

Framework for Cooperation for the system-wide application of Human Security

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I. Introduction

1. Drawing on 10 years of discussions on human security at the General Assembly, including three reports of the Secretary-General on the topic, the passage of General Assembly resolution 66/290 in September 2012 on a common understanding of human security underscored the growing recognition of the added value of the human security approach to the work of the United Nations. Accordingly, in July 2014, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Human Security, Mr. Yukio Takasu, convened an exploratory meeting with representatives of United Nations entities to discuss the system-wide application of the human security approach. This led to the establishment of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Human Security (IAWGHS)¹ and a series of meetings to consider the application of the human security approach and its contribution in responding to cross-cutting priority areas of the international community and the United Nations system. Among its activities, the IAWGHS contributed to shaping the Framework for Cooperation (FfC).

II. The overall approach of the Framework for Cooperation

2. The overall approach of the FfC is one of partnership among United Nations entities to apply more effectively the combined principles that underpin the human security approach in both headquarters and country level contexts.
3. Such collaboration does not add layers to the work of the United Nations system, nor does it imply new normative responsibilities. Rather, it builds upon and strengthens existing frameworks by addressing potential gaps in these frameworks, and by combining existing tools to accelerate delivery and make better use of scarce resources. As a result, the advancement of human security fosters greater collaboration to implement system-

¹ The IAWGHS includes representatives from the three pillars of the United Nations system as well as those with practical experience in the application of human security. Members of the working group include: Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Department of Political Affairs; Department of Peacekeeping Operations; Department of Public Information; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Organization for Migration; Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Office for Disarmament Affairs; Office of the Special Adviser on Africa; Peacebuilding Support Office; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States; United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations System Staff College. The IAWGHS has met five times since its first meeting in October 2014. The Human Security Unit provides coordination and secretariat support to the IAWGHS.

wide responses by the different pillars of the United Nations in a more comprehensive and integrated manner.

4. Grounded in General Assembly resolution 66/290, the FfC:

(i) Provides an overview of the principles of the human security approach and its contribution to today's complex and multidimensional challenges;

(ii) Documents how the human security approach can enable the United Nations system to utilize its resources and its comparative advantages in a more integrated, effective and efficient manner. By focusing on a few indicative cross-cutting priority areas, it highlights how the human security approach can result in substantial benefits and be instrumental in bolstering our commitments to the realization of the post-2015 development agenda; the effectiveness of the "Delivering as One" initiative; the strengthening of transitional and integrated planning and programming in crisis-affected settings; and the framework for disaster risk reduction; and

(iii) Offers some preliminary suggestions on ways to expand the application of human security across the United Nations system, whereby individual United Nations organizations, within their own mandates, voluntarily collaborate to integrate the human security approach into their overall work, either individually or working collectively with the Human Security Unit (HSU), the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) and others.

III. A common understanding on human security

5. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 66/290 on 10 September 2012 was a significant milestone for the application of human security.² In paragraph 3 of the resolution, the General Assembly agreed that human security is an approach to assist United Nations Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people. Based on this, a common understanding of human security was endorsed; it includes the following:

(a) 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;

(b) Human security calls for people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people and all communities;

(c) Human security recognizes the interlinkages between peace, development and human rights, and equally considers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights;

(d) The notion of human security is distinct from the responsibility to protect and its implementation;

² See: www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=%20A/RES/66/290&referer=http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r66_resolutions_table_eng.htm&Lang=E.

(e) Human security does not entail the threat or the use of force or coercive measures. Human security does not replace State security;

(f) Human security is based on national ownership. Since the political, economic, social and cultural conditions for human security vary significantly across and within countries, and at different points in time, human security strengthens national solutions which are compatible with local realities;

(g) Governments retain the primary role and responsibility for ensuring the survival, livelihood and dignity of their citizens. The role of the international community is to complement and provide the necessary support to Governments, upon their request, so as to strengthen their capacity to respond to current and emerging threats. Human security requires greater collaboration and partnership among Governments, international and regional organizations and civil society;

(h) Human security must be implemented with full respect for the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for the sovereignty of States, territorial integrity and non-interference in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States. Human security does not entail additional legal obligations on the part of States.

6. Agreed by consensus, the common understanding draws on 10 years of discussions on human security at the General Assembly and builds on nearly 20 years of experience, including activities supported by the UNTFHS since 1999 and the HSU since 2004, in implementing the human security approach within the United Nations system and beyond.³

IV. Applying the human security approach

7. The human security approach is a multidimensional analytical framework that can assist the United Nations system to assess, develop and implement integrated responses to a broad range of issues that are complex and require the combined inputs of the United Nations system, in partnership with Governments, non-governmental entities, and the communities themselves.

8. It is a comprehensive methodology that allows for a broad perspective on the challenges that face people and Governments. It is a framework that recognizes the interconnected nature of threats to the holistic sense of confidence in today's gains and tomorrow's potential. And it is a lens that reminds us that the challenges that the international community faces are not simple, nor can they successfully be ameliorated through separate initiatives, each assigned to a particular organization.

9. The human security approach, however, is more than an exercise in joint programming. There are five fundamental principles that encompass the human security approach and differentiate its impact from simply working together.

³ For more on the history of human security within the context of the United Nations, please visit the reports of the Secretary-General at: www.un.org/humansecurity/content/un-secretary-general-reports-human-security.

10. First and foremost, the human security approach is **people-centred**. It considers the broad range of conditions that threaten the survival, livelihood and dignity of people and their communities, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

11. Second, the human security approach recognizes the complexity and interconnected nature of the challenges that confront people and their aspirations to be free from want, fear and indignity. 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 day-to-day life of people and their communities.

12. There is no “one size fits all” in addressing today’s challenges. Recognizing that risks to the human condition vary considerably within and across countries, and at different points in time, the human security approach recognizes **context-specific** variances, including the differing capacities of people, civil society and Governments, as well as the root causes behind ongoing and future challenges.

13. The human security approach goes beyond quick responses and is **prevention-oriented**. By drilling down to ascertain the real causes of challenges and by building solutions that are in themselves sustainable and resilient, human security promotes the development of early warning mechanisms that help to mitigate the impact of current threats and, where possible, prevent the occurrence of future challenges.

14. Moreover, the human security approach recognizes that there are inherent responsibilities within each and every society. Empowering people and their communities to articulate and respond to their needs and those of others is crucial. Likewise, top-down norms, processes and institutions, including the establishment of early warning mechanisms, good governance, rule of law and social protection instruments are fundamental characteristics of the human security approach. The human security approach, therefore, brings **protection and empowerment** measures into a framework that can better address complex challenges to the human condition.

15. These five principles that make up the human security approach are mutually reinforcing and cannot be implemented as separate objectives. Indeed, it is essential to emphasize that working together in the context of human security involves much more than simply working jointly, side by side, but separately. It involves recognizing the strengths that accrue from true partnerships where different entities combine their strengths to create synergies that can achieve far greater impact in addressing today’s complex and multidimensional challenges.

IV. The system-wide application of human security: towards a stronger response by the United Nations system

16. An important development over the last decade has been the increase in transverse and cross-cutting challenges confronting people and Governments. Seldom are there situations where only one United Nations entity may be called upon to respond. On the contrary, there is growing acknowledgement that most of today’s developmental or humanitarian challenges are the confluence of multiple factors that are interconnected

and mutually reinforcing, and as such require greater integration of activities across the United Nations system.

17. Based on two prior background papers circulated to the IAWGHS, the following examples are presented to demonstrate how the human security approach can contribute to and strengthen the work of the United Nations system.⁴ All reflect contemporary challenges that require a comprehensive framework that is both universal and adaptable, and that involves the interplay between headquarters planning and field level activity and implementation. The examples include:

- Supporting the 2030 agenda for sustainable development;
- Improving the effectiveness of the United Nations system through “Delivering as One”;
- Strengthening transitional and integrated responses in crisis-affected settings; and
- Enhancing disaster risk reduction.

Supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

18. Fifteen years ago, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) transformed the global community’s response to ending extreme poverty. Building on the success of the MDGs, the new sustainable development agenda goes further by emphasizing the interconnectivity of the challenges that face humanity, and by highlighting the importance of integrated and comprehensive responses that support a more inclusive and shared prosperity in greater peace and resilience.

19. Echoing the principles of the human security approach, this new Agenda, as outlined by the General Assembly in “Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, 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.”

20. To this end, the human security approach offers an important framework that can significantly reinforce the contribution of the United Nations system to help Member States initiate comprehensive and multi-stakeholder partnerships that result in more resilient societies where people are safe from chronic threats such as abject poverty, hunger, disease, violence and repression, while protected from sudden and hurtful disruptions in their daily lives.

⁴ The first paper concentrated on how the application of human security can support activities at headquarters, while the second paper demonstrated how human security strengthens country-level operations of the United Nations system. Specific examples from the extensive portfolio of human security related initiatives are presented in these papers. See: www.un.org/humansecurity/sites/www.un.org.humansecurity/files/final_background_note_headquarters_0.pdf, and www.un.org/humansecurity/sites/www.un.org.humansecurity/files/final_background_note_country-level.pdf.

21. By highlighting the interlinkages among the Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the application of human security provides a proven and practical approach for "why" and "how" the different parts of the United Nations system must come together to utilize their resources in a more integrated manner. Lessons learned through the application of human security demonstrate the added value of such a comprehensive approach to combating poverty and promoting sustainable development. In addition, the application of human security allows for a more nuanced understanding of how different countries, districts within countries, and groups of people experience the multidimensional aspects of poverty. Such a deep understanding of poverty results in actions that can further extend the benefits of economic growth, and improve daily lives and opportunities available to different people and communities.

22. Specifically, to meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a context-specific analysis at the local level – a hallmark of the human security approach – is needed in order to further extend the benefits of economic growth across and within countries. By addressing the root causes of poverty and by highlighting the impact of income and other inequalities on broader development, the human security approach can respond in a more inclusive, integrated and multidimensional fashion. Whereas national measurements may not adequately address disparities at the local level, the identification of bottlenecks at the local level can foster inclusive economic growth with significant gains across countries.

23. Examples drawn from human security programming at the country level demonstrate such benefits. As noted in Kenya, Mongolia, Nepal and Paraguay, by disaggregating social and economic indicators at the national and local levels, the human security approach is able to uncover the various factors that impede those who are most vulnerable, including women, minority groups and economically marginalized populations, from accessing essential public services and economic opportunities. Subsequently, services can be tailored to meet the specific needs of these groups. As a result, national and local priorities are established with the aim to advance an inclusive development process where the benefits of economic growth can reach the most marginalized, and result in greater impact on the overall growth and social capital of respective communities.

24. Moreover, the application of human security addresses not only developmental challenges, but also challenges stemming from other factors that impede economic growth and poverty reduction. As a result, it helps to clarify how diverse issues ranging from deprivation in all its forms (food, health, education, employment, etc.) to violence and environmental degradation interact and require comprehensive and context-specific solutions.

25. Studies have shown that progress in the achievement of the MDGs has been slowest in fragile and conflict-affected countries. For example, in countries where violence is rife, and trust in people and institutions is lacking, a development framework that fails to address the structural and behavioural causes of violence falls short of preventing a relapse into crises and fragility.

26. The human security approach, 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. By emphasizing the triangular relationship between peace and security, development and human rights, human security can highlight the indispensable relationship between these variables, and ensure that poverty reduction strategies are attentive to root causes and remedial solutions needed in order to stem the persistence of violence and other forms of fragility, and stop their impact on the achievement of inclusive and sustainable development.

27. The application of human security therefore complements and enriches the mechanisms that will be needed in order to attain the SDGs. By conceptualizing the relationship between the different components of the SDGs, the human security approach can frame future responses in a more interconnected and systematic fashion. It can help clarify how diverse issues interact and require mutually complementary solutions so as to ensure more sustainable and inclusive development. Based on its combined principles, it can support the United Nations system to find appropriate solutions in this new direction and to advance the important expansion of the SDGs towards greater respect for human dignity and planetary sustainability for all.

Improving the Effectiveness of the United Nations System through “Delivering as One”

28. In addition to its importance as an overarching framework for meeting our global commitments, human security can be most valuable in enhancing the operational effectiveness of the “Delivering as One” initiative.

29. Through its analytical framework, the application of human security provides policymakers and practitioners with a multi-stakeholder partnership model to move beyond the single-agency style of programming that often leads to overlap, loss of synergies and even competition among United Nations entities. By collectively identifying the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of people and Governments, and by advancing solutions that are comprehensive and integrated, human security can be instrumental in emphasizing the critical significance of assessing, planning and “Delivering as One”.

30. Several interim evaluations have highlighted the extent to which the implementation of the “Delivering as One” initiative tends to be seen as a mechanistic process as opposed to a comprehensive framework designed to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of the services provided by the United Nations system. The human security approach can help transform the mechanistic and procedural focus of “Delivering as One”. It can provide the rationale and the analytical framework to bring together the different entities of the United Nations system into a more targeted, people-centred and comprehensive response. At the country level, projects supported by the UNTFHS⁵ have served as pilots to strengthen the “Delivering as One” initiative.

31. One such an example is from north-western Tanzania where conflicts in neighbouring countries had placed a severe toll on border communities. As a result, six

⁵ For a review of UNTFHS-supported projects, please visit www.un.org/humansecurity/trust-fund.

United Nations agencies⁶ developed a comprehensive and integrated response that aimed to reverse the proliferation of small arms, strengthen livelihoods, improve food security, foster empowerment and enhance the resilience of these vulnerable populations. Operating out of a joint office in Kigoma city, these agencies met regularly and ensured that their actions were implemented in an integrated and coherent manner. As noted by members of the joint programme, “this programme put in practice the United Nations vision to ‘Deliver as One’. It combined the technical knowledge and implementation capacities of six United Nations agencies and resulted in a stronger response by the United Nations system to help people living in these fragile communities find durable solutions in their daily lives and their long-term aspiration for peace, development and stability.”

32. Also in Tajikistan, five United Nations entities⁷ are working together to address the interrelated challenges confronting the remote region of the Rasht Valley. By bringing together the combined expertise of the United Nations system, the project is revitalizing the agricultural sector and restoring economic and food security. In addition, improvements in sustainable energy, drinking water and irrigation systems, along with greater access to health care and education, and conflict management are further supporting the sustainable recovery of vulnerable communities in the Rasht Valley. These forms of assistance, in combination with improved legal, social and psychological support, are providing the broad spectrum of interventions that are needed in order to respond to a complex situation that no single organization can tackle alone. Coming together through the application of the human security approach has subsequently resulted in greater coherence, minimized duplication and improved client delivery by the country team. As a result, the Government has welcomed the activities of the United Nations and has requested the replication of the approach in other regions of the Rasht Valley.

33. Member States have also stressed the importance of human security as a cross-cutting approach to advance integrated responses by the international community.⁸ These Member States recognize that based on a more in-depth, people-centred and comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by people and Governments, the human security approach can provide an important analytical and operational framework to contribute to a more coherent United Nations system.

34. In short, the application of human security complements and supports the “Delivering as One” initiative and provides successful multi-stakeholder examples that bring together the United Nations system as a whole to “Deliver as One”. They remind us that in a world where challenges are multidimensional, responses cannot be successful if addressed in narrow silos of action. Instead they require the combined expertise of the United Nations system.

⁶ The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Children’s Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Industrial Development Organization and World Food Programme.

⁷ United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Children’s Fund, World Food Programme, United Nations Population Fund and UN Women.

⁸ Excerpts of debates at the General Assembly are available at: www.un.org/humansecurity/publications/UN%20General%20Assembly%20Resolutions%20and%20Debates%20on%20Human%20Security.

Strengthening Transitional and Integrated Responses in Crisis-affected Settings

35. Numerous policies, tools and handbooks have been issued to provide practical guidance for those involved in crisis-affected settings. Despite these valuable efforts, a number of challenges remain. In 2014, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs released a major policy review on humanitarian and transitional activities titled “Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow”.⁹ The report highlighted the interplay among multiple shocks, and called for a more proactive approach to anticipate and prevent humanitarian crises. More recently, the review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture has underscored the need to promote comprehensive and multi-stakeholder solutions that integrate the three pillars of the United Nations system, and unite efforts towards greater peace and stability.¹⁰

36. Although remedies to institutional constraints that separate humanitarian and development assistance go beyond the scope of this FfC, a multi-stakeholder, comprehensive and integrated approach, such as the human security approach, can contribute significantly to ongoing efforts. Such an approach can underscore the need for joint analysis, planning and implementation among humanitarian and development organizations, and provide the rationale and evidence by which to transcend this divide.

37. At its core, human security is rooted in the notion that threats to people’s survival, livelihood and dignity are seldom singular in nature. Rather, a mix of factors comes together to generate situations that are often complex and multidimensional. Therefore, human security advocates for comprehensive solutions that encompass all key stakeholders, including those responsible for relief, rehabilitation and development. This is contrary to approaches that disassemble responses based on loosely coordinated but essentially individually focused solutions that are often compartmentalized.

38. In Madagascar, for example, a series of natural disasters had threatened communities already suffering from a number of emergencies, including economic and food insecurity, poor housing conditions, insufficient basic social services and rising urban violence. In response, several United Nations entities applied the human security approach to develop and implement an integrated and comprehensive human security strategy that could tackle the multiple dimensions of the crisis. The strategy aimed to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters while supporting long-term efforts to address crime prevention, boost economic security and improve living conditions for the most vulnerable households. By identifying the interlinkages between humanitarian and development priorities, this approach brought together a diverse network of stakeholders under a coherent and integrated cooperation mechanism that capitalized on the expertise of the United Nations, the knowledge and capacities of local communities, and the commitment of the national and local Governments.

⁹ “Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow: Managing the Risk of Humanitarian Crises”, see:

<https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OCHA%20SLTT%20Web%20Final%20Single.PDF>.

¹⁰ “The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture”, see:

www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pdf/150630%20Report%20of%20the%20AGE%20on%20the%202015%20Peacebuilding%20Review%20FINAL.pdf.

39. Second, human security is premised on the recognition that long-term sustainable results are more likely to be generated by activities that go beyond responding to an immediate crisis. By looking at the root causes of a particular threat, the human security approach identifies the structural as well as behavioural changes that are needed in order to mitigate negative impacts, and, wherever possible, help prevent the re-occurrence of current and future crises. In this regard, the human security approach complements immediate humanitarian efforts by proactively considering the root causes and the long-term solutions that are needed in order to anticipate and prevent the re-occurrence of future challenges.

40. In Northern Uganda, decades of conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda had displaced and disrupted the lives of over 1.5 million people. With the signing of the Peace Agreement in the late 2000s, the security situation gradually improved and the United Nations system began to shift its support from humanitarian relief to rehabilitation and development assistance. To ensure a smooth transition from crisis response to longer term development, the United Nations Country Team, based on the human security approach, considered the broad range of insecurities that were the product of over 20 years of dislocation, and that needed to be addressed in close consultation with humanitarian, development and community actors, and in full partnership with national and local authorities. Based on an integrated human security framework, community-based conflict resolution mechanisms were complemented with development-related activities. The combination of these and other measures encouraged people to actively participate in addressing the root causes of the conflict, and promoting the necessary changes needed in order to move towards a renewed sense of hope and optimism for themselves and their communities.

41. Based on a wide range of experiences, human security-based initiatives have enabled the United Nations to improve coherence between development and humanitarian processes. By identifying the interlinkages between humanitarian and development priorities, these human security-based initiatives have brought together a diverse network of stakeholders under coherent and integrated cooperation mechanisms that have capitalized on the knowledge, capacities and commitment of a broad range of actors. Experiences from Madagascar and Uganda, as well as Colombia, Ghana, Nepal and others have demonstrated how the United Nations system, by working together, has improved coordination with national and local authorities, strengthened national and local capacities, and reinforced confidence in the future stability of these countries.

Disaster Risk Reduction

42. Over the past decade, the Hyogo Framework for Action has been the central framework on disaster risk reduction (DRR). The recent ratification of the Sendai Accord on Disaster Risk Reduction continues the emphasis on substantially reducing disaster-related losses by transforming the ways in which individual countries respond to the multidimensional consequences of natural and man-made disasters. Based on lessons learned, the application of human security provides valuable tools to advance the priorities set out in the post-2015 framework for DRR. The following synthesis of these

lessons is based on a portfolio of DRR-related initiatives that have been supported by the UNTFHS.¹¹

43. As a people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented approach, human security has contributed to greater community participation in disaster risk reduction strategies. In particular, the human security approach has supported the development of community-based adaptation and mitigation plans that have highlighted the interconnected and cross-sectoral consequences of natural disasters on people and communities. Such an analysis has enhanced the quality of information required on the level, trends and distribution of risks and vulnerabilities at the local level, reinforced the development of early warning mechanisms, and improved the resilience of those most vulnerable.

44. For example, in the border communities of Turkana, Kenya, the impact of recurrent droughts has resulted in a significant drop in livestock production, high rates of malnutrition, regular outbreaks of communicable diseases and increasing competition over scarce resources among nomadic communities. Recognizing the essential role that communities can play in mitigating the impacts of this disaster, the United Nations Country Team, in close partnership with civil society and local authorities, adopted the human security approach in order to develop a deeper understanding of the needs and vulnerabilities of the local population. Subsequently, resource management committees, where local communities, Government representatives and the United Nations system could jointly plan and implement strategies for sustainable resource management, were established. Building upon the combined capacities of local and national actors, strategies were developed in partnership with the United Nations system to mitigate the multifaceted impact of the recurrent droughts, resulting in greater resilience and significant improvements in the daily lives of the communities.

45. Similarly, in the Andean region of Peru, recurring natural disasters had resulted in a progressive loss of livelihoods, undermining efforts to reduce poverty, enhance health care, strengthen food security and improve housing conditions. Based on a people-centred assessment of the affected communities, a deeper analysis of the needs and vulnerabilities of the local population, along with greater recognition of the existing capacities of community-based organizations and local institutions emerged to fill critical gaps in the existing disaster risk management framework. Overlooked by previous initiatives, traditional approaches and locally sourced materials were subsequently integrated into disaster prevention plans, and risk management technologies were modified in accordance with local conditions and agricultural practices. The inclusion of these measures gave rise to mitigation strategies that were better targeted to the specific situation of remote and mountainous communities. As a result, the coping capacities of vulnerable people to protect their livelihoods, homes and food security were strengthened, and communities became more resilient to the recurring threat of climate-related hazards.

¹¹ For more on the human security approach to disaster risk reduction, see the following video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=OL3INqbkTA

46. In Lesotho, where an estimated 80 per cent of people depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, the adverse effects of climate-induced droughts had hindered the country's development progress in a number of key areas, including agriculture and food security, poverty reduction, health and malnutrition. Developing long-term and sustainable responses required a comprehensive approach accounting for interlinkages among food, health, nutrition and economic security. By simultaneously addressing the impacts of climate-induced droughts on people's vulnerabilities and by integrating efforts, comprehensive strategies were developed resulting in tangible improvements in the lives of vulnerable communities in Lesotho.

47. These examples illustrate how the methodology of human security can result in greater community participation, improved early warning and strengthened resilience, including through the reduction of existing and emerging risk factors that together can help reduce the social, political, economic and environmental consequences of natural disasters.

V. Recommendations on the way forward

48. The application of human security has resulted in considerable benefits in how the United Nations system conceptualizes, plans and responds to current and emerging challenges. It has provided the rationale and methodology to meet some of the key priorities of the international community and the United Nations system. In doing so, it has broken through institutional silos and has provided the framework for United Nations entities, in particular those at the country level, to work together in a more integrated, coherent and efficient manner.

49. Today, the system-wide application of human security is both timely and essential in supporting the United Nations system to further integrate and enhance its efforts to improve people's aspirations for greater peace, development and a life lived in dignity. Based on lessons learned from previous efforts to mainstream concepts and approaches at the United Nations and elsewhere, the following are some key activities that seek to advance a unified approach in this regard. They represent a range of actions whereby United Nations entities can collaborate effectively to integrate the human security approach into their overall work, either individually, or working collectively with the HSU, the UNTFHS and others. These efforts which will be reflected in a future report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly¹² aim to further strengthen the contribution of the human security approach to the priorities of the United Nations system without unduly burdening the limited resources of partner entities, and in a manner that is both comprehensive and mutually reinforcing.

United Nations system

Ensure coherence and coordination of efforts

¹² Paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 66/290 requests the Secretary-General to report back to the General assembly on the lesson learned on human security experiences at the international, regional and national levels.

50. An information-sharing forum that ensures coherence and coordination of efforts will be essential to the system-wide application of human security. Such a forum will require a membership base that is larger in scope than the current IAWGHS. A refreshed Friends of Human Security that is inclusive of Member States and United Nations entities could transform the current IAWGHS. By providing an important mechanism to increase the level of awareness, cooperation and partnership at all levels, a refreshed Friends of Human Security can ensure that the application of human security remains strategic and has the necessary commitment in its implementation across the United Nations system.

Share lessons learned and promote best practices

51. Measures to increase outreach, share lessons learned and promote best practice solutions will further enhance the collective understanding of human security and result in greater cooperation. Early steps to consolidate and expand this level of awareness, specifically in the context of how the application of human security can complement and strengthen the United Nations' overall cross-cutting objectives, will be taken. Among these, the participation of the HSU as an invitee in selected working groups and task teams of the United Nations Development Group; the development and distribution of guidance notes on the added value of the human security approach to cross-cutting and priority issues of the international community; and the organization of events on thematic areas where the application of human security can be most valuable are some examples where the HSU can provide the necessary inputs towards policy and programme formulations at the global, regional and national levels.

Develop and strengthen the capacity of staff

52. Developing and strengthening the capacity of staff is an essential component of the system-wide application of human security. The HSU, in partnership with the United Nations System Staff College, will support the development of standardized modules on the application of human security.¹³ As per General Assembly resolution 66/290, the subsequent system-wide training on human security will provide senior management and staff with a common understanding of human security and its application across themes and country-level contexts. This will generate a cost beneficial multiplier effect over ad hoc training, and will form a powerful basis for technical and advisory services designed to realize the full potential of the system-wide application of human security.

Headquarters

Conduct an internal assessment

53. Initiatives decided or endorsed at the system-wide level must be reflected in the policy and strategic frameworks, as well as planning level documents of individual

¹³ These modules can build on the methodology and tools presented in the "Human Security Handbook" (www.un.org/humansecurity/sites/www.un.org/humansecurity/files/human_security_in_theory_and_practice_english.pdf), which have been used by United Nations Country Teams since 2009 in line with UNTFHS guidelines (www.un.org/humansecurity/sites/www.un.org/humansecurity/files/untfhs_guidelines_8th_edition_-_final_3.pdf).

organizations if they are to create an enabling environment where meaningful action can take place. Otherwise, implementation of activities will remain disjointed and ad hoc at both headquarters and the field level.

54. Subsequently, the expansion of the human security approach requires a firm basis for its contribution and added value to the work and strategic direction of a particular entity. Conducting an internal assessment serves to clarify any misunderstandings there may be about the fundamental nature of the human security approach, thereby building a common understanding on what human security is and is not. Furthermore, by contextualizing the human security approach, such a review can better demonstrate how the human security approach can strengthen the on-going work and strategic directions of a particular entity.

55. At the same time, while there can be no “one size fits all” approach, the principles and methodology of human security offer United Nations entities an analytical framework to assess and commonly formulate integrated programmes that result in greater synergies and a stronger response by the United Nations system. These efforts could be discussed at the refreshed Friends of Human Security, presented to the relevant United Nations Development Group working groups, and supported through training by the United Nations System Staff College and partnerships with the HSU.

Identify a human security focal point

56. To demonstrate the overall commitment of an organization, lessons learned from past experiences highlight the need for senior management to endorse and identify a human security focal point at headquarters. In this way, staff will recognize the degree to which senior leadership values the human security approach. This will also promote greater internal coordination and accountability.

57. We therefore invite the participating organizations to appoint a focal point on human security within their respective organization. A well-functioning network of human security focal points across the system will contribute to ensuring and strengthening coherence among United Nations organizations. These focal points, as part of the refreshed Friends of Human Security, could update the Friends of Human Security on their respective activities, which the HSU can compile and distribute at the global, regional and national levels, thereby strengthening collective understanding of human security and ensuring coherence of efforts.

Country level

Develop a country level “Human Security Review”

58. The expansion of the human security approach at the country level requires a firm basis grounded in its added value. A country level review that frames the human security approach within the country context can demonstrate how the human security approach strengthens the ongoing activities of the United Nations Country Team, supports national priorities, and contributes to the attainment of the SDGs and other cross-cutting issues within a particular country context.

59. Equally, a country level review can identify specific areas of opportunity, or gaps in services, where the application of human security could result in qualitatively superior benefits, thereby increasing the overall effectiveness of the United Nations system. By systematizing human security considerations, such a review complements and strengthens national level processes, such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the Common Country Assessment, the Integrated Strategic Framework, etc., and provides a comprehensive and holistic analysis of the interrelated factors and challenges, as well as the internal contextual variations that face a given country.

60. A country level review would normally consist of a comprehensive analytical process designed to highlight those areas where the application of human security could best support national priorities, meet emerging challenges, enhance the level of cooperation with other United Nations system partners and increase programmatic effectiveness in terms of the services provided to beneficiary populations. Interested United Nations Country Teams can partner with the HSU for technical advice, guidance and support.

Inform and raise awareness among members of the United Nations Country Teams, field level staff, key national decision-makers and in-country representatives of other relevant partners

61. Briefings such as these are designed to ensure the all key members of the United Nations Country Team share a common understanding on the application of human security; identify the specific benefits that such an approach can provide for the country and the United Nations Country Team in question; and determine the opportunities that may exist to collectively expand the application of human security. Engaging major national decision-makers enhances the overall levels of awareness of the human security approach and its added value to national priorities and challenges. Briefing other relevant partners also increases opportunities for forging new partnerships and synergies at the country level.

VI. Conclusion

62. These are some preliminary suggestions on a unified approach to expand the system-wide application of human security. They offer practical solutions to enhance partnerships across the United Nations system in order to apply more effectively the combined principles that underpin the human security approach. They illustrate how the application of human security can support the key priorities of the international community and result in considerable benefits in how the United Nations system responds to current and emerging challenges.