

Inputs from the United Nations Human Security Unit for the policy brief on the New Agenda for Peace

15 March 2023

The inputs in this note are based on areas where human security brings value to the prevention and sustaining peace agendas as identified by the recommendations of the 2022 Inter-Agency Working Group on Human Security (IAWG) co-led by the EOSG and UNDP/HDRO and by Member States, including at the high-level luncheon on human security on 1 Dec 2022 where its importance to the elaboration of the New Agenda for Peace was specified. The lessons and best practices outlined herein are drawn from the extensive programmatic engagement of the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) at the regional, national and local levels in conflict-affected and fragile settings¹.

Strengthening the global system to better respond to peace and security issues: Human security is a necessary conceptual and operational framework for strengthening our global system. By bringing together the different agendas of the international community, it is a unifying lens for enhanced multilateral cooperation and integrated action by the United Nations system. Its focus on people provides a universal benchmark to assess the effectiveness of our development, humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts. By prioritizing a ground-up approach, it deepens our capacity to make meaningful progress on the commitment to leave no one behind. And it guides forward-looking strategies that build the resilience of people and minimize the potential for sudden or slow-onset crises to grow into full-blown human catastrophes (Statement of the Secretary-General²).

Enhancing the approaches and tools available to the UN system: To enhance the UN toolbox to prevent the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of hostilities, it is essential to mainstream the human security approach into policy and programmatic processes. The human security approach is valuable in identifying blindspots in our current understanding of today's intersecting crises and the associated policy and programmatic responses (IAWG recommendations). In addition, as noted by the Secretary-General, the concept of human security is a useful frame of reference for the work of the Organization on prevention and sustaining peace. "Human security is people-centred and holistic; it stresses the need to act early and prioritize the most vulnerable. These must all be touchstones for our work."³

A better understanding of the underlying drivers and systems of influence that are sustaining conflict: Our Common Agenda calls for strengthening international foresight and capacities to

¹ The UNTFHS has an extensive portfolio of programming in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. An overview of the human security approach to prevention and resilience can be found on the HSU website <https://www.un.org/humansecurity/prevention-and-resilience/> and a sample of programmes include [Advancing the SDGs in conflict-affected countries in the Arab region](#), [operationalizing the HDPN in Cameroon](#), [advancing conflict prevention in the Republic of Congo](#), among many others. For more examples, please contact the HSU.

² Statement by the Secretary-General at the meeting of the Group of Friends of Human Security on 9 June 2021 [Remarks to Meeting of Group of Friends of Human Security | United Nations Secretary-General](#)

³ Statement by the Secretary-General at the Security Council open debate on 20 December 2017 <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2017-12-20/addressing-complex-contemporary-challenges-international-peace-and>

identify and adapt to new peace and security risks. The human security lens should be integrated to ensure new or adapted foresight and other analytical tools promote integrated analysis toward “whole of problem” solutions. Moreover, while foresight tools are meant to provide long-term strategic visioning, the human security approach can help connect this strategic analysis to more context-specific assessments in potential hotspots for actionable, targeted information to support the planning of Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams in crisis-affected contexts.

Investing in and prioritizing prevention: The human security approach is an invaluable tool for bolstering preventive action by focusing attention on pervasive and emerging risks at the global, regional, national and local levels in a given context and examining the causes, factors and deficits that turn risks and threats into human crises. By looking comprehensively at the types of risks to peace and stability, as well as to inclusive and sustainable development, human security works at the intersection of issues including security, climate change, health, gender equality, and human rights from a prevention perspective. It helps ensure that development assistance tackles the root causes of conflict and potential conflict drivers, as well as promotes human rights access and protections. It strengthens the identification of opportunities for linking emergency response and actions to promote stability, including disarmament and peacekeeping operations, to development opportunities at the local and national levels.

Operationalizing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus: A key approach to more effectively stemming the impact of crises and preventing their recurrence is operationalizing the triple nexus in crisis contexts. Human security is premised on the recognition that long-term sustainable results are more likely to be generated by activities that go beyond responding to an immediate crisis and address the root causes and the evolving dynamics behind current and future risks and challenges. As such, human security underscores the need for joint analysis, planning and implementation amongst different sectors and entities, and provides the rationale and evidence for the constellation of partners and actions necessary to respond effectively. It introduces a reflection on how humanitarian, peacebuilding or development decision can contribute to creating risk, which also supports greater coherence across these sectors of action based on reducing vulnerability and building resilience.

Supporting regional prevention: Through an extensive assessment of capacities and resources that exist at different levels, the application of human security highlights opportunities to better engage regional and subregional organizations in promoting sustainable peace and development. As regional and subregional organizations have a unique understanding and deeper knowledge of situations in their respective regions owing to their geographic proximity, as well as a compelling interest and ability to leverage knowledge and relationships towards collective action, they are invaluable in enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations.

Addressing the peace and security implications of climate change: In bringing together the three pillars, human security provides a lens through which to unpack the complex interactions of climate change with eco- and human systems toward understanding the consequences and impacts on people and the circumstances in which they live. It lends a humanistic angle to technical and bureaucratic framings and more fully captures how the insecurities generated by economic, political, social, cultural, environmental, and technological conditions may be affected by climate risk and resilience. By focusing on the consequences of climate change on people, human security

brings risk, exposure, vulnerability and resilience into an overarching framework to help identify how different factors can converge to create areas of high or intensifying stress and how impacts in one area of life can contribute to broader insecurities or deficits that inhibit or roll back progress towards the objectives of development, peace and sustainability.

Addressing violence in all its forms: By making people the referent object of security, the human security lens naturally captures any threat of physical harm or violence to people and communities, from interpersonal violence to organized crime and ethnically motivated violence. It will also highlight who is most impacted in a given context, including women and girls, enabling targeted measures within overall strategies to address the root causes of violence and advance remedial measures. Extensive work in the area of citizen security in Latin America and community policing in Africa and elsewhere underscores the value of human security for promoting a more comprehensive, people-centred response to prevent and respond to crime and violence, as well as its knock-on effects including migration and displacement.