Human Security and Agenda 2030

United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security

Echoing human security principles, the 2030 Agenda emphasizes a "world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want ... free of fear and violence ... with equitable and universal access to quality education, health care and social protection ... to safe drinking water and sanitation ... where food is sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious ... where habitats are safe, resilient and sustainable ... and where there is universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy".

It calls for development strategies that result in more resilient societies where people are safe from chronic threats such as abject poverty, hunger, disease, violence and repression, and protected from sudden and hurtful disruptions in their daily lives.

Based on a wealth of experiences in over 90 countries, the application of human security can significantly enhance actions taken by the global community, Member States, civil society and United Nations entities to fully realize the transformative promise of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Setting priorities, achieving integration

Human security is grounded in the fundamental recognition of the differing capacities, needs and circumstances of people, civil society and Governments. It seeks to establish participatory solutions that protect and empower all people.

By being comprehensive and by drawing together all the actors necessary to respond to a challenge, the application of human security ensures coherence, eliminates duplication and advances integrated solutions that result in more effective and tangible improvements in the daily lives of people and their communities.

Human security serves as both an analytical lens and a programming framework that complements and enriches mechanisms to attain the SDGs. Human security initiatives engage closely with people to uncover their specific needs and vulnerabilities, and advance policies and actions based on their priorities, resulting in sustainable development gains across and within countries.

Cutting the roots of exclusion

The human security approach addresses the root causes of social exclusion and highlights the impact of income and other inequalities on broader development. Examples drawn from human security programmes demonstrate clear returns. In Kenya, Mongolia, Nepal and Paraguay, for example, local disaggregation of social and economic indicators uncovered various forms of exclusion that impeded women, minority groups and economically marginalized people from accessing essential public services and economic opportunities.

Subsequently, services were tailored to meet their specific needs, taking account of elements such as language, gender and culture. National and local priorities were established as part of advancing an inclusive development process reaching the most marginalized, and fostering greater overall well-being and social harmony, with significant gains across countries.

Learn more: www.un.org/humansecurity/
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Linking peace and sustainable development

Progress on the Millennium Development Goals proved slowest in fragile and conflict-affected countries. Where violence is rife, and trust in people and institutions is lacking, development that fails to address the structural and behavioural causes of violence often falls short of preventing a relapse into crisis. The human security approach helps clarify how diverse issues—ranging from deprivation in all its forms to violence and environmental degradation—interact and require comprehensive, context-specific solutions.

Human security, based on its core vision to achieve freedom from fear, want and indignity, can help address challenges stemming from and resulting in persistent conflicts, marginalization and abject poverty. It emphasizes the triangular relationship between peace and security, development and human rights, highlighting their indispensable connections. This means, for example, that poverty reduction strategies are attuned to root causes and remedial solutions to stem violence and other forms of fragility, and stop their impact on the achievement of inclusive and sustainable development.

Bringing together the UN system

Human security can support the United Nations system to build on its unique position to facilitate integrated actions to achieve the SDGs in a more people-centred, comprehensive, sustainable and inclusive manner. By providing organizations, large and small, with a new way to address root causes of development deficits, and to prioritize, integrate and promote targeted and people-centred solutions, the application of human security can result in a stronger United Nations response.

The application of human security does not add additional layers to the work of the United Nations. Rather, it builds on and strengthens existing frameworks by closing potential gaps; combining existing tools to accelerate delivery and make better use of scarce resources; and deepening collaboration.

Beyond bringing the United Nations system closer together, the human security approach offers an important framework for the United Nations to help Member States initiate multi-stakeholder partnerships essential to the high ambitions of Agenda 2030. These bring people from all backgrounds to work together, on many fronts, to take on and conquer complex challenges posed by abject poverty, hunger, disease, violence and repression.