

INFORMAL THEMATIC DEBATE OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON HUMAN SECURITY

Background

Today, millions of men, women and children continue to find themselves in extreme and vulnerable circumstances. Threatened by intra-state conflicts, organised crime, chronic poverty, environmental degradation, deadly infectious diseases, and risks posed by natural hazards, the human, economic and social capital lost to these situations continue to exert a devastating toll on the survival, livelihood and dignity of large numbers of citizens around the globe.

Whereas in the past, the concept of security was equated primarily with territorial security, today cross-border military threats are only one, and often not the most significant challenge confronting people's lives. As a result, the guarantee of security no longer rests on military responses alone. Essential to its advancement is also healthy political, social, environmental, economic and cultural systems that together strengthen the inter-linkages between security, development and human rights and help advance human freedoms for all. Similarly, the shift towards a global environment has meant that national borders are permeable and insecurities in one area have the potential to pose grave threats not only to the immediate victims but also to the collective security of the international community.

In response to these developments, the United Nations General Assembly agreed at the 2005 World Summit to further discuss and define the notion of human security. Paragraph 143 of the World Summit Outcome (A/RES/60/1) recognizes that "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."

Drawing input from a number of governments as well as intergovernmental organisations, civil society groups, scholars and other prominent individuals, human security is gaining support not only at the United Nations but also in other forums. Subsequently, the notion of human security is increasingly reflected in the agendas of intergovernmental organizations such as the African Union, the European Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Organization of American States (OAS).

At the United Nations, in addition to human security related activities undertaken by UN agencies, funds and programmes (A/62/695, annex), the General Assembly, in May 2008, held an informal thematic debate on human security. During the course of deliberations, consensus was reached by Member States on the need for a new culture of international relations that goes beyond fragmented responses and calls for comprehensive, integrated

and people-centred approaches that help prevent or mitigate the growing instances of human insecurity around the world.

To this end, in March 2010, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued his report on human security (A/64/701). A formal debate on human security was subsequently held at the General Assembly on 20 and 21 May 2010, and in July 2010, the General Assembly adopted by consensus its resolution on human security entitled *Follow-up to paragraph 143 on human security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome* (A/RES/64/291).

Objective and Expected Outcomes

The Informal Thematic Debate of the General Assembly on Human Security aims to support the goals set out in General Assembly Resolution 64/291 and to contribute to discussions on a notion of human security. It is envisioned that the debate will provide an opportunity for experts and Member States to share ideas and attempt to forge a common understanding on the core elements of human security, its added value, and a possible definition thereof.

Programme

The informal thematic debate will take place on 14 April 2011 at UN Headquarters in New York. The debate, which will consist of two moderated panel discussions with high-level experts, will focus on a possible approach to defining human security and its added value as a practical approach to addressing the growing interdependence of threats to peace and development for the people on the ground. The floor will be opened to delegates for questions to the panellists as well as interventions.

| Time | Programme |
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| 10 – 10:30 a.m. | Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss, President of the General Assembly • H.E. Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General |
| 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | <p><i>Interactive Panel Debate 1: A Possible Approach for Defining Human Security</i></p> <p>Moderator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative to the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction <p>Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Founder of the Centre for Human Security • Dr. Frene Ginwala, Former Speaker of the National Assembly, Republic of South Africa and Member of the Commission on Human Security • Dr. Jennifer Leaning, FXB Professor of the Practice of Health and Human Rights at Harvard School of Public Health • Dr. Amitav Acharya, Professor of International Relations and Chair of the ASEAN Studies Center at American University |
| 3 – 5:45 p.m. | <p><i>Interactive Panel Debate 2: Human Security - Its Application and Added-value</i></p> <p>Moderator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator <p>Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Ms. Sonia Picado, President of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights and Member of the Commission and Advisory Board on Human Security • Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Special Adviser on Africa and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States • Dr. Andrew Mack, Director of the Human Security Report Project at Simon Fraser University and Former Director of the Strategic Planning Office in the Executive Office of United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan • Dr. Hans-Günter Brauch, Chairman of Peace Research and European Security Studies (AFES-PRESS) and Fellow at the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security |
| 5:45 – 6 p.m. | Closing Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Yukio Takasu, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Human Security • H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss, President of the General Assembly |