



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

28 April, 2014

Excellency,

I have the honour to inform that I will convene a thematic debate on Human Security, in order to provide Member States with an opportunity to have an exchange of views on the third report of the Secretary-General on human security (A/68/685) and to discuss how human security might be included in the next development framework.

This half-day debate will take place from 3 to 6pm on 18 June, 2014 and will be composed of an opening session, an interactive panel discussion and a closing session. A Concept Note for this thematic debate is attached hereto. Detailed information on the Programme will be provided closer to the event.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John W. Ashe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

John W. Ashe

To All Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers
to the United Nations

CONCEPT NOTE
Thematic Debate
**“Responding to the opportunities and challenges of the 21st Century:
Human Security and the post-2015 development agenda”**
18 June 2014

Background

The 1994 UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) launched human security as a distinctive concept within the United Nations, broadly defined as ‘freedom from fear’ and ‘freedom from want’. The 1994 HDR characterized human security as “safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression, as well as protection from sudden and harmful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities.”

Furthermore, the adoption of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (WSO) Document by the General Assembly was pivotal in raising awareness and interest in the concept of human security. Paragraph 143 of WSO (General Assembly Resolution 60/1) stresses “the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair ... Recognizes that 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 ... And commits the Heads of State and Government to discussing and defining the notion of human security in the General Assembly.”

Building upon this political framework, as well as on the work of UN membership (catalysed by the Human Security Network and the Friends of Human Security) and the reports of the UN Secretary General (A/64/701; A/66/763), on 10 September 2012, the General Assembly adopted by consensus the resolution “Follow up to paragraph 143 on human security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome” (A/66/290). The resolution reflects the agreement of the Member States on a common understanding of human security, having at its core the following elements:

- the right of people to live in freedom and dignity;
- people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses;
- human security recognizes interlinkages between peace, development and human rights, and equally considers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights;
- human security is distinct from responsibility to protect; it does not entail the threat or use of force or coercive measures; it does not replace State security;
- human security is based on national ownership; it seeks national solutions, which are compatible with local realities;
- governments retain primary responsibility for ensuring the survival, livelihood and dignity of their citizens; international community

complements these efforts, while greater cooperation and partnership is required among Governments, international and regional organizations and civil society;

- human security does not entail additional legal obligations to states.

The latest report of the Secretary General (A/68/685) provides an overview of experiences and lessons learned on the application of human security. These examples illustrate the value of the human security approach to reduce the likelihood of conflict, overcome the obstacles to sustainable development and provide a life of dignity for all.

Objective

This thematic debate will enable Member States to respond to the recommendations contained in the latest report of the Secretary-General (A/68/685) and also provide an opportunity for an exchange of views on how human security could be included in the next development framework.

The debate will build upon existing good practices at national, regional and international level, which have demonstrated the positive effect of the use of human security as an integrative approach towards peace, development and human rights for all.

In order to stir discussions, the application of human security will be assessed from the perspective of national planning processes towards inclusive social development, inclusive economic development, environmental sustainability and peace and security. A comparative presentation of human security experiences along with specific examples will be considered. In addition to these national experiences, two topical issues will further animate discussions. One will focus on the diverse causal processes of climate change and their impact on people and their communities (in light of the IPCC report, 2014), and the other on addressing disparities and inequalities, in particular with respect to women in situations of vulnerability. In all these cases, by considering the context, the root causes and the manifestation of a broad range of challenges on Governments and people, the human security approach shows its value as a flexible and responsive framework that is aptly suited to the current discussions on the post-2015 Development Agenda.

Questions to stimulate discussion:

What could be the added value of the human security approach and its principles (people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific, prevention-oriented through the protection and empowerment framework) to the post-2015 Development Agenda?

How can the human security approach assist Governments and other actors in addressing current and emerging challenges that are multiple, complex and interrelated?

How can the human security approach be integrated as an overarching framework into national development plans?

Recognizing that threats to individuals and communities vary considerably across and within countries, how can the human security approach ensure that development policies are inclusive and therefore result in greater human progress, peace and dignity for all?

What partnerships does human security propel in the achievement of the post-2015 development agenda?

Format and Outcome

The thematic debate will consist of an opening segment, one panel discussion facilitated by a moderator and a closing segment. The outcome of the thematic debate will be a summary.

Participants

The thematic debate will include participation of Member States, Observers, UN Agencies and representatives of civil society, private sector, and other relevant stakeholders.