

SPRING / SUMMER 2021

HUMAN SECURITY NEWSLETTER



Findings of the global survey on human security

More than 25 years after the introduction of human security at the United Nations, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the quest for human security even more urgent. The pandemic, by threatening lives and devastating social and economic systems, has highlighted the multifaceted nature of the challenges we face. It has shown how people around the world, in developing and developed countries alike, live under varied conditions of insecurity. And it has underscored the need for integrated policies that focus on people's survival, livelihood and dignity during downturns as well as in prosperity. Against this backdrop, the Human Security Unit (HSU) from January to March 2021 administered a global survey on human security to gather lessons learned on the contributions of human security over the past three decades, and to consider areas where it can bring the greatest value for the work of the United Nations moving forward.

The survey was disseminated across six stakeholder groups including United Nations Member States, the United Nations system, parliamentarians, and academics, NGOs, and youth organizations working on human security. Through nearly 700 responses, the survey strongly confirmed that (i) human security is broadly considered an essential framework to

strengthen prevention and to respond to multi-dimensional challenges; (ii) the human security approach has been mainstreamed widely as an analytical and planning framework by those implementing activities on the ground; and (iii) there is considerable interest in further expanding the understanding and application of the concept and approach.

Respondents also highlighted its operational value in improving the design of integrated national and local development policies, helping to translate global agendas and priorities into programming at the local level, focusing attention on reaching those most vulnerable, and promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships. In addition, the survey revealed a clear demand for more awareness raising, capacity building, and targeted guidance on the application of human security to address priority issues of the international community. Findings from the survey will inform decision-making on the future trajectory of human security at the United Nations.



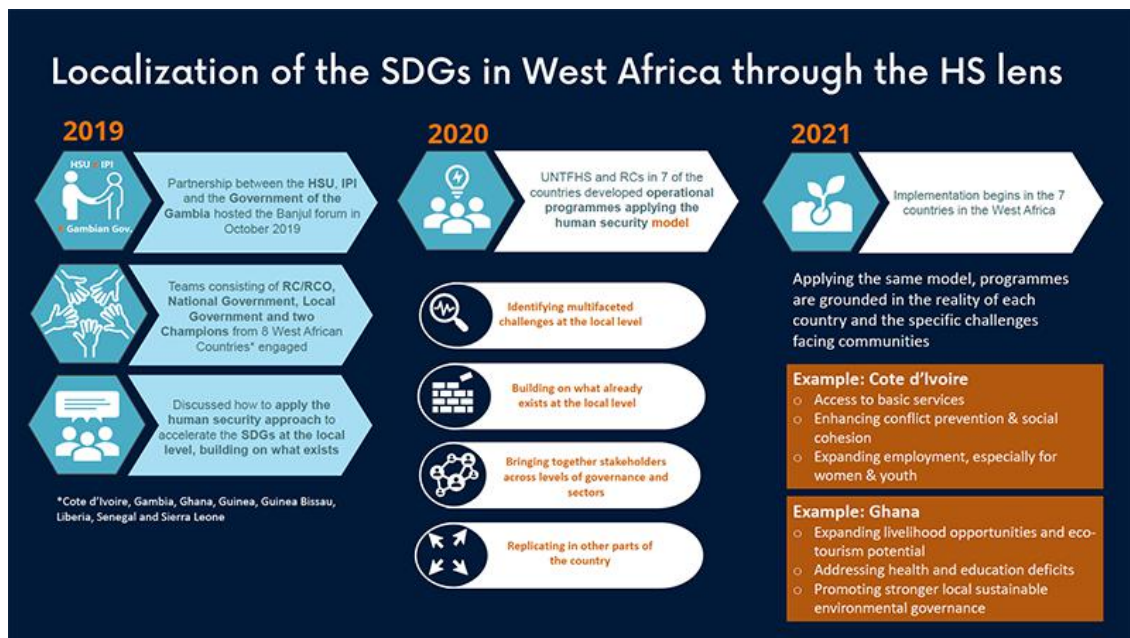
Accelerating the SDGs at the local level

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was growing consensus on the need for a more ambitious effort to achieve the SDGs, particularly at the local level. With the pandemic reversing development gains and exposing deep underlying inequalities in many countries and communities, a localized, ground-up approach to ensure that recovery and future development progress is responsive and tailored to local needs and aspirations is more essential than before.

In West Africa, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) has been working closely with Resident Coordinators and United Nations Country Teams, national and municipal governments, and local champions to develop initiatives that mobilize the capacities and ingenuity of local actors and advance inclusive, multi-stakeholder partnerships towards achieving the SDGs at the local and national levels. These programmes, launching in seven West African countries – Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana,

Guinea, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone – were developed subsequent to the recommendations offered at the Banjul Forum, organized in October 2019, in partnership with the Government of The Gambia, the Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat, the UN Country Team in The Gambia, and the International Peace Institute.

Today, the seeds planted at the Forum have grown into comprehensive, integrated programmes across the subregion. These programmes embody the human security approach by responding to the multifaceted development challenges at the local level, building on the resources and assets that already exist within communities, bringing together stakeholders from diverse sectors and levels of governance, and laying the foundation for scale-up and replication. While the programmes apply the same model, they are grounded in the reality and unique challenges of each country and participating communities, particularly those most vulnerable and furthest behind. Together these programmes promise to provide invaluable lessons on advancing inclusive COVID-19 recovery and sustainable development in resource-constrained environments.





Advancing the SDGs in conflict-affected countries in the Arab Region

Countries in the Arab region have been heavily impacted by conflict, resulting in displacement and loss of lives, destruction of property and infrastructure, rising inequality and other complex challenges and insecurities. Accordingly, the UNTFHS approved a multi-stakeholder initiative to develop a regional report and reference guide that incorporates tools and approaches for achieving SDGs in conflict-affected countries in the region. The initiative is led by the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation at the League of Arab States (LAS), in partnership with IOM, ESCWA and the HSU.

The report, to be launched in June 2021, focuses specifically on eight countries – Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and Jordan. Based on country-specific and regional reviews, in-depth analyses, and surveys, as well as through extensive e-consultations with policy makers, civil society, the UN system, multilateral, and regional institutions, the report underscores the following: strategies must treat the SDGs in their entirety and in this regard, the human security approach can provide a comprehensive “plan of action” for countries to translate national policies into initiatives that result in tangible improvements in people’s lives; (ii) addressing vulnerabilities and eliminating exclusion are key to achieving the SDGs in conflict-affected countries; (iii) recognizing that there is no “one size fits all” in addressing challenges and risks, the achievement of the SDGs should be based on a universal yet highly contextualized approach involving local stakeholders; and (iv) fulfilling the SDGs requires a common vision to eliminate silos and advance collective outcomes that bridge short-term assistance with long-term peace and development, for which the human security approach is particularly valuable.

The launch of the report will be followed by several high-level events throughout 2021. Please check the HSU website for regular updates.



Leave no one behind in COVID-19 recovery in Cabo Verde, Libya, Mexico, Timor Leste and Turkmenistan

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 UNTFHS Call for Proposals focused attention on submissions to support inclusive and comprehensive COVID-19 recovery and rebuilding at the national and local levels. Submissions were received from all regions of the world, underscoring the universal reach of the pandemic and illustrating the value of the human security framework for translating national response plans into concrete initiatives that are integrated, people-centred and preventive.

In **Cabo Verde**, UNODC and UN-Habitat are joining forces to support the most vulnerable urban communities to overcome the multidimensional impacts of the pandemic. Utilizing the innovative 'Block by Block' methodology, which uses gaming as a participatory tool to engage local communities, the programme will undertake comprehensive human security assessments and build capacities of national and local stakeholders towards inclusive and integrated development planning in three municipalities. Lessons will be upstreamed to integrate the human security approach in relevant national sectoral plans and to replicate the initiative in other municipalities.

In **Libya**, a WFP, UNDP and UNFPA programme will apply the human security approach to develop ground-up strategies that address the multiple impacts of the protracted conflict and COVID-19 in some of the most affected communities. Utilizing human security as an umbrella framework to bring together and bridge thematic community assessments across the humanitarian and development sectors, the programme will identify entry points for community action plans with the potential to address interconnected challenges at the local level. Networks of diverse stakeholders will elaborate and implement these plans in a participatory and inclusive manner to ensure that communities, particularly the most marginalized, are included in COVID-19 recovery and will benefit from the dividends of

peace.

In **Mexico**, UNFPA, UNODC and UNIDO are collaborating on a novel initiative to apply human security to strengthen national and local coordination in developing integrated public policies and response frameworks to assess and tackle challenges faced by youth-at-risk during and after the pandemic. The programme will establish permanent operational platforms to manage multi-stakeholder dialogue and intersectoral coordination at the federal, state, and local levels. It will build the capacity of stakeholders to apply the human security approach to better respond to the vulnerabilities of at-risk groups. In addition, it will create opportunities for youth leadership and agency in advancing inclusive COVID-19 recovery in the State of Hidalgo, with lessons to be shared with other states and municipalities.

In **Timor-Leste**, an IOM and UNICEF programme aims to ensure that the needs and specific challenges of remote border communities, some of the most vulnerable in the country, are effectively incorporated into the Government's COVID-19 response and recovery plan. The programme will use the human security approach to develop a multi-sectoral assessment and mapping of border communities to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges border communities face in view of the multifaceted impacts of the pandemic and response strategies that restrict movement. The results will be used to elaborate policy and programming recommendations to inform decision-making at different levels, including cross-border collaboration.

In **Turkmenistan**, a joint programme by UNFPA, IOM, UNICEF and UNODC will apply the human security approach to support a more inclusive and integrated implementation of the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan (SERP) adopted by the Government. Recognizing the need for implementation strategies to mirror the comprehensive nature of the SERP, government agencies, UN partners, and communities will establish multi-sectoral dialogue mechanisms to ensure that initiatives reflect the differential impact of the pandemic on communities, particularly youth. The programme will also develop the capacities of local stakeholders to build partnerships with local authorities to address both the immediate and longer-term consequences of the pandemic.

June – July events on human security

Please check our website regularly for updates on human security activities. Also, follow us on Twitter [@UNhumansecurity](https://twitter.com/UNhumansecurity).

8 June: Launch of the 2021 UNTFHS [Call for Proposals](#).

8-11 June: Human Security Symposium organized by the Human Development Report Office of UNDP. Visit the HDRO [website](#) for more information.

29 June: Side event on “Human Security and Gender Equality,” as part of the UNDP-led Development Dialogues – Rethinking Solutions to Crisis in the Decade of Action.

29 June: Official launch of the LAS-led Regional Report on Achieving SDGs in Conflict Affected Countries in the Arab Region, in partnership with IOM, ESCWA and the HSU.

July: Side event at the High-Level Political Forum entitled Inclusive Societies: A Regional Perspective to Support Localization to Ensure No One is Left Behind? based on the key findings of the “Regional Report on Achieving SDGs in Conflict Affected Countries in the Arab Region.” The event will be led by LAS in partnership with IOM, ESCWA and the HSU.



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