
- c) Human security underscores **the universality of a set of freedoms that are fundamental to human life** -- in developing and developed countries alike.
- d) Human security **recognizes the inter-linkages between peace and security, development and human rights, and equally considers civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.**

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- e) Human security calls for **people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses** that **strengthen the protection and empowerment of individuals and their communities.**
- f) Human security is best realized through **proactive actions** that **help mitigate the impact of current** and, where possible, **prevent the occurrence of future threats.**
- g) Since the **conditions for human security vary significantly across and within countries, and at different points in time**, human security **promotes responses** that are **contextually driven** and therefore **give rise to more immediate and tangible benefits to people and Governments.**

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- h) Governments **retain the primary role for ensuring the survival, livelihood and dignity of their citizens.** The responsibility of the international community is to complement and provide the necessary support to Governments, upon their request, so as to strengthen their capacities.
- i) Human security is a **dynamic and practical policy framework to address threats in a coherent and comprehensive manner.**
- j) The notion of human security is **distinct from the responsibility to protect and its implementation.**
- k) Human security **does not entail the threat or the use of force.** It is implemented with **full respect of the UN Charter**, including **sovereignty of States, territorial integrity** and **non-interference** in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States.



## **Areas of UN activities where a human security approach can be useful to the work of the Organization**

- Health and related challenges**
- Climate change and climate related hazard events**
- Post-conflict peacebuilding**
- Global financial and economic crisis and MDG**



## Health and related challenges

- Improvements in health are not only dependent on **availability of healthcare and disease prevention**, but are also shaped by **social, economic and environmental conditions**.
- In some regions, **poverty, inadequate housing, lack of sanitation, and poor environmental conditions** may be the major contributing factors to ill health. While, in other regions, **the lack of an integrated protection and empowerment framework** may be the main cause.
- Furthermore, sudden crisis such as **natural disasters or economic downturns can put enormous pressure on healthcare systems** and can further deteriorate the health status of countries and, in particular, the most vulnerable.
- The application of the human security approach **looks at the roots causes and highlights the specific factors that contribute to ill-health**. Based on a more comprehensive analysis of the conditions confronting people, **more targeted and effective responses** can be promoted.



## Climate change and climate-related hazard events

- The **human consequences of climate change are multiple and devastating in nature**. The convergence of climate change with demographic trends, rapid urbanization, and increased competition over dwindling water and natural resources can result in social stresses with far reaching implications for national, regional and international stability.
- By focusing attention on the combined risks of climate-related threats, the human security approach **improves and expands the required information on the level, trend, and distribution of risks and vulnerabilities across and within countries**. Subsequently, **evidence-based protection and empowerment strategies can be developed**.
- The combination of these measures can result in **improved early warning systems, more resilient coping mechanisms, and better tailored adaptation strategies to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the people on the ground**. Taken together, they can help **reduce the human, economic and social costs of disasters**.



## Post-conflict peacebuilding

- **Peacebuilding is a complex process.** The challenge is to **build genuine partnerships that strengthen coexistence and reconciliation, improve public safety, re-establish the rule of law, revitalize the economy, and restore basic services to all segments of the population, in particular those most affected by the conflict.**
- By applying the **four principles of human security** as well as the **protection and empowerment** framework, the application of human security helps **societies recover from the aftermath of conflicts** as well as **minimize the space in which societies may relapse into conflicts.**
- In particular, by **placing community level efforts at the forefront**, human security **underscores the significant role that local actors can play** in underlining the importance of **people's rights to civil, political, economic, social and cultural freedoms, developing early warning systems, and advancing inclusive practices** that restore trust in local and national institutions and return stability to post-conflict situations.



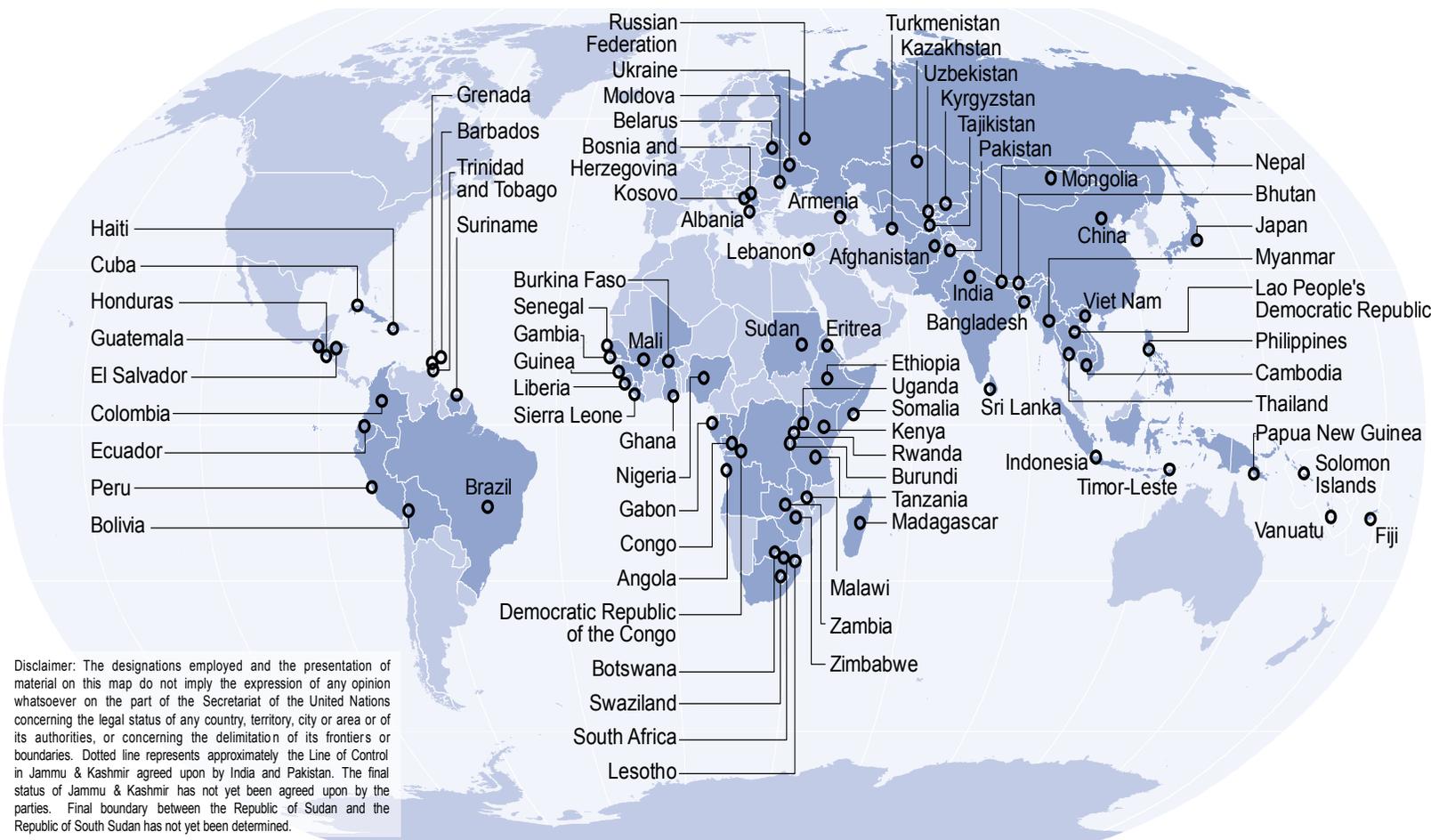
## Global financial and economic crisis and MDGs

- Global recessions generate insecurities in all countries, including prosperous ones. However, **the depth, severity, and impact of global recessions vary significantly between regions, countries, and population groups.**
- In addition to improved early warning systems and adequate emergency lending mechanisms, **a better understanding of the differential impact of these crises on groups, particularly the most vulnerable, and areas within countries, is urgently needed.**
- A human security analysis will not only **result in more targeted and tangible improvements to the well-being of those most at risk, but it will also limit the negative impacts of these crises on other areas such as food, health, environment, etc. This could help limit the convergence of these vulnerabilities, which if neglected, could have dire consequences.**



## UNTFHS

With support to **over 200 projects in 70 countries**, the UNTFHS has played an important role in translating human security into **practical actions that have helped the most vulnerable communities and people around the world.**





## UN Trust Fund for Human Security

- UNTFHS projects have covered a wide range of cross-cutting issues worldwide. While not exhaustive, the following are **some of the areas covered by the UNTFHS**:
  - Transition to peace and sustainable development in fragile and conflict-affected communities.
  - Social, economic, and environmental components of health-related insecurities.
  - Protecting and empowering refugees, IDPs, economic migrants and others on the move.
  - Responding to the multidimensional consequences of climate-related threats.
  - Urban violence and its impact on health, education, economic, personal and community security.
  - Poverty reduction, social inclusion and community-based development in isolated areas.

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UNTFHS-funded projects have:

- Resulted in a deeper analysis of the causes and manifestations of complex and interconnected threats and their impact on the survival, livelihood and dignity of communities.
- Provided new perspectives for the development of interventions, particularly where existing responses have proved insufficient.
- Reduced duplication and strengthened the development of solutions that are targeted and prioritized based on the actual needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of those impacted.
- Highlighted the lack of protection and empowerment conditions that can perpetuate insecurities.
- Provided examples of successful multi-stakeholder collaborations that have fortified existing partnerships and promoted avenues for new collaborations among UN organizations, Governments and local communities.

## Recommendations

- Consider and **agree upon a common understanding on human security.**
- Support the **application of human security in the work of the UN** and reflect on how best to apply in UN activities.
- Take note of the lessons learned from project activities funded by the UNTFHS and **expand the application of human security to national and sub-national levels.**
- Encourage States to **give financial support to the UNTFHS.**
- Invite the S-G to **report on progress in applying human security** and the lessons learnt **at national and sub-national levels to the General Assembly** every two years.



**Thank you**

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