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Human Security – Trajectory and Application at the United Nations

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Why Human Security Now?

‘Security’ as defined by the Oxford dictionary is --- “the state of being free from danger or threat --- feeling of safety; feeling of ease; absence of worry and anxiety; peace of mind; freedom from doubt; certainty; happiness; comfort; confidence; ...”

*Example: The system is designed to provide maximum **security against** toxic spills; job security; health security; etc.*

Such a broad understanding of ‘security’ is also in line with the challenges faced by people, governments and the international community



Today's world is an insecure place for many

- Political instability, often involving bitter sectarian violence with heavy **human losses** and **forced displacement**, generating unrelenting cycles of suffering and loss
- **Pressures of climate change, health pandemics and economic downturns** placing considerable stress on fragile social, political and economic systems of those least capable of responding
- **Widening inequalities** and disparities of income and wealth across and within countries, leaving large groups behind and marginalized

These threats, **if not addressed comprehensively**, can grow exponentially, spilling into all aspects of people's lives, destroying entire communities and resulting in **more intractable crisis** that often **spill-over into broader national, regional and international insecurities**

For people who are faced with multiple insecurities, responding through **fragmented and stand alone frameworks** is not enough. Instead, what is required is a **renewed consensus** that acknowledges **the totality of the human condition**. Only then will people begin to **feel safe in all aspects of their lives**; have the **income and opportunities to attain well-being**; and know that their **rights and dignity are fully respected**



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To better understand the manifestation of threats on people's lives, let's consider their impact on the different areas of human security

(examples: conflicts, natural disasters, persistent & abject poverty, etc.)

Economic insecurity: unemployment, lack of access to credit and other economic opportunities

Food insecurity: hunger, famine

Health insecurity: deadly infectious diseases, malnutrition, lack of access to basic health care

Environmental insecurity: environmental degradation, resource depletion, pollution

Personal insecurity: violence in all its forms, lack of rights and access to opportunities

Community insecurity: inter-ethnic, religious, identity based tensions, crime, conflicts

Political insecurity: political repression, human rights abuses

Plus other insecurities as relevant



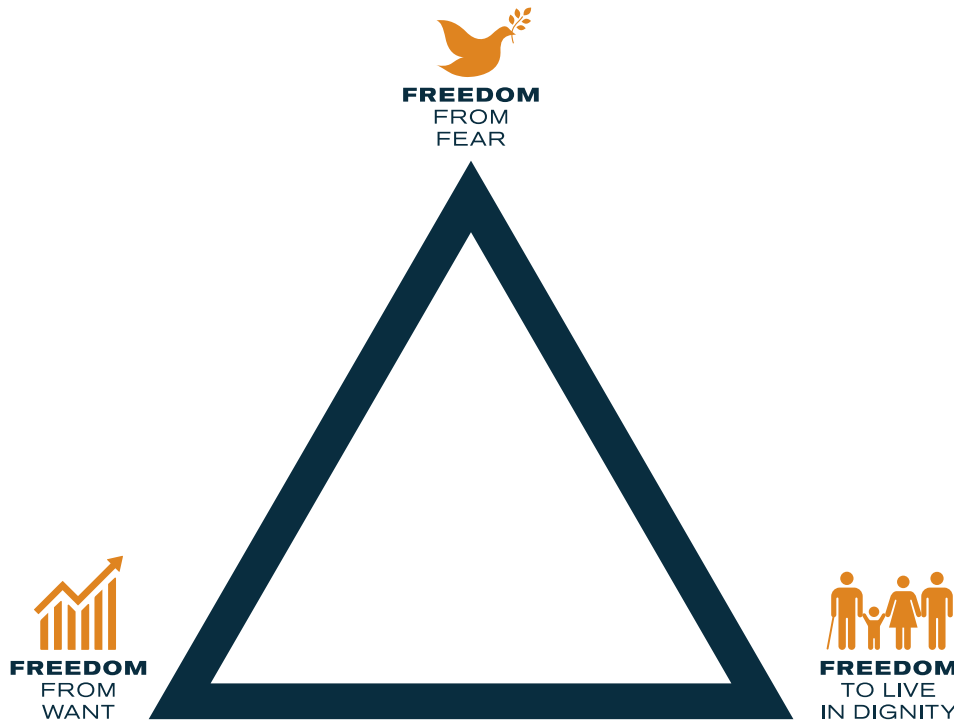
An example...

Violent conflicts

- Lead to deprivation and poverty
- Which in turn can lead to resource depletion
- Spread of infectious diseases
- Educational deficits
- Social tensions
- Criminality
- Breakdown of institutions
- Further fragility and conflicts
- Etc.



At its most basic level – human security recognizes three freedoms to be fundamental to people’s lives and aspirations



◆ **Freedom from fear**

Threats to the safety of people
(i.e., all forms of violence)

◆ **Freedom from want**

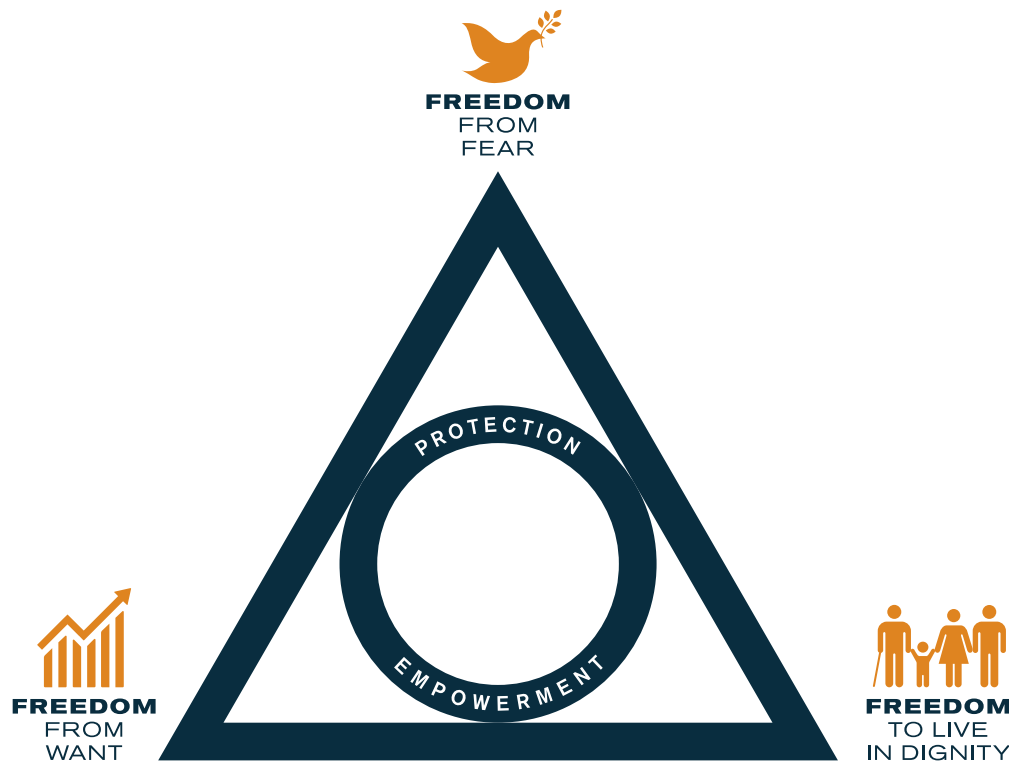
Threats to basic needs
(i.e., economic, social and
environmental aspects of life)

◆ **Freedom to live in dignity**

Threats to human rights and by
extension access to services and
opportunities



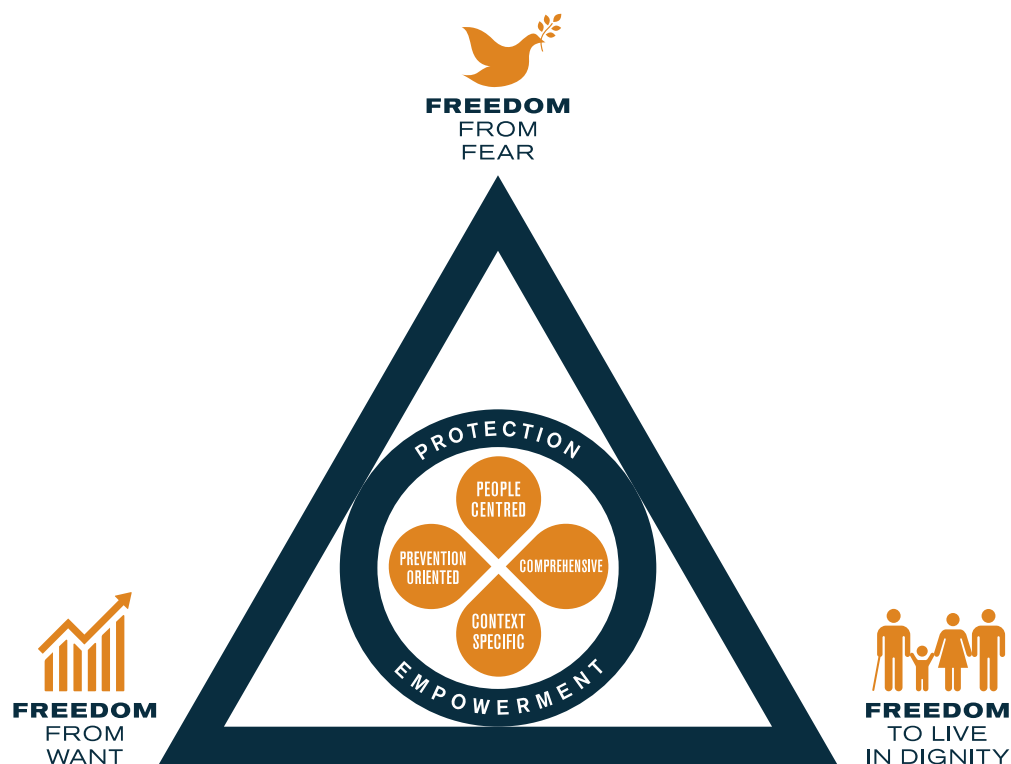
More comprehensively – human security calls for protection and empowerment strategies



- ◆ Protecting people in a systematic, comprehensive and preventative way, including the establishment of the rule of law, good governance, social safety nets
- ◆ Empowering people so as to develop their resilience and their capacity to mitigate and respond to current and future crises



... based on the following four principles



- ◆ **People-centered** (focuses on the individual and highlights the universality and primacy of these 3 freedoms to individuals)
- ◆ **Comprehensive** (looks at the totality of people's sense of security — economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, political, etc., ... and develops multi-sectorial solutions that bring the expertise of different actors to address the totality of human insecurities in question)
- ◆ **Context-specific** (no 'one-size fits all' but based on the specific context)
- ◆ **Prevention-focused** (not just fixing things but making lasting change — looks at root causes and considers sustainable solutions — comprehensive, capacity building, early warning and preventive)



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The added value of human security to addressing today's challenges

People-centered – enables highly **localized and disaggregated analyses** thereby helping to reveal the 'real' situation of individuals and communities and allowing for a **deeper understanding** of how communities and social groups experience different types of threats and vulnerabilities

Context-specific – considers the specific context including the **root causes of insecurities** and their **inter-linkages**. This allows for more targeted, effective and sustainable responses

Comprehensiveness – underlines the importance of addressing the **totality of conditions** that impact human beings and highlights the need to **refrain from** looking at people's lives through the lens of specialized entities or interested parties that often result in **silos-driven responses**. Instead, HS advances a **multi-sectorial/multi-stakeholder** framework to advance **integrated and prioritized** solutions over the short, medium, and the long run

Prevention-oriented – focuses efforts to prevent or mitigate risks; it advances **locally tailored responses** to protect and empower individuals and communities **in coping with these risks**; and it **strengthens early warning mechanisms** that enhance resilience and wherever possible prevent the occurrence of crises

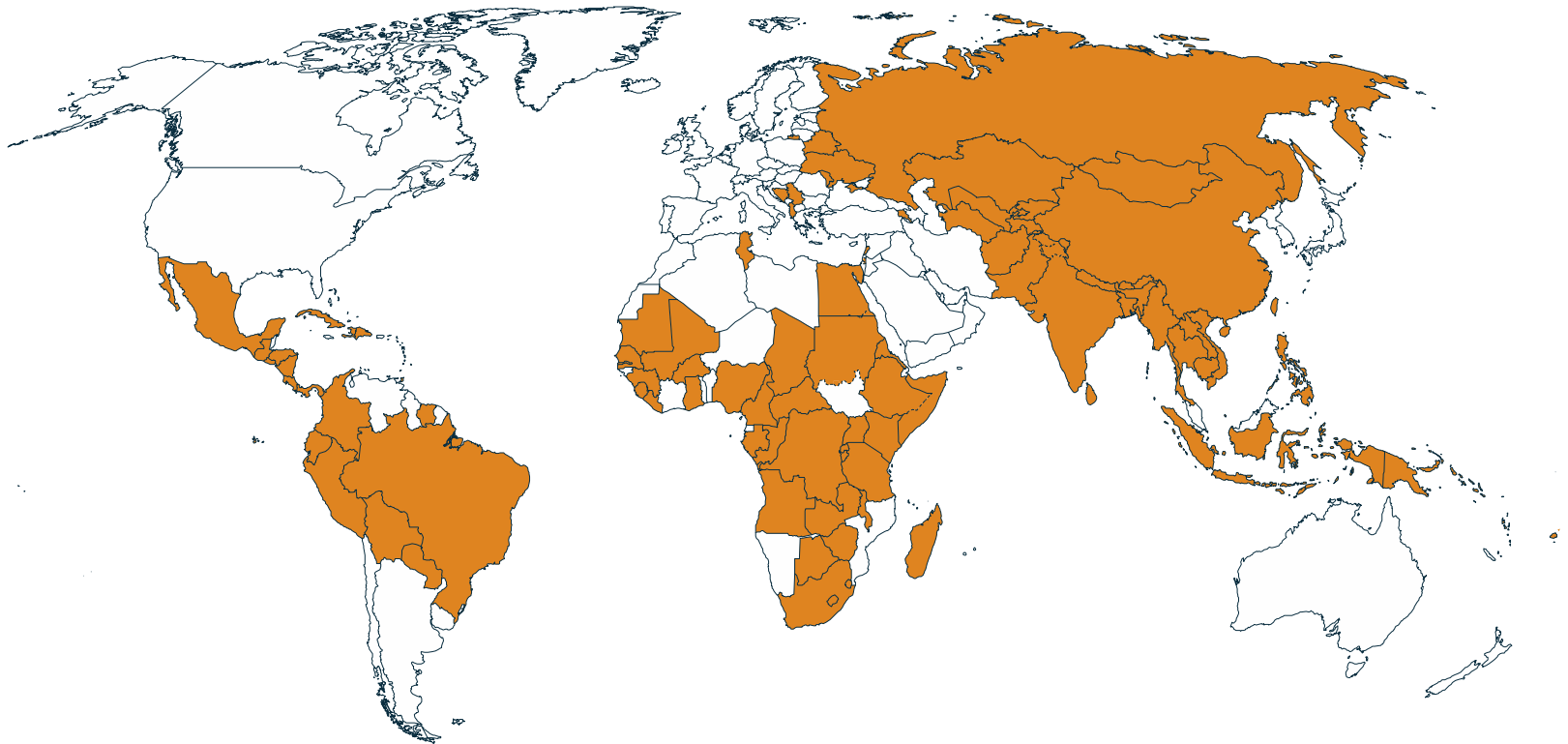


In particular, the application of human security

- promotes integrated responses that **harnesses the political, humanitarian and development work of the UN system**
- allows for the **inclusion of different programming principles** such as equity, resilience, early warning, social harmony, poverty reduction, sustainability, etc.
- provides the evidence for why and how different **UN and non-UN entities should come together based on their expertise, resources and comparative advantage**
- results in **greater coordination in planning, improved harmonization of activities, and the attainment of synergies across disciplines and groups**
- And contributes to enhancing the UN's work towards 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



Human Security in Action





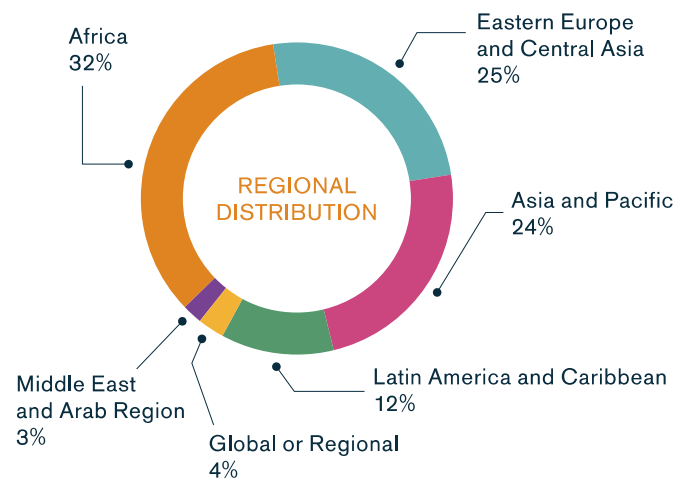
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Established in 1999, the UNTFHS is funded through contributions from Greece, Japan, Malta, Mexico, Slovenia and Thailand. More funding from supporters of human security is needed in order to expand its application at this critical juncture where all reviews of UN priority areas have highlighted its value

To date, 220 projects funded in 90 countries worldwide

- Projects **uncover the dynamic interaction between insecurities and how they affect the lives of people in diverse settings across the globe** with priority given to countries and regions where insecurities to people are most critical and pervasive
- They provide the **analytical framework to address complex challenges and promote comprehensive responses** that have led to **more effective actions by the United Nations system, national and others partners**





Supporting vulnerable refugees and host communities in northern Lebanon



Lebanon hosts approximately **1.2 million registered refugees from Syria and Iraq**, making it the country with the highest number of refugees per capita in the world. The **northern city of Tripoli**, where over 70,000 Syrian refugees reside, **is an impoverished region that has long been struggling** to provide adequate employment, decent housing and basic services to its neighbourhoods. As a result, **the recent arrival of refugees has added considerable stress** on existing services and **has created tensions between host communities and the incoming refugees**.

With support from the Trust Fund, several UN agencies are developing a **comprehensive and integrated programme** with the active engagement of the municipal Government, refugees and host communities **to provide the necessary protection and empowerment mechanisms** including: access to education and employment opportunities; improvements in public safety, infrastructure and housing conditions; as well as psychosocial support for those most vulnerable. By **addressing the needs of both refugees and host communities**, the programme aims to **combine institutional policies with community-based activities that together help manage the migration crisis so that it is a win-win for all**.



Strengthening rural livelihoods severely affected by climate change-induced drought in Lesotho



The **adverse effects of climate change** have hindered Lesotho's development in a number of areas, including **agriculture and food security, water management, public health and disaster risk reduction**.

Supported by the UN Trust Fund on Human Security, **a comprehensive approach was adopted accounting for the inter-linkages between environment, food, health, nutrition and economic security**. The project (i) increased crop production and nutrition security through improved agricultural techniques and cropping systems; (ii) enhanced the capacity of districts, communities and households to combat the impact of anthrax on livestock; (iii) improved maternal health care by increasing access to emergency obstetrics care services and providing food supplements to mothers; and (iv) increased the capacity of public authorities and local communities to adopt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. **This joint endeavor reinforced the resilience of communities by linking community-based adaptation strategies with institutional mechanisms for early warning and collective action.**



The Balkans: Strengthening social harmony and promoting inclusive and sustainable development



While countries across the region have made significant progress during the past two decades, **the onset of sudden crises, along with continued inter-ethnic tensions in some areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia, continue to challenge future prospects for peace and stability. In particular, marginalized groups, including ethnic minorities and displaced individuals, living in sub-standard housing with inadequate access to water, electricity and land, are especially vulnerable.**

Based on financial and substantive support from the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, these projects **have highlighted the importance of strong social, political, economic and legal systems that together help foster greater co-existence and social harmony.** Accordingly the projects have strived to eliminate community, personal and economic insecurities. **They do this by enhancing the capacity of local authorities, institutions and communities to improve access to social services, strengthen community safety, promote inter-ethnic relations, and prevent discrimination and violence.**



Supporting the transition from post-conflict to sustainable development in El Salvador



Following over a decade of conflict, the dividends of peace and development have been slow to reach vulnerable and **marginalized communities** in the western Department of Sonsonate. To address interrelated threats, a comprehensive human security approach was needed.

Through support from the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, **an integrated programme** was developed to build the capacity of local authorities to tackle violent crime while engaging communities in efforts to regenerate urban areas. The project underlined the importance of a comprehensive/multi-stakeholder approach that considers the root causes of violence; addresses unemployment and early school drop outs; bolsters economic opportunities; strengthens access to adequate housing, health and education; and engages with communities to harness trust and promote partnerships towards individual and community security.



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History of human security at the United Nations

1994	UNDP Human Development Report
1999	Establishment of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security
2000	UN Millennium Summit and Declaration
2003	Human Security Now Report by the Commission on Human Security Establishment of the Advisory Board on Human Security
2004	Establishment of the Human Security Unit
2005	World Summit Outcome paragraph 143 on human security
2008- 2010	General Assembly informal thematic debates on human security
2010	First report of the Secretary-General on human security (A/64/701)
2012	Second report of the Secretary-General on human security (A/66/763) PLUS GA resolution 66/290
2013	Third report of the Secretary-General on human security (A/68/685) GA debate on Human Security including the post-2015 Development Agenda
2015	Adoption of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, 70th Anniversary of the UN: all reviews highlight the importance and the added value of the human security approach



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70th Anniversary of the UN – Summary of reviews

- Most of **today's development or humanitarian challenges** arise from multiple factors that are **interconnected and mutually reinforcing**
- These require **greater integration of activities** across the United Nations system and in partnership with others -- grounded with a stronger **focus on local communities, marginalizes groups and inclusive processes that are preventive and not reactive**
- Through its analytical and operational framework, the **application of HS reinforces UN support** to the
 - achievement of the SDGs
 - transition from humanitarian response to sustainable development, and
 - prevention of crises wherever possible,
 - as well as other areas where vulnerabilities and risks are multiple



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Human Security and Agenda 2030 (SDGs)

The SDGs require people-centered and context-specific analyses at the local level

- These are at the core of the human security approach
- A focus on human security leads to a **deeper understanding of the local context, including the root causes of insecurities, their inter-linkages and their impact on different regions and groups within countries**
- The application of human security **addresses not only developmental challenges but also challenges stemming from other factors, such as, violence, environmental degradation, etc., that impede economic growth and poverty reduction**
- This results in more **targeted, inclusive and sustainable outcomes that can build resilience and prevent the re-occurrence of persistent and protracted crises wherever possible**

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, such as, lack of access to food, health, education, finance, etc., on broader development

Human security is about integration .. this is also the DNA of the SDGs

- **SDGs must be tackled together, comprehensively**
- Challenges and solutions cannot be addressed in isolation but require holistic responses ... **this is the hallmark of the human security approach**



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Humanitarian Relief and Sustainable Development

Working together since a mix of factors come together to generate situations that are often complex and multidimensional

- Human security underscores the need for **joint analysis, planning and implementation among humanitarian and development organizations** and provides the rationale and evidence by which to transcend this divide
- That is, **by promoting a context-specific approach**, human security can help ensure that **support from across the international system is based on the actual realities on the ground**
- This results in a **response framework in which the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of crises-affected countries are continually assessed, and encompasses all key stakeholders from Governments to civil society**, including those responsible for emergency relief, rehabilitation and long-term sustainable development
- Ensures that **assistance leads to addressing the root causes of a crisis** and results in **resilience building** and the **prevention of 'repeat' or 'protracted' humanitarian crises**

Inclusive, fair and peaceful environments

- Human security highlights the need for **protection and empowerment efforts** that together provide **public safety, deliver essential basic services, underline the rule of law and improve the space to restore trust and 'build better'**. Local partners in collaboration with other stakeholders play a significant role in this regard



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Human Security and Migration

People centered and comprehensive approach

- Viewing migration through the human security lens highlights **the social, political and economic challenges faced by 'people on the move' as well as their host communities**
- This provides **an approach to mitigate the negative impacts of migration and to limit reactionary responses**

Protection and empowerment framework

- Combines **institutional policies with community-based activities** in order to address the **gaps in the management of migration**
- This helps **strengthen mechanisms that protect and empower** migrants and their host communities, thereby improving **social harmony** and **providing the space** for both groups **to live free from fear, want and indignity**

Multi-stakeholder partnerships that ensure a safe and orderly management of migration with full respect for human rights are critical in a world that is increasingly interconnected

- Prevents an **'us-them' paradigm** to develop; **limits a 'race to the bottom'** in the absence of fair burden sharing among countries; **and upholds the universal values of human rights** and prevents it from eroding
- In worse case scenarios, the poor management of the migration crisis can marginalize groups and provide the space in which terrorist groups rally disgruntled communities into their ranks



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Where are we today?

- **Clear recognition that threats to people and States are multi-dimensional and therefore require multi-sectoral/mutli-actor design & implementation**
- **A growing consensus that in view of today's complex and evolving threats, the human security approach is both timely and needed - - and that it**
 - ❖ **provides an improved understanding of the whole condition of people's lives, the insecurities they face, and their root causes ;**
 - ❖ **results in more targeted, effective and efficient responses; and**
 - ❖ **allows for a stronger culture of prevention, collaboration and responsibility by all.**



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Thank you

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FROM
FEAR**



**FREEDOM
FROM
WANT**



**FREEDOM
TO LIVE
IN DIGNITY**