

**Report on the International Consultation and Workshop on**  
***Regional Dynamics of Human Security***

Held at  
The Wits Club  
University of the Witwatersrand,  
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## **I. Background and Objectives**

On 26 and 27 May 2005, *United Nations Dialogue with the Global South* and the *Department of International Relations* at University of the Witwatersrand co-hosted a consultation and workshop on the regional dynamics of human security. Participants in the meeting included some 30 researchers, academics and policy makers from South Africa, particularly the greater Johannesburg area, and academics from selected universities in China, Egypt, India and Mexico. (See Addendum 1 for a list of participants.) The purpose of the meeting was to engage the academic and research communities in a discussion of the concept of human security and its relationship to current proposals for United Nations reform. The meeting, generously supported by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, also provided an opportunity for participants to explore regional differences in human security concerns and to identify priority issues for further research.

*United Nations Dialogue with the Global South* is a three year pilot project that was initiated by the United Nations in 2004 with support from the United Nations Foundation. The goal of the project is to establish research links and ongoing collaboration between the three United Nations departments directly responsible for peace and security issues and partner universities located in the Global South. The partner universities include the American University in Cairo, Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, the National University of Mexico, Tsinghua University in China and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg. This meeting, generously hosted by Wits, provided the first opportunity for representatives of the partner universities to meet and discuss their further collaboration.

The discussions during the two-day meeting were facilitated by the proposals contained in three high profile reports: *Human Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People*, by the Commission on Human Security; the United Nations Secretary-General's High Level Panel report, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*; and the United Nations Secretary-General's report, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*.

## **II. May 26, 2005: Consultation on Human Security and United Nations Reform**

Prof. John Stremlau, Head of International Relations at Wits University, opened the meeting by welcoming participants to the event. Additional remarks were made by Mr. Derek Swemmer, Registrar of Wits University; Dr. Robin Ludwig, Coordinator of *United Nations Dialogue with the Global South*; His Excellency Mr. Toshinori Shigeie, Ambassador of Japan to South Africa; and Ambassador Jessie Duarte, Deputy Director-General of Africa Multilateral Affairs in the Department of Foreign Affairs in South Africa.

In opening the meeting, Prof. Stremlau noted that this was the first dialogue organized in the context of *United Nations Dialogue with the Global South* and thanked the organizers and donors for making the event possible. Prof. Stremlau highlighted the important role that universities can and must play not only in the enhancement of human resources, but also in the promotion of human rights. He appealed to institutions of higher learning to engage in policy relevant debates such as United Nations reform, and the emerging concept of human security. He admonished participants to avoid remaining in the “ivory tower” of academic discourse and to instead engage in the discourse on contemporary issues of the day.

In his remarks, Wits University Registrar, Mr. Derek Swemmer stated that the University was proud to be part of the Human Security/United Nations Dialogue initiative. He noted the important role of universities in shaping current policies and the thinking of policymakers. He emphasised Wits’ commitment to contributing to both policymaking and capacity building initiatives at the sub-regional and regional levels.

Dr. Robin Ludwig, Coordinator of *United Nations Dialogue with the Global South*, briefly outlined the background of the meeting as well as the origin and goals of the Dialogue project. Dr. Ludwig pointed out that the concept of human security offers a new approach to security issues that can help the United Nations better address the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. She observed that the Secretary-General’s report, *In Larger Freedom*, stresses that “not only are development, security and human rights all imperative; they also reinforce each other.” The United Nations is moving away from the compartmentalization of such issues, and is instead seeking to explore their interconnectedness. This shift in approach is clearly in accordance with the recommendations of the Commission on Human Security, which are contained in its 2003 report, *Human Security Now*.

The Ambassador of Japan to South Africa, His Excellency Mr. Toshinori Shigeie, outlined the Japanese government’s position on human security, describing it as a “human-centred” approach that should be integral at all stages of development. Ambassador Shigeie noted that the promotion of human security is one of the key pillars of Japanese cooperation with Africa, adding that the Japanese government recently doubled its overseas development assistance to the continent. He appealed to the international community to meet the challenges of both United Nations reform and the priorities of Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Ambassador Jessie Duarte, Deputy Director-General of Africa Multilateral Affairs at the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, provided an overview of South Africa’s position on UN reform. She noted that there is broad consensus in South Africa on United Nations reform, and that efforts by the African Union (AU) to achieve a continental consensus on the various reform elements were well underway. South Africa actively

contributed to, and is promoting the *Common African Position on the Proposed Reform of the United Nations*, adopted at the 7-8 March 2005 meeting of the AU Executive Council in Swaziland, Ambassador Duarte told the audience (copies of the text on African consensus, also known as the *Ezulwini Consensus*, are available from the Wits Dept. of International Relations and from the United Nations office of the Dialogue programme).

Ambassador Duarte recalled that when the United Nations was established in 1945, most African states were not represented in the world body. Later, in the context of the first United Nations reforms of the 1960s, Africa was still in a weak position to negotiate. Africa now sees itself as able to contribute significantly to the Organization's reform, and its goal is therefore to be fully represented in all decision making organs of the body. Although the AU is in principle opposed to the veto in the Security Council, as long as it exists, it should be available to all permanent members of the Council, she argued.

Ambassador Duarte drew attention to the changing conception of security. She observed that, broadly speaking, security is still commonly considered a state/military concern, with little relation to people as individuals. However, the AU has emphasised that in order to prevent conflict, issues such as poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation need to be addressed. She noted that HIV/AIDS must be recognized as a security threat, and poverty and the lack of development have been identified as the most important sources of conflict in Africa. Africa's priority is therefore to "to break the back of poverty," Ambassador Duarte asserted.

The AU's common position on intra and inter-state conflicts, stresses the importance of protecting democratically elected governments from unconstitutional changes. The AU has affirmed its commitment to reject unconstitutional changes of governments in Africa. Ambassador Duarte suggested that the United Nations and its Member States should negotiate a related international instrument. In cases where peacekeeping is required, the AU would support the preventive deployment of peacekeepers, and encourages other regional organizations to adopt similar policies. She emphasized, however, that it is vital to focus not only on the creation of a military peace, but on addressing the root causes of conflict.

### **III. Keynote Address**

Dr. Frene Ginwala, Member of the Human Security Commission and former Speaker of the South African National Assembly, delivered the keynote address (See Addendum 2 for Dr Ginwala's remarks). Dr. Ginwala prefaced her address with a definition of human security, describing its evolution over more than a decade. She emphasized that human security is still an evolving concept, noting that while it is widely accepted, it is often

not fully understood and implemented. The difficulty in changing the way security is generally understood is not surprising, since it has been historically perceived largely in state and military terms. Dr. Ginwala stressed that human security is not intended to replace the traditional concept of state security, but rather complement it, by integrating concerns of people in the process.

An important question to ask in the context of the human security debate, is whose security matters? Is it the security of the powerful or the vulnerable? A majority of people face some type of insecurity, and these insecurities need to be addressed. The key is to find out what makes people feel secure.

Dr. Ginwala suggested that the Commission on Human Security was established with the aim of defining the concept of human security, as well as to advise the international community on how it could respond to the challenges that arise from them. Although the Commission developed a definition, it refrained from preparing a list of issues that comprise human security, arguing that it was important to keep the concept dynamic, and to have the flexibility to adapt the framework to the needs of different societies. Dr. Ginwala encouraged participants not to try to come up with a list of issues relevant to human security, but rather to use the two-day meeting to prioritise those issues “that would feature in each of the regions represented”.

She further encouraged participants to consider the interlinkages of various components of human security; to determine whether they relate to each other; and if so how; and finally whether they are distinct or complementary. For example, after violent conflict has ended, the root causes of the initial violence must be identified, and addressed if a recurrence of that violence is to be prevented. Sources of violence vary considerably, and may include cultural differences, human rights abuses, corruption, social and economic hardship or a combination of these and other factors. She concluded her remarks by suggesting that UN institutional reforms should be shaped by human security concerns.

#### **IV. Consultation on Human Security and United Nations Reform**

The deliberations were focused on three clusters of issues, namely; new challenges to *international peace and security*, *promoting human security through human rights and humanitarian action*, and *development and human security*. These clusters correspond with the three primary areas of United Nations reform contained in the report of the Secretary-General, *In Larger Freedom*, namely; freedom from fear, freedom to live in dignity, and freedom from want. The Commission on Human Security also considered these issues to be closely related, stating in its report that “human security brings together the human elements of security, of rights, of development”.

Participants were invited to reflect on the proposals for United Nations reform in the context of human security, and to pay special attention to regional priorities in considering those reforms. To facilitate discussion on topics within each cluster, 2-3 speakers were invited to provide introductory comments on specific issues and explore their relevance to the reform proposals.

### **A. New Challenges to International Peace and Security**

The opening speakers addressed three particular issues related to United Nations reform: conflict prevention, terrorism and the proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission. The role of regional organizations, particularly the AU, was highlighted frequently throughout the discussions.

Dr. Abdul Lamin of University of the Witwatersrand examined armed conflict and governance as a security challenge in Africa. Dr. Lamin emphasized that since the adoption of the AU Constitutive Act in 2000, the African continent has made clear that it will reject any change of government that is carried out through unconstitutional means. There is growing identification with principles of democracy and good governance, and an increase in popular participation in the political processes of numerous countries in Africa, he observed.

Dr. Lamin however noted that in spite of the gains made so far, several key challenges to governance and security remain. These include the role of the military in the “new” democratic dispensations, and the related issue of civil-military relations. The question is how to demilitarize the state and strengthen civilian participation in the political process? How can a culture of prevention be created and more importantly, what role should the military play in that? On the African scene, Dr. Lamin stressed that there is a need to identify structural problems that could lead to conflict. He drew attention to the problem of corruption, and emphasized that in the African context, corruption must be considered a serious threat to human security, since in many cases it ends up robbing the public of much needed resources to address social needs such as healthcare, education and so forth, creating a fertile condition for armed conflict. He argued that corruption does not only have significant economic consequences but also undermines human rights protection and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts.

Dr. Lamin also noted that the protection of civil liberties is central to strengthening human security in Africa. While acknowledging the significance of periodic free elections to democracy consolidation, broad citizen participation and protection of civil liberties at all levels must be the goal of governments and civil society. He raised concern that in their zest to respond to the threat of “terrorism”, some African governments are in the process of

promulgating legislation that could in the long run undermine civil liberties, and consequently erode the democratic gains made to date. Dr. Lamin therefore urged caution on the part of governments, but also encouraged civil society to be vigilant in protecting the rights and liberties of citizens.

Prof. Varun Sahni of Jawaharlal Nehru University addressed the issue of terrorism and related proposals for UN reform. In introducing this issue, he noted that the concept of security is being re-conceptualized beyond the traditional political/military approach to include societal/environmental factors. Human security also suggests a deepening of the security concept away from a fairly exclusive focus on the state, to include additional referents at various levels—regional, sub-regional and civil society. He noted that there is also a growing sectoralization of expertise related to specific issue areas such as environmental and food security.

Prof. Sahni pointed out the importance of distinguishing among human security, human development and human needs. He argued that it is important not only to define those issues in terms of “threats” but also in terms of challenges, fears or denials. He observed that the emphasis of human security on protecting people from critical and pervasive threats may create dilemmas for policymakers. For instance, should healthcare be given priority over education? He also drew attention to the need to distinguish between regions and cultures since different regions experience things differently.

With regard to the specific security threat posed by “terrorism” and the reasons why it is now so high on the international agenda, Prof. Sahni suggested two particular factors. First of these is the apparent interest of the United States, currently the most powerful state in the world, and second is the catastrophic nature of terrorism. The potential of terrorism as a catastrophe is largely due to globalization and the availability of weapons of mass destruction. The catastrophic nature of terrorism now clearly forms a nexus between state and human security, since the security of states becomes synonymous with the security of individuals.

In considering United Nations proposals for elaborating a definition of terrorism and crafting a comprehensive international convention, Prof. Sahni noted that to date, there is a lack of consensus among states. There is no acceptable definition or convention on terrorism, despite its global importance, he asserted. One reason for this might be the lack of consensus on who a terrorist is, since different regions have different perceptions of terror and terrorism. He argued that there is no particular South Asian perspective on terrorism. As an example, he noted that Pakistan is considered by some to be on the frontline of defense against terrorism, while others consider it a “haven” for terrorists. In some cases,

internal resistance to a particular state or occupying power might be considered terrorism while in others such resistance might be considered justified protest.

Mr. Festus Aboagye of the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) examined the significance of establishing a United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, and its relevance to building and consolidating peace in Africa. Mr. Aboagye asserted that the fundamental causes of African conflicts must be better understood if they are to be eliminated. He appealed to the international community, as it considers the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission at the UN, to ensure robust engagement with African institutions in order to enhance its capacity to prevent and intervene in conflicts. He suggested that the proposed Commission should coordinate closely with the contemporary security architecture and institutions of the AU, such as the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the African Standby Force (ASF).

Mr. Aboagye suggested that in the past, United Nations engagement in Africa has often been incoherent, with significant discrepancies in the attention and support received by African countries from the international community. As an example, he cited as unacceptable, the troop support provided to a country the size of Democratic Republic of Congo, in comparison to the support given by the United Nations to Kosovo in the late 1990s. In order to avoid such discrepancies, he called for a reform of the doctrine of intervention, including a shift towards full Chapter VII interventions. Mr. Aboagye also called on the international community, particularly G8 countries, to provide comprehensive and meaningful resources for the various peace support operations in Africa.

## **General Discussion**

In the general discussion, emphasis was placed on conflict prevention and terrorism, with additional discussion on governance, and the role of regional organizations in promoting peace. The discussions strongly reflected African concerns. Governance was cited as an important factor in conflict prevention, and corruption was identified as an important structural problem that needs to be seriously addressed. Participants agreed that those offering bribes should be considered as culpable as those accepting them. There was also general agreement that no one, regardless of their status in society, should be considered above the law, and that all citizens should be accorded equal treatment by the legal and judicial system.

There was a broad consensus that Africa, particularly through the AU and other pan-African institutions, is assuming an increasing role in conflict prevention, management and resolution on the continent. Although the AU faces a range of challenges and limitations, there are significant expectations for its contributions to Africa's future, particularly if it



receives support from the international community. It was observed that an important limitation on Africa's engagement in conflict prevention, management and resolution was the lack of sufficient resources for peace operations. Participants agreed that well resourced, regional and sub-regional organizations could play a particularly important role, given their familiarity with the problems and challenges facing the continent.

On the issue of terrorism, some participants expressed concern at the possible abuse by some states of the so-called "threat of terrorism" in order to restrict civil liberties and further control populations without sufficient justification. Participants also noted that distinctions ought to be made between terrorism and internal resistance. The creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was considered an important step forward, and participants called on the international community to fully support this new institution.

### **Conclusions:**

1. Good governance can contribute significantly to conflict prevention, particularly in Africa. It provides an important illustration of the linkage between security and human rights. As popular participation in governance increases, the state will be strengthened both internally, particularly through reduced corruption, zero tolerance for impunity and increased respect for the rule of law, and externally through participation in regional organizations/initiatives such as the AU and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), particularly through its African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). In this regard, the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs should be strengthened and better coordinated to assist countries going through electoral processes. The Economic and Social Council, which provides space for discourse with civil society, should also be strengthened.
2. The terrorism debate and proposals currently before the United Nations General Assembly are state-focused to such an extent that civil society and human security concerns have had little relevance. Implementation of the United Nations proposals for elaborating a definition of terrorism and related instruments will be problematic, particularly due to the varying perceptions of who is a terrorist and in what context terrorism occurs. At the same time, there is a definite risk that some governments may use the "terrorism threat" as a means of restricting civil liberties for inappropriate reasons.
3. The proposal for creation of a United Nations Peacebuilding Commission was considered a step in the right direction. In this context, participants noted the importance of building contacts between the Peacebuilding Commission and locally based academic, research and civil society organizations. Such organizations can contribute significantly to a better understanding of the root causes of conflict and may assist in preventing its

recurrence. Contributions to peacebuilding can be made at every level of society, and such participation should be encouraged. Greater coordination between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council would contribute to more integrated and effective international action.

## **B. Promoting Human Security through Human Rights Protection and Humanitarian Action**

Two invited speakers introduced the issues of human rights and humanitarian action and their relationship to human security and UN reform. The discussion also covered the role of regional organizations and their responsibility to protect civilians.

Prof. Bahgat Korany of American University in Cairo provided an overview of the evolution of human rights within the international community. Although the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was adopted in 1948, it was only in the 1970s, with the creation of the Human Rights Committee, and more recently in the 1990s, with the creation of the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, that the issue gained greater prominence on the international agenda. Within the Organization, human rights have been increasingly incorporated into policy discussions and debates, and the link between human rights and security has been clearly acknowledged. The current challenge is for human rights to become truly mainstreamed and established as a guiding principle for both international and national debates.

Prof. Korany noted that an important human rights controversy relates to universality. He distinguished between two schools of thought, namely; the *Universalist* school, which espouses an all-inclusive approach that supersedes differences of race, history or culture, and the *relativist* school which views human rights as more exclusive and influenced by cultural, racial and historical context. He highlighted the debate that has emerged from the *relativist* school, and specifically mentioned the so-called “Asian Debate.” Referring to the *Bangkok Declaration on Human Rights*, Prof. Korany identified key issues in the “Asian Debate” that clearly question the universality of human rights. He acknowledged arguments that human rights may be incompatible with some cultures, and noted that the notion of universal human rights can contradict the principle of national sovereignty. Given such controversy, Prof. Korany suggested that the provision of development assistance should not be solely contingent on the human rights situation in the respective country. He noted that despite its name, the “Asian Debate” has relevance for other regions as well.

Ms. Yasmin Sooka of the Foundation for Human Rights discussed human rights and human security in the context of peace processes and countries in transition. Like Prof. Korany, Ms. Sooka emphasised human rights and human security as complementary

principles. In dealing with transitions from authoritarian rule to democratic governance, she noted that international organizations often face the dilemma of a potential “trade-off” between accountability and punishment on the one hand, and impunity and reconciliation on the other. She expressed concern that players in post-conflict settings often sacrifice high human rights standards in order to grant concessions to human rights violators and preserve a fragile peace process. In addition, post-conflict situations are often characterized by weak legal structures and collapsed governments, which contribute to low levels of accountability for human rights abuses, and high levels of impunity.

Ms. Sooka suggested that greater attention should be paid to securing the peace while at the same time unequivocally dealing with impunity. Among other things, she suggested that the concept of human security should be better integrated into the international security agenda. She also advocated a deepening of awareness and respect for human rights through efforts by government, civil society and the private sector. In a post conflict environment, disarmament of former combatants should be intensified. She also emphasized the need to strengthen humanitarian action and to bridge the gap that exists between international humanitarian law and human rights law.

## **General Discussion**

The general discussion focused on the *universality* of human rights vis-à-vis intervention in situations where those rights come under threat. Participants noted that respect for human rights has evolved over centuries and will continue to do so, with regional variations of time, emphasis and pace. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international and regional instruments were recognized as raising hopes for immediate positive change, but should more accurately be considered as ideals and aspirations. The past 50 years have witnessed a dramatic acceleration in the promotion of human rights, but much more remains to be accomplished. The evolution of human rights should be recognized as influenced by the given historical context, as well as by economic and social opportunities and resources.

With respect to the “Asian Debate”, it was noted that such arguments are often used by totalitarian states to crack down on internal dissent. It was equally acknowledged that the argument favouring universality of human rights can also be used opportunistically in order to satisfy hidden agendas. The US-led intervention in Iraq in 2003 was cited as a clear case in point. Participants discussed the importance of ensuring that human rights principles are applied in consultation with the states involved. Imposition of standards from outside was thought by participants to be unacceptable.

In discussing the validity of various types of intervention, such as for elections or humanitarian reasons, several participants suggested that there is a need to better

operationalize regionally crafted instruments so as to address those concerns. Participants also suggested that the international community was slower to react to the Rwanda genocide in 1994, and more recently in Darfur, than was the case in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s. It was also observed that international organizations often tend to disengage quickly from humanitarian situations, causing a return to conflict or prolonged hardship for those left behind. The cases of Sierra Leone and Liberia, two post-conflict societies, were cited in this regard. Better and more flexible exit strategies for international assistance should therefore be developed, participants noted.

Although some participants suggested that the international community should intervene in any case in order to protect the interests of people, others acknowledged that such a policy was not realistic. They noted that international organizations face a “Catch-22 situation” because they risk being criticised either way: either for interfering in domestic matters, or for failing to protect vulnerable civilians from human rights abuses. Some participants suggested that it was important to differentiate between those who intervene, and for what purpose, before deciding whether an intervention is legitimate or not. Many participants clearly believed that in cases where the state is unwilling or incapable of protecting its people, the international community has a responsibility to provide the necessary protection.

### **Conclusions:**

1. Over the past 60 years, significant progress has been made in promoting greater respect for human rights around the world. However, that work is far from complete, and continuing efforts must therefore be made to ensure that the aspirations contained in legal instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and regional documents such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights become reality. A bill of rights, which is a key feature of many countries that have embraced constitutional rule since the decade of the 1990s began, represents a social contract between government and citizens. Based on that document, citizens should hold their governments accountable. In this regard, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights should be strengthened in order to assist citizens in asserting their rights against the state, when those rights come under threat.
2. Because conflict may often be related to earlier human rights abuses, greater emphasis should be placed on examining the role of human rights abuses in the generation of armed conflict.
3. Participants generally expressed support for international intervention on behalf of vulnerable civilians whose governments either refuse or are unable to protect them. Due

consideration, however, should be given to who would conduct the intervention and the motivations behind such action. This view is supportive of the position taken by the Secretary-General and the High Level Panel on the collective responsibility to protect.

### **C. Development and Human Security**

Three invited speakers introduced the above issue, with presentations on the Latin American experience with structural change, HIV/AIDS and non-traditional threats to security in Africa, and sustainable development and the environment, with specific reference to Asia.

Prof. Rolando Cordera of the National University of Mexico discussed the situation in Latin America after 20 years of experimentation with structural changes. These changes, he argued, were designed to integrate the region into the global economy. Today, however, several countries are close to economic and social disaster. The impact of the Washington Consensus on Latin America has led the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) to suggest that the region has actually lost 10 to 16 years of development. Many countries are still not proper democracies, and according to a recent study by UNDP, large segments of their populations may soon begin to lose confidence in democratic rule, due to economic inequalities and stagnation.

As a result, there has been a growing tendency in recent years to rethink the liberal experiment. United Nations agencies such as ECLA are now calling for economic transformation with equity and respect for human rights, including economic and social rights, as paramount concerns. The rapid transformation of earlier periods has destroyed traditional social safety nets, social contracts, etc., and people are feeling insecure in many respects. A new agenda is required in order to address questions such as when and how the state should intervene in the economy; the importance of the timing of government intervention; how democracy can be used to eliminate poverty, and the future of globalization. Governments now face the need to establish new safety nets, design new strategies for development, especially in rural areas, and to re-integrate themselves into the Latin American context rather than focusing on the global setting.

Dr. Tandeka Nkiwane of University of the Witwatersrand addressed HIV/AIDS and other non-traditional threats to security. She argued that in Southern Africa, the traditional concept of threats to security is still characterized largely in military terms. Dr. Nkiwane suggested that human security should be interpreted as protection from various forms of structural violence, and cited the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report, *New Dimensions of Human Security*, as an important contribution in broadening the concept of security. With regard to HIV/AIDS, she argued that the disease poses a major threat to human security. In

South Africa, HIV/AIDS has had a deep impact on healthcare and the public health system; has affected national economic potential by one third; and by some estimates, reduced life expectancy by 16 years. Given such broad consequences for both development and security, HIV/AIDS must be considered more threatening than conventional security threats to the state.

Dr. Nkiwane noted that South Africa is the epicentre of the HIV/AIDS crisis, and thus appealed for a high level response to this threat. With the establishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, as well as Security Council resolution 1308, the international community has taken the first step toward addressing the problem, but acknowledged that more was still needed. Given the pervasiveness of the crisis in Africa, the continent should be in the vanguard of the fight against the pandemic.

Prof. Chen Qi of Tsinghua University addressed sustainable development and the environment as critical components of human security. Prof. Chen suggested that a new paradigm of security was needed in order better to address the complex challenges facing the world today. He noted that sustainable development and human security were linked and thus called for further research into their relationship. He argued that development has been traditionally defined as economic growth. However, with the introduction of the concept of sustainable development, additional environmental issues such as deforestation, desertification and acid rain are being integrated into the debate. Development is now increasingly viewed as a “people-centred” process with the goal of improving human life. This new paradigm of development relates very closely to human security concerns.

Prof. Chen noted that there are, however, important differences in perceptions of sustainable development and human security. With regard to sustainable development, developed countries may place particular emphasis on the rule of law and give priority to the role of the market, while developing countries may focus more on such issues as global economic inequalities, structural barriers to trade and consumption. In considering human security, he noted that the focus on individuals poses an inherent challenge for international organizations based on the concept of national sovereignty. Some Asian states, strongly supportive of the traditional concept of national sovereignty, have proposed counter-concepts to human security such as “comprehensive security” and “incorporative security”. Despite these and other differences, common ground can probably be found through the elaboration of a pragmatic framework of goals and paradigms related to human security and sustainable development.

## **General Discussion**

In the general discussion, some participants suggested that the concept of “public goods” should be re-introduced into the debate, in order to generate a more meaningful agenda for action, and to assist in the discourse on human security and development. “Public goods” include goods such as the environment and public health, which are universal and non-competitive in terms of consumption. The Commission on Human Security had also discussed this possibility, but did not pursue it.

Several participants raised the issue of refugees and migration, noting that their status had serious economic, human rights and security implications. The “brain drain” that may result from migration can have lasting economic impact and the movement of labour can seriously affect employment in various sectors.

Some participants believed that there were potential limitations to the human security concept, due to the breadth of its framework. One participant noted that a broad definition of human security entails the risk of talking about “everything and nothing” particularly given the proximity of the concepts of human security and sustainable development. Related to this, some participants questioned whether the same statistics might be used to measure human development and human security. Another participant suggested that perhaps human security should not be the only framework for analysis. Issues such as HIV/AIDS result in a variety of threats, including economic and military security, with obvious implications for social stability due to the devastation of families. For such issues, human security should perhaps be more rigorously analysed in order better to address the different layers of threats. It was suggested that further research might be useful into the differences between human development and human security, with an emphasis on operationalizing the concept of human security.

## **Conclusions**

1. Given the experience of the last 20 years in Latin America, a new agenda for development must be elaborated that takes into account recent socio-political experience and incorporates greater consideration of social policy and human rights. The proper role of the state may need to be reconsidered. Based on the recent past, poverty remains a critical issue for many Latin American countries.
2. HIV/AIDS provides an important example of a human security challenge and highlights the multiple effects that one particular non-traditional threat to security can have. Although Africa has generally acknowledged its problem with HIV/AIDS and has begun to take action, Asia faces a similar threat without having fully confronted its devastating potential.

In Latin America, HIV/AIDS is not yet discussed as an imminent and large-scale threat to public health. Support for United Nations proposals for an expanded and more comprehensive response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a critical need.

3. As an organization created by sovereign states, the United Nations faces inherent tensions between its responsibility to serve its Member States and the need to address human security concerns at the grassroots and civil society level. In his report to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General states that “the goals of the United Nations can only be achieved if civil society and Governments are fully engaged”. The General Assembly should carefully consider the recommendations of the 2004 Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations, known as the *Cardoso Report*, in order to develop appropriate means for engaging civil society more fully and effectively in its work.

### **Final Thoughts**

Participants welcomed the opportunity to discuss the concept of human security, and they appreciated the fact that the United Nations was interested in their views on human security and reform. A number of participants stressed the role that universities, as important institutions of civil society, can and should play in policy development and capacity building. Hope was expressed that the Organization would tap more fully into the intellectual resources and talents of universities and research institutions, particularly in the Global South, for its work in the years ahead.

Participants acknowledged that United Nations Member States, having created an organization to serve their interests as governments, would not easily adopt reforms reflecting a human security approach. Many of the proposed reforms, such as elaboration of a definition of terrorism or expansion of the Security Council, offer little opportunity for input from civil society. Participants noted, however, that human security should provide an additional lens for examining proposals for United Nations reform, and they emphasized the need to examine the inter-linkages among various issues. Such an emphasis is very consistent with a human security approach.

Because a number of reform proposals reflect increased attention to issues and actions that might include all segments of society, participants noted this as a welcome development from a human security perspective. Proposals related to peacebuilding, good governance, democratization, HIV/AIDS, strengthening respect for human rights and increased cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations offer opportunities for concerted action at a variety of levels. The 2004 *Cardoso Report* on UN-Civil Society Relations demonstrates the growing importance attached to cooperation with civil society in addressing these and other critical challenges to human security.



The discussions also highlighted the importance of particular issues in different regions. Since the meeting took place in Africa, priorities for that continent were most clearly articulated and defined. Among these were the priority given to the alleviation of poverty, the need to address the multiple threats posed by HIV/AIDS, and issues related to democratization and good governance. Poverty and economic development issues were highlighted in the Latin American context, and linkages were identified between current economic difficulties and the potential loss of confidence in democratic governance. HIV/AIDS was not highlighted as a priority concern in Latin America or the Middle East at this time, but some participants acknowledged it to be an imminent threat to Asia. Concern over the tension between *universal* and *relativist* conceptions of human rights, as well as the “threat of terrorism” resonate in the Middle East. The concern revolves mainly around the abuse of human rights principles by authoritarian regimes, occupation forces and other non-state actors, thus undermining individual liberties and making people feel insecure.

Although discussion focused primarily on issues of human security and United Nations reform, two additional considerations, related primarily to human security, were raised. The first of these was a specific concern with migration and the need to transform the existing “brain drain” into a “brain gain” for regions such as Africa. The second issue related to the controversy surrounding accountability for past human rights abuses, and impunity for perpetrators of such violations, particularly in post-conflict societies. Some participants suggested the need to develop some level of international consensus in addressing such issues. While transitional societies vary, in terms of their unique circumstances and contexts, the international community must work hard to find consensus on how to deal with the tensions between the need for peace on the one hand, and the desire to pursue justice on the other.

Based on this first opportunity to discuss human security from a regional perspective, participants agreed that additional research and discussion related to specific regional priorities were warranted. The consultation had introduced a variety of issues deserving further attention both at the regional and international levels. A comparison of human security priorities, focussing on cross-regional differences and similarities, might also prove fruitful.

## **V. May 27, 2005: Workshop**

The workshop which took place on May 27, 2005, was designed to map out a future research agenda. Representatives of the five partner universities of *United Nations Dialogue with the Global South* discussed plans for a collaborative research project to further examine the concept of human security. A decision was made that each university would prepare a research paper on human security that would reflect the particular priorities and concerns of

its respective region. Papers are to be prepared in advance of a further meeting to be held in New York in November 2005. At that meeting, the regional papers will be reviewed, and a summary drafted, identifying regional similarities and differences in their approaches to human security.

South African participants held a similar workshop and discussed a variety of prospective research topics that had been raised in the context of the consultation. In concluding the meeting, participants adopted a short statement affirming the role of universities, as important institutions of civil society, in capacity building as well as in contributing to informed policy debate at the international, regional and national levels. The joint memorandum is attached as Addendum 3.

**Consultation and Workshop on Regional Dynamics of Human Security  
26 & 27 May 2005  
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### Regional Dynamics of Human Security

Presentation by Dr. Frene Ginwala  
26 May 2005

I am particularly pleased that the UN Dialogue with the Global South is focusing on Human Security and congratulate the partner universities which have come together to engage in dialogue on ways of cooperating and promoting Human Security initiatives nationally, regionally, and among the countries of the South. The success of this meeting will be measured by its practical outcomes, and not only on its theoretical debate.

To contextualize our discussions, I would like to step back for a moment and try to set out the meaning and evolution of the concept of Human Security as I have understood it. Human Security is still an evolving concept. It is not surprising therefore, that while Human Security has been accepted and even formally adopted as a policy framework by many countries, as well as regional organizations such as the African Union, its full implications are not always understood nor fully implemented. Too often the focus remains on the old notion of “security” and the “human” part is almost an afterthought or add-on, rather than that it should be the focal point of a new concept of security that is people centered.

Old mindsets, perspectives, long standing and deeply entrenched approaches and policies are deeply embedded in the minds of institutions, decision makers and in particular the state security apparatus and its research institutions. Self interest as well as a self perpetuating dynamic always resists change.

This is not surprising given that for more than four centuries, “security” referred to defending the state and its frontiers from external enemies and potential invaders. This usually implied protecting the rulers and elites within society. For them, as well as for the new contenders for power, the population was considered, if at all, as cannon fodder and the producers of future wealth for their accumulation.

Through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this remained the position, notwithstanding US President Wilson’s identifying crucial “freedoms,” the League of Nations, the Atlantic Charter and various other proclamations of freedom and democracy. After World War II a small group of countries came together and drafted and adopted the UN Charter which embedded the traditional concept of security in Chapter 7. In addition to establishing the United Nations, they designed the international financial architecture under which the Breton Woods Institutions were created.

The thinking, values, perspectives and outcome, reflected the economic and political power relations of the time. It should come as no surprise that the institutions



established on these bases should be dysfunctional in today's world with different values and aspirations.

For the power brokers, the proclamations of freedom, non-racism, equality and democracy soon faded into the priorities of the cold war. Under Chapter 7, it was those who continued to struggle for the achievement of these ideals, who were often projected as the threats to international peace and security.

The shifts in thinking about security were initiated by people's experiences of colonialism and neocolonialism and the external and internal forces which combine to continue the domination and subjugation of people. Often the "enemy" lived within the same state and the conditions in which people lived left them in a state of chronic insecurity.

The women's movements – By the way, where are the women participants? Are there no women in the partner institutions which have come to this dialogue. I would ask Dr. Ludwig, that in the future equitable representation should be a precondition for participation. How else can the UN claim to have "a dialogue with the South"?

To return to my subject: the women's movement and the anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles introduced into the debate, from their particular perspectives, notions of the link between peace and security, and justice equality and development. Apparently disparate issues mobilized their own constituencies as well as sectors of the international community, and eventually were integrated and found their way into UN language. And so we began to see the shift as UN Conference titles began to change: to peace and security were added, first justice, then equality and finally development. The question was raised: whose security mattered and needed to be addressed, as well as who needed protection, the powerful or the vulnerable?

These processes initiated the debate that continues to this day on what is the content of democracy; the form of reconstruction and development, and the method of nation building in newly independent and post conflict societies; and what constitutes good governance in countries with a diversity of population.

Thinking about security broadened from an exclusive concern with the security of the state to a concern with security of people. Along with this came the notion that states ought not to be the sole or main referent of security. People's interest, or the interests of humanity as a collective, became the focus.

The Commission on Human Security was charged with the task of trying to define the concept and to advise on an international response. Its report on Human Security now refers to the definition of Human Security; thus (and I quote at length):

“...to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human Security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive

(widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strength and aspirations.

“It means creating political, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.

“The vital core of life is a set of elementary rights and freedoms people enjoy. What people consider to be “vital” – what they consider to be “of the essence of” and “crucially important” – varies across individuals and societies. That is why any concept of human security must be dynamic. And that is why we refrain from proposing an itemized list of what makes up human security.”

However, the Commission did identify some of the components of Human Security, explored a few in depth, and made general policy recommendations. It did not link or enclose them within a particular framework. This remains one of the important challenges as we try and implement the concept.

Human Security does not replace state security. They are not alternatives but complementary. Security between states is necessary, if we want to ensure security of peoples. At the same time a secure state is essential to facilitate the provision of the needs of the population and to give them the protections they require. Human Security will strengthen the security of the state.

The concept of Human Security evolved in the context of globalization, a coming together of nations and peoples, as well as moves towards greater democratization within states and an assertion of equality and the right to participate in international affairs by smaller or less powerful states. Thus we have seen a flurry of meetings, commissions, and world conferences articulating shared ideals and aspirations. Each one of us has large numbers of reports identifying one or more global illness and the prescriptions for the cures.

Hence arises the challenge of determining what to address in which order, and also which particular prescription to follow.

Too often the debates on security start with the assumption of an existence of “threats” that need to be identified and countered. The reality is that the majority of the population of the world does not enjoy security and lives in various states of insecurity. The question to be answered is not what threatens people's security, but what do they want or need to make them feel secure.

A significant aspect of the approach of the Commission was the programme of consultation with civil society initiated by the African Commissioners, that supplemented the research. Working within limitations of resources and time, the question of what would make you feel secure and how should this be addressed was posed during various continental and international conferences and meetings, as well as at public hearings at the NGO Forum during the World Conference on Sustainable Development. From the

responses, and acknowledging that the sample was not a scientific one, it was clear that ending conflict was no the major preoccupation of African people, but rather the need for jobs, education, and an end to poverty and long term economic security, etc. This ran contrary to the dominant theory in academic institutions. Work is about to begin on preparing a report on Human Security in Africa.

I would urge participants here to be wary of prioritizing problems and issues that are identified in academic isolation. The engagement of civil society, and the need to engage it in dialogue is crucial in discussions such as these. I was shocked to learn that the UN programme of dialogue with the South does not specifically draw in the range of civil society organs in our regions. It will be incumbent on the institutions here to ensure that they acknowledge that they are part of civil society and to devise programs that draw in other sectors. I have already referred to the failure to ensure participation of women from your institutions.

Even as we have been developing the concept of Human Security, there appears to be an apparent reversal towards the earlier and narrower concept of purely state security. The response to 9/11 from the United States and some other countries reflects this reversal in its most dramatic form. Instead of mobilizing the necessary global and collective response, which was and remains necessary, we witnessed a flouting and thereby undermining of multilateral systems and institutions, to the extent of calling into question the legitimacy, integrity and credibility of the United Nations and the Secretary General, as well as committing aggression against the Iraqi people. At the same time the human rights of US citizens and others continue to be violated.

To enhance human security, the international community needs to reverse these setbacks and move forward. From a Human Security perspective there remains a need for a global response to terrorism including early completion of conventions against all forms of terrorism including nuclear. Often terrorists exploit genuine grievances for their own ends. Therefore, we are challenged and required to examine the causes of conflict and the resort to terrorism and find ways of eliminating them. It is heartening that the High Level Panel identified some of these including the denial of self determination, the persistence of poverty, dispossession, and illegal occupation.

In the various papers and reports there are an incredible number of proposals. Fortunately the organizers of this meeting have managed to group them together in the three panels that follow. I hope, however, that we will not endeavor to produce a new list, but will limit ourselves to reaching agreement prioritizing those that would feature on each of the regions represented here. We cannot hope to provide all the solutions, but we can identify areas where work is required and commit ourselves to cooperating to provide solutions.

I have already indicated why the Commission refrained from preparing a list or a rigid framework. I would like to share with you some of our concerns:

1. One of the problems was how to identify the issues. I have already referred to the consultations with civil society.
2. It remains to work out how the various components of Human Security relate to each other and to other issues. The Secretary General refers to the themes before us: Development, Security and Human Rights, and argues that they are related and reinforce each other. Amartya Sen has explored the differences and linkages between Human Rights, Development and Human Security, and argues that though they are distinct they are complementary.

While agreeing with the Secretary General, I would go further and argue that the issues are not just interconnected, but are interdependent. If you are in a state of conflict, you need to bring an end to the violence, but peace and stability do not follow automatically. Simultaneously with ending violence, one needs to address the issues that caused the conflict, such as possible marginalization of one or more groups in that society, a distribution of resources, denial of human rights, corruption, non-inclusive political systems and decision making processes, absence of democracy and good governance, and so on.

If these are not speedily addressed, or at least seen to be addressed, the society will slip back into instability and eventually into renewed conflict. There are many such examples. Perhaps we can best visualize this as a horizontal spiral (please don't advise me that this is technically not a spiral!). At whichever point on the spiral a society is located, it must continue to move upwards and forwards towards greater security for its people or slip back to growing instability and back into conflict.

I hope that the Panel looking at the Peace Building Commission will examine whether one can separate conflict resolution from peace building, or whether we do not require a seamless process if we are to attain sustainable security.

In conclusion, there are some principles or guidelines which I hope will assist our deliberations:

1. The concept of security will vary from society to society and within each society. There is no universal formula as to what constitutes security. People will identify their security as coming from their particular needs. Let us respect them, and allow them to prescribe what is needed.
2. Let us agree on whose security concerns us. Is it that of the powerful or that of the vulnerable? Let us bear in mind that the overwhelming majority of the global population fall into this latter group and live in the South.

3. Consideration of institutional reform of the UN and the international financial institutions should be informed by a Human Security perspective.
4. It is necessary to meet needs as well as protect people from sudden downturns.
5. Processes and means are important, and should empower people. Paternalistic solutions are never sustainable.
6. The environment and systems should be conducive to enable people to survive, and earn a livelihood in dignity.

At this early point in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we have the opportunity and possibility to achieve this last: to enable people to survive, and earn a livelihood of dignity.

To create that environment and provide that security is our greatest challenge.

Thank you for your attention.

## Addendum 3

### United Nations Partnerships with Universities in the Global South

*In May 2005, the university partners of the “UN Dialogue with the Global South” project held their first consultation and workshop on “Regional Dynamics of Human Security” at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. The purpose of the consultation was to discuss priorities for the promotion of human security in different regions of the developing world and to examine the inter-linkages between the concept of human security and recommendations for UN reform as proposed by the UN Secretary-General in his report, “In Larger Freedom”.*

*The senior academics from the five participating universities, in their personal capacity, adopted the following memorandum for the international community at the closing session of the workshop.*

We call upon the General Assembly to acknowledge the strategic role that institutions of higher education in developing countries can and must play in strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations system.

While recognizing the enormous contribution that the UN has made in facilitating greater national self-determination and peaceful relations among states during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world now faces a need to achieve greater fairness and equity among and within all members of the United Nations. Academic participants in the Global South Dialogue appreciate the growing recognition among governments of the role that universities can play in generating knowledge and training of critically needed skills to facilitate the transition to an equitable, peaceful and more law abiding global order.

We are willing and eager to contribute to the UN reform effort. We recognize that our research and capacity building priorities need to be more responsive to the challenges outlined in the Secretary General’s reform agenda to equip our countries with the necessary knowledge and skills. Without compromising long held traditions of academic freedom, Universities of the Global South must become more effective partners of governments, regional and international organizations. Universities have a special role as members of civil society in undertaking independent research and analysis of issues relevant to peace and sustainable development.

Governments may wish to consider the special attributes of Universities in advancing preventive action through research and analysis of the root and proximate causes of conflict, by facilitating confidence building through scholarly exchanges and through innovative training programmes geared to deal with the positive and negative effects of globalization on all countries. To achieve this, however, greater resources will be required for capacity building by Universities, primarily in the Global South, and

closer cooperation will be needed with the UN system at all levels. We also urge governments to encourage the importance of critical thinking among the world's young people, the value of independent scholarly research and cooperation among academic institutions to advance the high ideals of the United Nations.

University of the Witwatersrand  
27 May 2005

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