

**Sixty-eighth session**

Agenda items 14 and 118

**Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields****Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit****Follow-up to General Assembly resolution [66/290](#) on human security****Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [66/290](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a report on human security experiences at the national, regional and international levels. In accordance with that resolution, Governments of all Member States, as well as regional organizations, the United Nations system, academic and research institutions, and non-governmental organizations, were invited to provide inputs and share their views. On the basis of these contributions, the report provides an overview of experiences and lessons learned on the application of human security.

The examples presented highlight the centrality of human security as a universal framework to respond to a wide range of challenges and opportunities in the twenty-first century. They document the need for people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented solutions that focus our efforts on advancing the interconnected pillars of peace and security, development and human rights. Further, they illustrate the value of the human security approach in our determination to reduce the likelihood of conflicts, overcome the obstacles to sustainable development, and promote a life of dignity for all. The report closes with a set of recommendations for the consideration of Member States.



## I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [66/290](#) entitled “Follow-up to paragraph 143 on human security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome”. In that resolution, the Assembly agreed that human security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people. Accordingly, in paragraph 8 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the resolution, seeking the views of Member States and providing lessons learned on human security experiences.

2. In response to this request, in January 2013, questionnaires were sent out to gather comprehensive information on human security activities and policies implemented at national, regional and international levels, and to seek views on lessons learned through implementing the human security approach. This was followed by an additional set of questions sent to gather further insights from Member States in July 2013.<sup>1</sup>

3. The present report is based on the information generated through these questionnaires, as well as discussions on human security at the General Assembly and experiences from projects funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS). Anchored in the common understanding reached on human security by the Assembly, the present report:

(a) Provides an overview of experiences on the implementation of human security at national, regional and international levels;

(b) Identifies lessons learned on the application of human security as expressed by Member States, regional organizations, the United Nations system and non-governmental entities;

(c) Documents the added value as well as the opportunities in advancing human security and strengthening United Nations support in this area.

The report concludes with a set of recommendations for consideration by Member States.

## II. A common understanding on human security

4. The adoption of General Assembly resolution [66/290](#) on 10 September 2012 was a significant milestone for the advancement of human security. In paragraph 3 of that resolution, the Assembly agreed on a common understanding of human security which included 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;

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<sup>1</sup> See the annex to this report for a complete list of submissions.

(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;

(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.

5. Agreed by consensus, the common understanding draws on 7 years of discussion on human security at the General Assembly and builds on nearly 20 years of experience of implementing the human security approach within the United Nations system and beyond. It provides the parameters for its application across the Organization and ensures that its implementation is rooted in the Charter of the United Nations.

### **III. Applying the human security approach**

6. Since the turn of the new millennium, our demographic, environmental and technological landscape has shifted significantly and threats to our common peace, security and development are more complex and interrelated than ever before. While technological advances have brought new opportunities for political participation and poverty reduction, in many regions, disparities of income and inequities are widening and vulnerable groups are being left behind. As a result, 1.2 billion people still live in extreme poverty and face serious deprivations owing to differences in gender, ethnicity, disability, age and location. In addition, the pressures of urban growth and climate change present significant challenges to people and Governments throughout the world, while violent conflicts continue to undermine our aspirations for peace, development and social progress.

7. At the same time, the common understanding on human security, agreed to by the General Assembly, provides a new way of thinking about the range of challenges we face in the twenty-first century and how we respond to them. By focusing our efforts on advancing the interconnected pillars of peace and security, development and human rights, human security provides the people-centred approach by which to comprehensively address the totality of the challenges we face and to translate our efforts into actions that give rise to more effective and tangible improvements in the daily lives of people.

8. Today, the added value of the human security approach is increasingly recognized by Governments, at both the national and local levels, as well as by regional organizations and civil society groups. Similarly, the United Nations system at Headquarters and at country level acknowledges its significant contribution towards strengthening the Organization's efforts to support Member States in ways that are more comprehensive, integrated and mutually reinforcing.

9. The examples presented here demonstrate how the human security approach is being implemented at the national, regional and international levels in line with the provisions of General Assembly resolution [66/290](#). It is being applied worldwide in response to a wide range and varying constellation of threats, and has proved its value as a tool for project design, programme development, strategic planning and policymaking.

## **A. National level**

10. Human security strengthens solutions that are embedded in local realities and based on national ownership. Since the political, economic, social and environmental conditions for human security vary significantly within and across countries, and at different points in time, the advancement of human security recognizes these differences and promotes responses that are contextually relevant, people-centred, comprehensive and prevention-oriented.

11. Accordingly, human security initiatives promote solutions that identify the root causes underlying current and emerging threats, reveal possible mismatches between local and national as well as regional and international policies and programmes, and strengthen the capacities of Governments and people to reduce the impact of current challenges and prevent the occurrence of future crises.

### **Human security as an approach for national planning by Governments**

12. Responses to the questionnaire reveal that an increasing number of Member States recognize the added value of the human security approach as a tool to strengthen national planning and to address disparities and inequities. In my previous report on the subject ([A/64/701](#)), I highlighted Mongolia's Good Governance for Human Security programme, and the inclusion of human security in Ecuador's constitution which is currently being realized through *Plan Ecuador*, a people-focused, preventive and multidimensional framework which aims to solve the interrelated problems of poverty, exclusion and violence. The report also highlighted the ongoing efforts of Thailand's Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to promote social development and create public equity and social justice through the advancement of human security.

13. Over the past four years, other Member States have underscored the value of a more people-centred national planning process, which engages communities and takes into consideration local differences. Such an approach has advanced more responsive national architectures which build on people's aspirations and capacities, incorporate a broader range of actors, and strengthen long-term solutions to current and emerging challenges.

14. For example, in Kenya, the national development plan entitled "Kenya Vision 2030" applies a comprehensive and multisectoral approach which is built on the principles of protection and empowerment. Accordingly, the plan's economic and social pillars envisage a just, cohesive, equitable, clean and secure environment where individuals and communities are empowered to enjoy greater prosperity and a better quality of life across all regions of the country. Complemented by a political pillar that provides protection through a people-centred, results-oriented and accountable democratic system, Kenya Vision 2030 highlights the importance of combining top-down protection measures with bottom-up empowerment activities which bolster institutional capacities and advance a people-centred, comprehensive and inclusive approach to national development.

15. Similarly, in Mexico, a better understanding of the local context is the basis for the National Development Plan 2013-2018. Derived from a nationwide public consultation, the Plan aims to, inter alia, strengthen democracy, governance and security; protect social rights and inclusion; improve the quality of education; and advance equitable growth. This multisectoral plan acts as a broad strategy around which people and the Government can come together to develop more sustainable, prevention-oriented and regionally specific programmes which build on local capacities and aspirations.

16. Lithuania's National Security Strategy, adopted in 2012, incorporates the objectives of freedom from want and freedom to live in dignity, as well as freedom from fear, as fundamental considerations for national security. While maintaining the centrality of national sovereignty, the strategy is formulated based on the understanding that territorial security cannot be guaranteed by military and political means alone. By incorporating a wider spectrum of factors, including economic opportunities, energy security, human rights, public health, prevention of transnational crime and disaster management, the strategy outlines a more integrated and holistic approach to address security and development in their totality.

#### **Utilizing the human security approach in the field by the United Nations system**

17. A number of Member States also view human security as an important tool to reinforce the work of the United Nations and promote comprehensive joint programming at the national level. This was echoed by numerous United Nations country teams which have adopted the human security approach when faced with complex situations and in cases where a standard single-agency response has been ineffective in responding to the multiplicity of challenges faced by people and Governments.

18. Since 1999, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security has played a critical role in channelling financial resources to field-based projects that apply the human security approach. In 2013, an independent rapid assessment of projects funded by the Trust Fund was undertaken. Projects reviewed from around the world highlighted the fact that, compared with single-support silo-driven responses, the

human security approach has allowed for a new way of thinking to highlight the interconnectivity of the challenges faced by a broad range of communities. In particular, the report emphasized the need to go beyond short-term fixes and to advance comprehensive solutions that are preventive rather than reactive and that include the active participation of the affected communities, the Government and civil society. There is ample evidence to demonstrate that such an approach results in more targeted and effective solutions which strengthen local ownership, enhance sustainability and contribute to the expansion of the gains made to other groups and geographical locations.

19. In particular, addressing the multifaceted needs of vulnerable populations and building their long-term resilience to complex challenges require our continued commitment to promote genuine engagement at the local level and to advance integrated and multisectoral partnerships beyond the duration of a single project. Responses to the questionnaire demonstrate that United Nations country teams and their government partners are integrating the human security approach into their national-level analysis and strategic planning. Based on a more in-depth, people-centred and comprehensive understanding of the spectrum of the challenges faced by communities, human security strategies address root causes, emphasize the active engagement of affected communities, strengthen local capacities and ownership, and ensure that the challenges faced by the most vulnerable are included in national strategic plans and policies.

20. Consequently, the human security approach has been used across a range of country contexts to provide a richer and more comprehensive country-level analysis in the preparation of strategic documents, such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in the Pacific subregion, the Congo and the State of Palestine; Common Country Assessments for Afghanistan and Benin; and national strategic plans in Libya and Montenegro, for example.

21. In the Pacific subregion, the human security approach was applied to the subregional United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2013-2017 so as to capture the local specificities of the subregion's 14 Pacific island countries and territories, namely, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Through consultations with Governments and civil society, the result was a comprehensive yet flexible framework that was tailored to local conditions, and as a result ensured the inclusion of vulnerable groups and remote communities in national development priorities.

22. In Libya, the United Nations country team identified the human security approach as the most appropriate strategic framework for addressing competing national priorities. The strategic framework 2013-2014 highlights the importance of empowering conflict-affected communities to participate in the country's transition while building on the capacity of the Transitional Government to meet the various challenges and provide the necessary protection and empowerment for vulnerable groups.

23. Moreover, in the State of Palestine, a human security analysis was first applied in the "Human Development Report 2009/10". By re-examining international assistance in view of the changing environmental, economic, security and political challenges in the State of Palestine, the report advocated for more comprehensive and participatory approaches which could strengthen the resilience of vulnerable

communities. This resulted in the implementation of a number of multi-agency projects that aimed to address the well-being of communities in their totality. Drawing on these experiences led to the emergence of the human security approach as the most effective framework for the first United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the State of Palestine in 2013.

24. Human development reports have also played an important role in the application of human security at the national level. Since the issuance of the United Nations Development Programme 1994 *Human Development Report* on human security,<sup>2</sup> some 20 national and regional reports<sup>3</sup> have been produced on this subject. These reports have demonstrated how the human security approach can provide a more comprehensive and contextualized understanding of the particular challenges in a specific country. Based on the broader understanding of human security, they have helped to highlight the most critical and pervasive threats to the survival, livelihood and dignity of people and have strengthened the quality and relevance of policymaking at the national level.

25. These are a few of the many cases where the human security approach is being applied at the national level. From this diverse range of experiences, it is evident that the human security approach is a versatile yet practical tool to assist national policymakers and those implementing projects on the ground to develop innovative actions that can better address the totality of human aspirations to be free from fear, free from want and free to live in dignity.

## **B. Regional level**

26. Regional bodies play an important role in identifying common insecurities, mobilizing support and advancing collective action. With knowledge of the political nuances and cultural sensitivities of their regions, these organizations are crucial partners in guaranteeing human security. The present section highlights important contributions made by regional intergovernmental organizations and other regional entities in applying the human security approach.

### **Regional intergovernmental organizations**

27. The ethos of human security has influenced the policies and programmes of many regional intergovernmental organizations that deal with a broad range of human insecurities.

28. In Africa, the importance of human security and the interlinkages between peace, security and development has influenced many African Union policies over the past 15 years. The African Union Constitution Act, the African Union Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact, the Statement of Commitment to Peace and Security in Africa, and the policy on Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development assert the belief of the African Union in human security as a continent-wide approach that can bring long-lasting benefits to its member States and their

<sup>2</sup> New York, Oxford University Press, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Including reports for Afghanistan, Albania, Benin, Chile, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Honduras, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Mali, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the State of Palestine and regional reports of the Arab, Central Asian and Latin American countries.

partners. Moreover, in June 2013, at the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), the African Union reaffirmed the centrality of human security as a framework for assisting African countries in achieving their development goals and its relevance to the post-2015 development agenda.

29. In the Pacific region, where climate change continues to threaten sustainable economic development, the Pacific Islands Forum adopted the Human Security Framework for the Pacific 2012-2015 in June 2012. The Framework provides strategic guidance for improving the understanding and implementation of the human security approach in the region and outlines a framework for the integration of peace, security, development and environmental initiatives in the Pacific context.

30. Noting the profound changes that have occurred in the world and in the Americas, States of the Americas, at the Organization of American States (OAS) Special Conference on Security, reaffirmed in the Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted on 28 October 2003:

(T)hat the basis and purpose of security is the protection of human beings. Security is strengthened when we deepen its human dimension. Conditions for human security are improved through full respect for people's dignity, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, as well as the promotion of social and economic development, social inclusion, and education and the fight against poverty, disease, and hunger.

It was also reaffirmed that:

The security threats, concerns, and other challenges in the hemispheric context are of diverse nature and multidimensional scope, and the traditional concept and approach must be expanded to encompass new and non-traditional threats, which include political, economic, social, health, and environmental aspects.

31. For the European Union (EU), the promotion of human security remains a priority in addressing critical and pervasive threats to the survival, livelihood and dignity of people. Recognizing the inextricable interdependence and the mutually reinforcing relationship among human rights, development, peace and security, EU supports the advancement of human security through its commitment to reduce poverty and inequality, promote good governance and human rights, and address the root causes of conflict and insecurity. In addition, more targeted initiatives for addressing food insecurity in the Horn of Africa, building stronger bridges between humanitarian and development assistance and improving disaster risk management, both inside and outside EU, are seen as important for enhancing human security.

#### **Regional bodies of the United Nations system**

32. Among regional bodies, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has made significant strides in translating human security into action. As a follow-up to Fiftieth Directing Council resolution CD50.R16 on health, human security, and well-being, PAHO has been instrumental in examining the interlinkages between health and human security and has developed technical guidelines on the application of human security and its relation to improvements in health. These documents highlight the importance of human security to the achievements of health-related targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

33. Similarly, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is applying the human security approach across a broad range of issues which are of particular interest to the region. Based on paragraph 17 (g) of the Shanghai Declaration, adopted by ESCAP by its resolution 60/1, and to better address social disparities and improve poverty reduction across the region, the Commission has striven to “promote human security in the region through greater regional cooperation, especially for vulnerable people”. These efforts have resulted in people-centred policies and programmes that build on a deeper understanding of the local dynamics for equitable growth, migration and sustainable urban environments.

### **C. International level**

34. Governments retain the primary role for ensuring the survival, livelihood and dignity of their populations. At the same time, the crises of recent years have sharpened the focus of the international community on those threats that go beyond the control of any individual Government or Governments. These threats have highlighted the need for greater collaboration among Governments, international and regional organizations, civil society groups and community-based actors. Consequently, an increasing number of Member States and non-governmental organizations have emphasized the significance of the human security approach to international policies and programmes. In addition, many organizations of the United Nations system have highlighted the added value of the human security approach in fostering overall coherence of policies across different entities of the United Nations system.

#### **Strengthening international collaboration**

35. As highlighted by discussions at the General Assembly, and reflected in the responses to the questionnaire submitted in the preparation of this report, many Member States have stressed the importance of human security in guiding a more comprehensive and coordinated response by the international community to complex and multifaceted threats. Accordingly, an increasing number of Member States view human security as an appropriate framework that provides a practical and policy-oriented approach to integrate peace and security, development and human rights and, as such, contributes to, but does not duplicate or detract from, existing efforts by the United Nations system.

36. Many Member States recognize that human security, based on its focus on people and the range of insecurities they face, not only strengthens intergovernmental cooperation, but also integrates the full range of actors, including the relevant technical entities, civil society networks, regional organizations and the private sector, needed to address multidimensional challenges. As noted by the Governments of Armenia, Australia, Japan, Nigeria, the Philippines and the United States of America, among others, including member States of the Human Security Network (Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Panama, Slovenia, Switzerland, Thailand and South Africa (observer)), human security ensures that the international community’s response to current and emerging challenges is not fragmented and thus leads to more coherent and targeted policies, which can contribute to bringing lasting benefits to people threatened in their survival, livelihood and dignity.

37. Consequently, many Member States have welcomed efforts to further integrate human security as a cross-cutting framework in the work of the United Nations, where, to this end, notable contributions have been made in advancing the human security concept. For example, the Human Security Network continues to play an instrumental role in highlighting the added value of human security. By focusing on common global challenges, including those pertaining to climate change, human trafficking, protection of children and women against violence, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the Human Security Network draws special attention to instances of human insecurity around the world where global cooperation can strengthen our efforts. Similarly, the Friends of Human Security (FHS) was established as an open-ended forum to promote a greater understanding of the human security concept and its application through collaborative efforts among Member States. The Friends of Human Security was instrumental in further discussing the notion of human security following its inclusion in paragraph 143 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1).

38. At the field level, projects supported by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security have been critical to the advancement of human security across a broad range of thematic areas. Based on contributions by the Governments of Greece, Japan, Mexico, Slovenia and Thailand, and through its support provided to over 200 projects in some 85 countries, including regional projects, the Trust Fund has drawn on the combined expertise of the United Nations system to tackle widespread and cross-cutting threats affecting people in all regions. Projects supported through the Fund have provided examples of successful multi-stakeholder collaborations that complement the efforts of Governments to address the needs and vulnerabilities of local communities, highlight the institutional gaps that hinder appropriate responses to complex insecurities, and support empowerment and capacity-building measures that result in notable increases in the human security of the most vulnerable communities and people.

39. Non-governmental organizations have also played an active role in advocating for the importance of human security in response to today's multiple and complex challenges. Among these, the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), a network of civil society organizations which actively promotes a more comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, recently launched the "Human security first" campaign. The campaign is a platform for gathering local perspectives on the added value of human security and its importance to the post-2015 development agenda. From the perspective of these non-governmental organizations, "there can be no development without human security".

40. Similarly, the "One voice" coalition supported by Global Health South, an alliance of health and development advocates from both the North and the South, aims to actively promote human security as one of the framing principles for the post-2015 development agenda. For these advocates, the human security approach, by underscoring the importance of inclusive, targeted and comprehensive solutions to widespread and cross-cutting challenges, provides the appropriate methodology for the analysis and development of policies and programmes in the formulation of the post-2015 sustainable development goals, including those related to health and its improvement across all regions.

41. Also noteworthy are the increasing number of academic institutions in many countries offering courses on the human security approach and hosting discussions on ways to further integrate the approach into the work of the international community.

42. These experiences underscore that at the national, regional and international levels, human security is an effective tool for project design, strategic planning and policymaking across a wide range of thematic and institutional settings. 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 commitment and expertise of Governments and people, civil society, regional organizations and the international community. Furthermore, these experiences highlight how human security is leading to evidence-based policy frameworks that are relevant to local realities and that can result in positive and sustainable change for communities faced with multiple challenges.

#### **IV. Lessons learned through the application of human security**

43. Based on the information gathered at the request of the General Assembly in its resolution [66/290](#), the present section will illustrate how the methodology and lessons learned from applying the human security approach can provide valuable tools for responding to current and emerging threats. In particular, inputs from the questionnaire highlight a considerable change in mindset among policymakers and practitioners. They reflect the growing recognition of the multiplicity of challenges to the well-being of individuals and the need to advance comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable results that seek to reduce the likelihood of conflicts, help overcome the obstacles to sustainable development and promote human rights and a life of dignity for all.

##### **Empowering vulnerable communities through people-centred solution**

44. Member States, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations have highlighted overwhelmingly the importance of people-centred responses where the voices of people guide policies and actions. Whereas national measurements may not adequately address disparities at the local level, as well as pay the needed attention to the underlying causes of inequality and exclusion within communities, more than a decade of experience has shown that policies that support the systematic identification of bottlenecks at the local level and foster robust and inclusive economic growth produce significant gains across societies and bolster progress that is more sustainable.

45. As noted in Kenya, Mongolia, Nepal and Paraguay, by disaggregating social and economic indicators at the national and local levels, the human security approach was able to uncover the various factors of exclusion that impeded women, minority ethnic groups and economically marginalized populations from accessing essential public services. For example, in Nepal, after 10 years of conflict, an interim constitution was established to protect the rights of all citizens — regardless of caste, ethnicity, religion, sex, geographical location, age or class. To ensure that historically marginalized groups were included in the reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts, the Government, in collaboration with the United Nations

system, applied a people-centred lens to better assess the dynamics of exclusion in the country. Subsequently, services were tailored to meet the specific needs of the excluded populations in terms of language, gender and culture. As a result, national and local priorities were established with the aim to advance an inclusive development process where the dividends of peace and development could be accessed by all.

46. In addition, across a diverse range of country contexts, people-centred assessments of the needs and vulnerabilities of affected communities have engendered lasting solutions to complex challenges through evidence-based approaches built around the priorities and capacities of vulnerable groups. By engaging communities in the development and implementation of solutions to their daily challenges, the human security approach has led to more effective and sustainable responses which capitalize on existing local capacities and promote greater national ownership.

47. In the Andean region of Peru, for example, recurring natural disasters had resulted in a progressive loss of livelihoods by 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 in 2006, 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.

48. In the aftermath of conflicts, when peace is often very fragile and the needs of people are far greater than the capacities available, a peacebuilding architecture that cultivates public participation, strengthens local ownership and governance and minimizes the space in which communities may relapse into conflict is crucial to break the cycle of violence and transition to sustainable peace and development. A prime example of such a people-centred strategy can be found in Timor-Leste. Faced with critical and pervasive insecurities, it became clear very early on that efforts to build and consolidate peace must be grounded in the needs and aspirations of local communities. Among these, the establishment of community-based self-help groups was considered central to promoting an inclusive framework for reducing poverty, improving access to essential services and enhancing social inclusion. These self-help groups empowered conflict-affected men and women to collaborate across a range of community-based initiatives. This played an important role in reinforcing ownership in the future of the country and in restoring trust in the communities and the institutions that aimed to return stability to the country. Similar experiences have also been found in Burundi, Liberia and Uganda.

## Context-specific approaches to multidimensional challenges

49. Since the causes and manifestation of insecurity vary considerably across and within countries, human security provides the flexibility needed to tailor national strategies and international responses to local contexts. Experiences at the national level have shown that a context-specific analysis of local conditions provides a rich source of information which helps advance solutions that are contextually relevant and responsive to the particular situations they seek to address. Subsequently, policies and programmes have been developed that consider the root causes of insecurity, identify the complex interaction of internal and external threats in a specific situation, and reveal possible mismatches among domestic, regional and international policies and responses.

50. For example, in regions affected by climate change, it has been recognized that an in-depth analysis of the local context is necessary in order to understand the cross-sectoral consequences of climate change and its impact on the level, trend and distribution of risks and vulnerabilities within countries. In Lesotho, where an estimated 80 per cent of the population depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, the adverse effects of climate-induced droughts have been hindering the country's development progress in a number of key areas, including agriculture and food security, poverty reduction, health and malnutrition. At the same time, developing long-term and sustainable responses requires a comprehensive approach that accounts for the interlinkages among food, health, nutrition and economic security. By simultaneously addressing the impact of climate change on people's vulnerabilities and promoting sustainable drought-resistant agricultural technologies in line with local capacities and available resources, strategies to adapt agricultural practices to climatic fluctuations have not only reinforced the resilience of communities to the threat of climate change but also resulted in tangible improvements in the food, health and nutrition status of the participating communities in Lesotho.

51. The need to tailor national strategies to local conditions was also evident in the conflict-affected regions of northern Ghana. Based on consultations with local government and community leaders, national policies and programmes were adapted to reflect local needs and capacities. Meanwhile, in responding to common insecurities identified at the local level, a multidisciplinary approach which integrated economic, nutrition, public safety and governance activities was developed. At the same time, the active participation of communities in identifying and surmounting their shared challenges created spaces for dialogue and conflict prevention. Consequently, through a local-level analysis, conflict prevention activities were integrated into local development plans, thereby further ensuring that development gains were not undermined by unresolved local tensions and recurrent episodes of violent conflict.

52. An important aspect of human security is the intersectoral relation among the challenges faced by vulnerable households and communities. In the Colombian municipality of Soacha, seven United Nations agencies, funds and programmes came together with local municipalities to address the consequences of rapid urbanization and internal displacement. Focusing on the interrelation among food insecurity, poverty, violence and the influx of internally displaced people, policies were adapted to the specific dynamics in Soacha and a framework of cooperation between national and local stakeholders was established in order to promote a more targeted distribution of resources and capacities. This resulted in a comprehensive

and integrated framework that improved access to public services; reduced the indicators of violence, criminality, unemployment and environmental degradation; and resulted in greater social cohesion and social harmony.

53. Another example where the human security approach has underscored the importance of local perceptions of insecurity to national policymaking is the recent national human development report in Benin. Covering more than 18,000 households, the human security survey, which was undertaken as part of the Benin national human development report, has been instrumental in assessing the multiplicity of needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of people and communities across the country. This has greatly expanded the understanding of insecurities at the local level and has revealed possible mismatches between national policymaking and local realities. As a result, the national Government and the United Nations country team have drawn on a set of human security priorities with which to implement a more targeted and contextually relevant national development plan for the country.

### **Comprehensive solutions for a more effective United Nations system**

54. The attainment of peace and security, development and human rights requires a comprehensive approach where the interlinkages among the three pillars of the United Nations are fully recognized. As a people-centred and context-specific framework, the human security approach has facilitated comprehensive and multidimensional strategies that capitalize on the comparative advantages of a diverse network of stakeholders, including Governments, civil society, and regional and international organizations. Together, these multi-stakeholder responses have led to more effective, efficient and integrated actions by the United Nations system which can better address the many interrelated challenges that threaten people in their daily lives.

55. For example, in Mongolia, the interrelated threats of persistent poverty and recurring droughts, coupled with the lack of access to basic services, continued to undermine the well-being of isolated rural communities. Despite successive efforts to bring essential services to these areas, the rural communities, especially their ethnic and linguistic minorities, continued to suffer as a result of their isolation from the country's integration into the global economy. Under the umbrella of human security, several United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, along with national and local governments and civil society organizations, combined their expertise and resources in order to devise a comprehensive strategy that could simultaneously address the specific geographical and social needs of these communities. By aligning the work of the various stakeholders, these remote communities received integrated support in the form of income-generating opportunities and access to information; improvements in sanitation and basic health-care services; and education and skills training. This comprehensive approach gave rise to more effective and tangible improvements in the daily lives of these communities and was the most appropriate response to addressing multiple insecurities in remote and isolated areas.

56. Furthermore, the human security approach has improved coherence among goals and responsibilities, as well as in the allocation of resources among United Nations entities. Accordingly, four United Nations agencies, funds and programmes worked in partnership with the local Government to address the environmental,

economic, health and social insecurities faced by vulnerable urban communities in Antananarivo, Madagascar. Instead of duplicating efforts, the comprehensive emphasis of human security created synergies among these organizations and resulted in more targeted, coordinated and cost-effective solutions which together improved the United Nations response to the full spectrum of insecurities faced by the most vulnerable inhabitants of Antananarivo.

57. Lastly, by facilitating a broader analysis of a given situation and a wider perspective beyond each organization's mandate, the human security approach has also strengthened coordination between the United Nations and national and local governments. Experiences in Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Kosovo and the Republic of Moldova have demonstrated how the members of the United Nations system by working together have improved coordination and communication with national and local authorities and enhanced the alignment of its work and expertise to national and local priorities, thereby strengthening national capacities to provide an adequate response to the most pressing needs of their populations.

58. In El Salvador, for example, growing violence coupled with unemployment and early school dropout rates had threatened the human security of vulnerable communities in the department of Sonsonate. As violence takes many forms — gender-based, gang-related and organized criminal networks — to respond to it effectively required a multi-stakeholder approach that focused on its root causes and combined top-down institutional policies with bottom-up community engagement. Subsequently, in 2008, formal mechanisms were established to unify the activities of local and municipal governments, the United Nations, civil society organizations and the communities themselves. This resulted in the advancement of comprehensive, collaborative and systemic strategies that brought together the inputs of the various stakeholders. Together, these measures made it possible to improve individual and community safety, foster peaceful coexistence and promote conditions for counteracting crime and urban violence. The success of this approach has since been replicated in a number of other municipalities.

## V. The added value of the human security approach

59. Drawing input from human security experiences at the national, regional and international levels, the application of human security and the principles that underpin it (i.e., protection and empowerment strategies that are people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented) has proved to be essential to our combined efforts to advance “the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair ... with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential” (General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 143). Most important, these examples further reinforce the centrality of human security to the activities of the United Nations system and underline its importance for achieving inclusive social and economic development, environmental sustainability and peace and security in the twenty-first century.

60. As underscored by Member States at the General Assembly, and reiterated in the questionnaire, human security provides a framework that aims to galvanize international cooperation and strengthen our resolve towards reaching our global commitments. It complements existing frameworks by considering the broad range of conditions that threaten the survival, livelihood and dignity of people, in

particular the most vulnerable, and underlines the importance of inclusive, targeted and comprehensive solutions to widespread and cross-cutting challenges.

61. Today, the cumulative impact of natural disasters undermines our efforts towards sustainable growth and development. Climate-related disasters threaten the lives and livelihoods of billions of people and result in economic losses amounting to hundreds of billions of dollars annually. Since the human consequences of climate change are multiple and often devastating in nature, a comprehensive and integrated approach that helps to reduce the social, economic and environmental consequences of climate change is an urgent priority. The examples in this report have underscored the need to tailor disaster mitigation strategies to local capacities and resources, promote local engagement in resilience-building efforts, and address the cross-sectoral consequences of climate change for people and communities. In particular, the impact of low-severity but high-frequency disasters represents one of the greatest challenges to the future development of low- and middle-income countries and warrants urgent action. It is in this regard that the human security approach can contribute significantly to our efforts to better align international and national policies to local needs and vulnerabilities and ensure that our actions result in tangible improvements in disaster risk reduction and resilience-building at the local level.

62. Similarly, in the aftermath of conflicts, when trust is eroded, local partners can play a significant role in addressing the root causes of conflicts and in promoting an inclusive peacebuilding architecture that restores basic services to all; protects people's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights; revitalizes the economy; reinforces the rule of law; improves public safety; and renews people's confidence in the political process and the institutions that together minimize the space in which societies may relapse into conflicts. As seen in the foregoing examples, the human security approach provides a valuable tool to strengthen local and national capacities for sustainable peace and development. Based on the combined implementation of its core principles, the application of human security gives rise to inclusive and accountable institutions that foster greater social cohesion and strengthen local ownership in the future of countries emerging from conflict.

63. Despite our progress in global health, we are far from achieving the full range of targets under the health-related Millennium Development Goals, especially those related to child mortality and maternal health. While we must continue to enhance the availability of health care and strengthen our disease prevention systems, improvements in health are also shaped by social, economic, personal, community and environmental conditions, which, if not addressed, can impede our progress in this critical area. The human security approach, by highlighting the specific cluster of factors that contribute to ill health, provides a flexible and responsive framework for identifying structural and behavioural causes, and for promoting comprehensive responses that recognize the importance of non-health interventions in achieving improved overall health outcomes. In particular, to prevent the tragedy of child and maternal mortality, efforts to strengthen health systems and achieve universal access to reproductive health care must be accompanied by actions that tackle the root causes of mortality and ill health — namely, the lack of access to education, gender inequity and violations of women's rights, as well as economic disparities affecting the poorest and the most vulnerable.

64. Accelerated efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and a fresh commitment to the subsequent post-2015 development agenda must be at the forefront of our resolve. The world community, both Governments and civil society, has recognized that the future of humanity rests on a truly integrated people-centred response that bolsters our determination to ensure greater inclusive social development, inclusive economic development, environmental sustainability, and peace and security. With its focus on peace and security, development and human rights, the human security approach gives expression to these commitments. Experiences from Member States, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations have highlighted the added value of the human security approach in addressing the interlinkages between these components in a manner that is contextually relevant and thereby provides the flexibility needed to adapt policies and programmes to local realities. Furthermore, by underscoring the importance of comprehensive and multisectoral responses, the contribution of human security as an appropriate framework for integrating social, economic, environmental, and peace and security concerns has been highlighted by a number of practitioners on the ground. I am therefore convinced that the human security approach offers an important framework to help accelerate progress towards meeting our existing development goals and achieving our future global objective of a life of dignity for all.

65. In addition to its importance as an overarching framework for our global commitments, human security can be most valuable at the national and local levels. Through its emphasis on people-centred analysis, human security provides practitioners and policymakers with a deeper understanding of the local context, including of the root causes of insecurities and their interlinkages. Furthermore, by collectively identifying the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of communities, human security helps to highlight potential gaps in the protection and empowerment infrastructure. Subsequently, strategies that are comprehensive and mutually reinforcing are considered, thereby resulting in targeted, effective and coherent responses which give rise to greater improvements in the daily lives of people. In particular, a key message that emerged from the United Nations system at the country level was the contribution of the human security approach to the “Delivering as one” agenda. It was noted that the human security approach through its analytical framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and the responses needed. Subsequently, by providing the rationale behind the technical assistance provided by the United Nations system, human security, in partnership with local and national counterparts, can be instrumental in enhancing the operational effectiveness of delivering as one.

## **VI. Conclusions and recommendations**

66. Stemming from the valuable experiences outlined in this report, a growing consensus is emerging on the added value of the human security approach and its contribution to the work of the United Nations. The United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security has also played an important role in providing resources for projects that bring concrete and sustainable benefits to people and their Governments. More is needed, however, in order to consolidate these lessons and to mainstream human security in the activities of the United Nations system.

67. The General Assembly is therefore requested:

- (a) To consider the present report;
- (b) To take note of the lessons learned from the experiences presented in this report and to encourage the application of human security at regional, national and subnational levels;
- (c) To request the Secretary-General to promote the mainstreaming of human security into the activities of the United Nations system;
- (d) To consider human security as an overarching framework in the post-2015 development agenda;
- (e) To urge Member States to give financial support to the valuable work of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security;
- (f) To invite the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly every two years on the progress made towards the mainstreaming of human security in the activities of the United Nations and the lessons learned.

## Annex

### **Submissions in response to the questionnaire on human security**

A total of 146 submissions were received in response to the questionnaire.

#### **Member States and non-member Observer State**

Argentina, Austria, Belarus, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Finland, Germany, Greece, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, Portugal, Slovenia, Suriname, Switzerland, Uruguay, State of Palestine.

#### **Regional intergovernmental organizations**

African Union, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Pacific Islands Forum.

#### **United Nations and other international organizations**

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Labour Organization, International Organization for Migration, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Pan American Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, United Nations Office for Project Services, United Nations Population Fund.

#### **Departments, Offices and regional commissions of the United Nations Secretariat**

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (submissions from Social Integration Branch Section 1, secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, secretariat of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and Office of the Special Adviser on Africa), Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Political Affairs, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations Global Compact Office, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office.

#### **United Nations country teams**

Afghanistan, Albania, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia,

Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Republic of Moldova, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe, State of Palestine.

**Academic and research institutions**

Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Griffith University, London School of Economics and Political Science, Sciences Po.

**Non-governmental organizations**

3P Human Security, ActionAid, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, International Alert, Servicios y Asesoría para la Paz, United Network of Young Peacebuilders.

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