



Human Security at the United Nations

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Human Security Unit - United Nations

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This is the twelfth issue of "Human Security at the United Nations," a newsletter produced by the United Nations Human Security Unit.

With the United Nations General Assembly set to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals in September, this issue focuses on ways in which the human security approach can contribute to the implementation of the 17 inter-related goals. A UNTFHS-funded project in Egypt provides a practical example of the human security approach in action to promote inclusive and sustainable development for remote rural communities.

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Human Security contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

On 1 August 2015, the UN General Assembly released the much anticipated and thoroughly debated declaration on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" is an ambitious agenda that places the wellbeing and dignity of people at the centre of the global community's agenda and pledges to leave no one behind.

Echoing the principles of the human security approach – people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific, prevention-oriented as well as the protection and empowerment framework – the sustainable development agenda recognizes the interconnectivity of the challenges faced by humanity and highlights the need for integrated and comprehensive responses that support the advancement of more inclusive and peaceful societies.

To this aim, the human security approach brings a valuable contribution. Based on a wealth of lessons learned from fifteen years of experience in more than 85 countries, the human security approach can enhance the United Nations' efforts to address the integrated nature of the SDGs. The approach can be very effective in the design of comprehensive and multi-stakeholder partnerships for eradicating poverty, and promoting inclusive and resilient societies. Through the combined application of its principles, the human security approach provides a practical approach for 'why' and 'how' the different parts of the United Nations system must come together to maximize their expertise and resources in a more holistic and integrated manner.

Moreover, the human security approach provides a more nuanced understanding of how different countries; districts within countries; and groups of people experience the multi-dimensional aspects of poverty. Such a context-specific analysis at the local level will be critical to ensure the

attainment of the SDGs for all people, especially those most vulnerable.

At the same time, by addressing the root causes of poverty and by highlighting the impact of income inequality on people's daily survival, livelihood and dignity, the human security approach can support poverty reduction in a more inclusive, targeted and people-centred fashion. Initiatives based on the human security approach have uncovered the various factors that impede marginalized people from accessing essential public services and economic opportunities. Subsequently, responses have been tailored to meet the specific needs of marginalized populations, including women, ethnic minority groups, displaced people, and people with disabilities, among others. And national and local priorities have been established with the aim to advance inclusive development processes where the dividends of economic growth and social harmony are felt by all sections of society. Moreover, the human security approach addresses the full range of challenges that undermine economic growth and poverty reduction. It helps to clarify how diverse priorities ranging from food, health, education and employment, to peace, stability and environmental sustainability interact and require solutions that are both comprehensive and context-specific.

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In addition, today, there is clear evidence that violent conflict and fragile institutions are the biggest obstacles to sustainable economic development. When violence is rife and trust in institutions is weak, any response that neglects the structural and behavioural causes of violence falls short in preventing a relapse into crises. The application of the human security approach, based on its core pillars – freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom to live in dignity – has helped address challenges that stem from and result in violence, human rights violations and abject poverty. By emphasizing the intrinsic interrelation between peace and security, development, and human rights, human security based initiatives have produced effective solutions to ensure that poverty reduction strategies are attentive to the root causes of violence.

In short, the application of the human security approach complements and enriches the mechanisms that will be needed in order to meet the SDGs. By understanding the relationship between the different components of the SDGs, the human security approach can frame future responses in a more interconnected and systematic fashion and help clarify how diverse issues interact and require integrated solutions to ensure greater sustainable and inclusive development. It can support the United Nations system to find appropriate solutions in this new direction and result in stronger responses by the international community.

Human Security in Action – United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) promotes inclusive and sustainable development in Upper Egypt



A date farmer receives training on how to control the spread of the red palm weevil which threatens to decimate this lucrative crop. Collectives have also been established to process and package dates as a sustainable source of income. © UNIDO 2015

Since its establishment in 1999, the UNTFHS has generated a significant catalogue of best practices that translate the human security approach into practical actions. Through people-centred responses that draw on the combined expertise and partnerships among a diverse group of stakeholders, these projects have highlighted the added value of the human security approach in tackling the root causes of poverty and in removing the obstacles to sustainable development. In the Governorate of Minya, for example, UNIDO, UN Women, UN-HABITAT, ILO, and IOM are working together with Government ministries and local NGOs to overcome the growing number of human insecurities faced by communities in Upper Egypt, an area home to 66 per cent of the country's extreme poor. Faced with severe unemployment, the acute drop in incomes, combined with decreasing agricultural outputs have resulted in growing social tensions and a rise in economic, food, health, and environmental insecurities.

With funding from the Trust Fund, the Swiss Development Cooperation and the Government of Japan, the UN system has come together to tackle the multi-dimensional drivers of poverty in Upper Egypt, with a focus on vulnerable households, youth, women and children. Recognising the importance of human security to the survival, livelihood and dignity of people, the project applies a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach that emphasizes the importance of combining top-down protection measures with bottom-up empowerment activities. As a result, through a series of institutional measures, the project is improving the quality of homes; providing social services, including health, education and water to those most in need; increasing employment opportunities through information sharing, counselling and referral services; and supporting entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, bottom-up empowerment actions are building people's capacities to lead the way in defining their community's future. Among these, Human Security Forums serve as an enabling environment for communities to take the lead in planning and implementing local development projects based on the priorities set during the Forum's consultations.

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Through comprehensive community action plans that identify priority projects at the village and district levels, the Forum catalyses local ownership and ensures sustainability of the planned initiatives. As a result, vocational skills training for disadvantaged community members, business management coaching for entrepreneurs, and micro-finance activities for women and other vulnerable groups are provided to empower communities to mitigate current challenges and build future opportunities.

Furthermore, the human security approach by rejecting silo-driven responses which have limited impact on the overall improvement of people's lives, leverages the expertise and knowhow of five UN Agencies to respond to the multi-dimensional challenges of poverty in Upper Egypt. Such an approach utilizes local structures, builds upon local knowledge and skills, and is carried out in close collaboration with local and national counterparts. It is anticipated that by creating such synergies, the project will be instrumental in effectively addressing the inter-linkages between the various threats to human security and as a result will institute the most effective response to the multi-faceted challenges faced by the people of Minya. Further information on the project, including photos, videos and newsletters, please click [here](#).



The project offers a variety of vocational training in order to empower vulnerable women and boost household incomes. In this picture, women attend a dairy processing training course. © UNIDO

Upcoming Events and Latest News

UN Television “21st Century” Documentary Series on Human Security

The UN Television’s news-magazine programme “21st Century” shines a spot line on the world’s most unreported stories. Told through people’s experiences, the programme highlights four projects funded by the UNTFHS. The latest edition showcases the UNTFHS-funded project in **Egypt**. Previous editions have focused on projects in Kenya and the Republic of Congo. In **Kenya**, the documentary tells the story of pastoralist communities in the Turkana region driven from their homes by the interrelated threats of climate change, poverty and conflict. In the **Republic of Congo**, the multidimensional effects of the country’s civil war are presented through the story of one woman leading efforts to rebuild her community and heal the scars of violence. The final documentary in the series will focus on the issue of Haitian migrants and their descendants living in the Dominican Republic, highlighting the added value of the human security approach in addressing the multiple needs of vulnerable and marginalized communities.

Video on Human Security and Disaster Risk Reduction

The Human Security Unit has produced a short video on Human Security and Disaster Risk Reduction which demonstrates the contribution of the approach in mitigating and adapting to the devastation of natural hazards and climate change. Featuring examples from Serbia, Kenya and Uzbekistan, the video was launched at the 2015 UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and provides practical examples of how the human security approach builds resilience of vulnerable communities threatened by natural disasters. To view the video, please click [here](#).

Global Forum on Migration - 14-16 October 2015, Istanbul

The Global Forum on Migration aims to advance understanding and cooperation on the mutually reinforcing relationship between migration and development and to foster practical and action-oriented outcomes. Co-chaired by the Governments of Eritrea and Moldova, a roundtable discussion on enhancing

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Publications and Resources

Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – United Nations General Assembly

Empowerment and Protection: Stories of Human Security – Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict

A Human Security Approach to Disaster Risk – Human Security Unit

UNTFHS Project Summaries – lessons learned, notable achievements and the application of the human security approach

An extensive list of human security related publications can be found on the **UNTFHS website**.

human development and human security for forced migrants will provide an opportunity to discuss the benefits of the human security approach as a comprehensive policy framework for tackling migration.

The Human Security Unit will be present at the Forum with advocacy materials on human security and on UNTFHS projects on migration at the IOM booth. For further information on the Forum and the roundtable discussion, please click [here](#).

The Fifth Istanbul Human Security Conference “The Role of Non-State Actors in Building Human Security: Opportunities and Challenges Ahead” - 20 and 21 October 2015, Istanbul

The conference will be held at Kadir Has University in Istanbul and is organized by the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations (CTPSR) at Coventry University, the United Nations Human Security Unit and Kadir Has University. Panel sessions will focus on the role of non-state actors in building human security across four thematic areas – development, humanitarian aid, disaster management and peacebuilding – and will provide an interactive forum to engage both the academic and practitioner communities. More details can be found on the conference [website](#).

Conference on “Applying the human security approach and its contribution to priority areas of the international community and the United Nations system” - 11 May 2015, Vienna

The Human Security Unit, with the support of the Permanent Missions of Austria and Japan to the United Nations in Vienna and UNIDO, hosted an interactive panel discussion at the Vienna International Centre. The event raised awareness on the application of the human security approach as a tool for developing effective policies and programmes by the United Nations, Member States and the broader international community, including the private sector. Drawing on experiences from the United Nations and

academia, the event provided an important opportunity to share lessons learned and best practices on the application of the human security approach, while exploring its added value as a people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented framework to respond to and mitigate risks and increase resilience. For further information on the event, please click [here](#).

Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Conference on Human Security - 9 and 10 April 2015, Santiago

Titled “The Contribution of the Human Security Approach to the Post-2015 Development Agenda”, the Human Security Unit and the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Latin American Social Sciences Institute (FLACSO-Chile), hosted a Latin America and Caribbean regional human security conference in Santiago, Chile. The conference brought together practitioners, academics and policymakers from across Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss the added value of the human security approach to current and emerging challenges in the region. During the two-day event, experts discussed the following thematic areas: citizen security, public health, and the impact of climate change and natural disasters. Panellists and participants shared their first-hand experiences in implementing the human security approach in Latin America and other regions, and examined ways to integrate best practices and lessons learned into future policies and programmes at the regional, national and local levels. For the panel presentations and further information on the conference, click [here](#).

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International Conference on Human Security and Migration - 26 and 27 March 2015, Mexico City

The UNTFHS-funded Joint Programme on Migration in Mexico, in collaboration with the Migration Policy Unit of the Mexican Ministry of Interior, organised an “International Conference on Human Security and Migration” in Mexico City. The conference provided a platform for best practices in the management of migration in the region, especially in North and Central America, and also to showcase the results of the Joint Programme in Chiapas, Oaxaca and Tabasco. For further information on this project, please click [here](#).

Side Event on Human Security and Disaster Risk Reduction - 18 March 2015, Sendai

The Human Security Unit and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, hosted a side event on “Disaster Risk Reduction and Human Security: Effective Responses to Strengthen Resilience and Protect and Empower People in Response to Natural Disasters” at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) in Sendai, Japan. The event raised awareness of the effectiveness of the human security approach in tackling disaster risk reduction and how it builds the resilience of communities, especially those most vulnerable. Panel presentations provided practical examples of how the human security approach is an effective tool to prepare for, adapt, and mitigate the risks associated with natural disasters around the world and how the approach can contribute to implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction at the national and local levels. Information on the event can be found [here](#).

Security Council Open Debate on the “Maintenance of international peace and security: Inclusive development for the maintenance of international peace and security” - 19 January 2015, New York

During a day-long debate featuring nearly eighty speakers and presided by the President of Chile, the Security Council urged a common United Nations approach to inclusive development as a key for preventing conflict and enabling sustainable peace. A number of Member States highlighted the important contribution made by the human security approach in uncovering the drivers of exclusion and in engaging communities in the development and implementation of solutions to ensure a sustainable transition to stability and development. A summary of the debate can be found [here](#).

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