



High-Level Event on Human Security

New York, 8 May 2013

Concept Note

Summary

In September 2012, the General Assembly adopted, by consensus, resolution 66/290 “Follow-up to paragraph 143 on human security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome”. This resolution marks a significant milestone on a common understanding on human security which forms the basis for the implementation of human security within the United Nations (UN) system. Thirteen years since the establishment of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, the resolution provides an important opportunity to reflect on the achievements and challenges in the implementation of human security and to mobilize support to further advance the notion of human security.

In this regard, a High-Level Event on Human Security will be held at UN Headquarters in New York on 8 May 2013. The event will cover, among others, the following key areas:

- What has been achieved since the inclusion of human security in paragraph 143 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome?
- What have been the achievements and challenges in translating the notion of human security into practical actions?
- Ways forward for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 66/290.

The Notion of Human Security

The complexity and interrelatedness of both old and new threats – from chronic and persistent poverty to internal violence, human trafficking, climate change, health pandemics and sudden economic and financial downturns – threaten the lives and livelihoods of millions of people around the world. These threats seriously challenge both Governments and people and call for a broader understanding of security that centers directly on people.

While national security remains pivotal to peace and stability, the impact of today’s complex and multidimensional challenges reveal our shared vulnerabilities to a growing risk of threats that are widespread and cross-cutting. Whether caused by internal or external factors, today’s threats heighten the recognition that insecurities can spread rapidly within and across nations, and give rise to more intractable crises that not only challenge individuals but often spill-over into broader national, regional and international security threats.

At the same time, opportunities for removing insecurities are larger now than ever before. The unprecedented combination of resources and technology means that we have the tools, the knowledge and the resources to make measurable progress towards the achievement of human security. To harness these opportunities, decision makers and practitioners must recognize that the guarantee of security requires a new framework where the survival, livelihood and dignity of people forms the basis for

achieving peace, development and human progress at every level – local, national, regional and international.

The United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security

In 1999, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) was established in the UN Secretariat. The UNTFHS supports projects led by UN organizations which translate the human security approach into practical actions, in particular those at the field level, to demonstrate its added-value in addressing multiple insecurities. Administered by the Human Security Unit, the UNTFHS has financed over 200 projects which bring concrete and sustainable benefits to vulnerable people and communities threatened in their survival, livelihood and dignity.

Commission on Human Security and the Advisory Board on Human Security

In 2001, the Commission on Human Security (CHS) was established under the co-chairmanship of Mrs. Sadako Ogata and Professor Amartya Sen to mobilize support and provide a concrete framework for the application of human security. In 2003, the Commission published its final report, “Human Security Now”. Based on the recommendations of the CHS, an Advisory Board on Human Security (ABHS) was created to promote human security and advise the Secretary-General on the management of the UNTFHS.

Human Security at the General Assembly

With the inclusion of paragraph 143 on human security in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (A/RES/60/1), discussions on human security progressively gained acceptance throughout the UN and the first informal thematic debate on human security was held at the General Assembly in May 2008. Subsequently, in 2010 the Secretary-General issued his first report on human security, which was followed by a panel discussion and plenary meeting at the General Assembly in May of the same year. A second report was issued in 2012, followed again by a plenary debate at the General Assembly in June 2012. This culminated in the adoption by the General Assembly of the consensus resolution 66/290 “Follow-up to paragraph 143 on human security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome”. In this resolution, Member States agreed on a common understanding on human security which forms the basis for the implementation of human security within the UN system.

High Level Event on Human Security

On 8 May 2013, a high-level event will be held at UN Headquarters in New York. The event aims to follow-up on General Assembly resolution 66/290 and to mobilize support for the advancement of human security within the United Nations and beyond.

The event will be opened by the Secretary-General followed by statements from Mrs. Sadako Ogata, former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency and co-Chair of the Commission on Human Security (CHS) and Mr. Surin Pitsuwan, former Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and member of the CHS. Ms. Sonia Picado, Chair of the ABHS, will proceed by outlining the perspective of the Board on human security and its application. This will be accompanied by a brief documentary on the notion of human security and the work of the UNTFHS. An interactive panel discussion will follow on the application of human security; lessons learned and challenges from implementing the human security approach; as well as the added value of the approach to the work of the United Nations. Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General will close the meeting with remarks on the way forward.

The event will be attended by Members of the Advisory Board and Commission on Human Security, UN Member States, and senior officials from UN agencies, funds and programmes, as well as selected institutions, NGOs/CSOs, and prominent individuals with an interest in human security and related issues.