

Introduction

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The concept for this book emanated from discussions in Pretoria, South Africa, between civil society actors and researchers from seven Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. The meeting was convened by the Southern African Human Security Programme's SADC Civil Society Project, which was initiated by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS).² The project's primary aim was to support the development of a collaborative security community in SADC, built on common democratic values and institutions, an observance of human rights, strengthening the rule of law, and policies that are informed by a concern for individual as opposed to state security. To further this objective, the project established and supported a network of civil society actors and researchers committed to peace and security issues in the seven SADC countries. This book is the first concrete result of that process.

These civil society actors and researchers engaged in promoting partnership with the security structures and authorities in key SADC member countries, as well as on broader social issues that have an impact on human security in their countries. The organisations that are part of the project also engage regularly with critical human security issues at national and community levels. The SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation deals regularly with the same issues at regional level. In doing this, civil society actors are well within the SADC treaty mandate that identifies them as 'key stakeholders' in the implementation of the treaty.³

Since human security is the key and the common element to the studies that are presented in this volume, it is worth briefly considering human security as a concept and the frame of reference that gave rise to human security as a goal and a tool for development. For Kofi Annan, human security "... in its broadest sense, embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment – these are the interrelated building blocks of human and therefore national security."⁴

Therefore, to think in human security terms represents a shift away from the kind of thinking that sees ‘security’ purely in terms of territorial security or the protection of national interests from internal or external threats. Rather, human security concerns itself with the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who seek security in their everyday lives. As the Zambian contributors to this volume phrase it: “... the concept of human security equates security with people rather than territories, with development rather than arms.” It is bound up with social stability and economic opportunity. As well as involving safety from such threats as hunger, disease and oppression, it means the absence of sudden, unpredictable disruptions in day-to-day life. The United Nations Development Programme has defined human security in its 1994 Human Development Report as “[s]afety for people from both violent and non-violent threats. It is a condition or state of being characterised by freedom from pervasive threats to people’s rights, their safety, or even their lives.”⁵

Human security consequently intersects with a diverse range of social, economic and political issues and problem areas: the violation of human rights by state or non-state actors; homelessness and social dislocation; environmental degradation as the result of ill-considered development plans or of land shortages; crime, be it internally or internationally organised; gender-based and family violence; and disease and natural disasters. A lot rests on the strength and willingness of the state and civil society to take responsibility for such challenges and on their material and technical capacity to address them. That economic crises typically give rise to social unrest and violence – and that unrest in turn undermines economic confidence – is a clear indication of the interdependency of economic stability and human security.

The breadth of the concept of human security is matched by the social, economic and political diversity to be found in the countries under discussion. SADC includes one country (Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC) that has yet to achieve comprehensive and lasting peace, another (Angola) that only recently emerged from civil war, several that have endured war or destabilisation within the past two decades, and others where peace is long established and unchallenged. Democratic participation in political decision-making is well established in some countries, non-existent in others. In economic terms SADC states include those that generate revenue from extractive industries involving a high degree of foreign investment, and others that are largely agricultural. Even within those states where the extractive industries are important,

varying proportions of the population are reliant on subsistence agriculture. Natural resources such as land and water are scarce in some SADC countries and plentiful in others.

No wonder, then, that while human security is a prerequisite for economic development and social progress in all of the countries studied, the specific needs of each country in terms of establishing and guaranteeing human security are likely to vary widely. With this in mind ISS convened a workshop in Pretoria in June 2004, bringing together like-minded non-state actors and researchers from various SADC countries to participate in an information exchange network on security problems affecting the region: the Southern Africa Peace and Security Network (SAPSN_{et}). Over the two days of this meeting, participants made presentations on what they saw as the principal security challenges that confronted their home countries. Each non-state partner then selected one particular challenge that merited further research.

In Angola, a long civil war has compromised the education system and left large numbers of youth – many of them displaced by war – to make a living on the streets of the capital city, Luanda. This reality informed the decision by Angolan participants in the project to focus on education, the hazards of frustrated expectations, and their links to human security. Participants from the DRC likewise chose an urban focus within a country whose recent history has been charted by civil war and economic mismanagement: the needs and aspirations of street children in Kinshasa.

Lesotho, by contrast, is a predominantly rural society where livestock represents capital to a substantial part of the population; stock theft, which might be regarded as a relatively minor nuisance in other countries, therefore takes on the dimension of a national crisis and it was chosen by the partners from Lesotho as the focus for their contribution to this book. Zambian partners chose to focus on two rural locations as a way of examining issues of poverty and human security that impinge on the country and on the region as a whole.

For the partners from Tanzania and Zimbabwe, issues surrounding the democratic process were identified as problem areas for human security. In Zimbabwe, the transition to multiparty democracy, against the background of economic crisis and controversial land reforms, has been marked by tensions between government and opposition movements that have repeatedly spilled over into violence during election periods. Within Tanzania, the islands that constitute Zanzibar have long had an ambiguous relationship with the mainland; the way in which tensions

between islands and the mainland, and between the islands themselves, have played out in the political sphere is examined in this book, with a view to addressing the violence that has frequently tainted the exercise of democracy in Zanzibar.

However great the differences in priority and perspective, there are clear commonalities among the countries represented in this book. No country and no individual in southern Africa is not touched in some way by the interlinked challenges of poverty, education, urban and rural development, and health – particularly HIV and AIDS. By gathering together information and analyses from across the SADC countries, this book is intended to encourage fresh and ongoing reflection on questions of human security throughout the region, a process which can only be enriched by the exchange of experience and analyses across national boundaries.

NOTES

- 1 Keith Muloongo is the deputy director of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). At the time of writing he was programme head of the Southern African Human Security Programme (SAHSP) at the ISS.
- 2 The participants were Centro de Estudos Estratégicos de Angola (Angolan Centre for Strategic Studies) (CEEAA), Labor Optimus of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lesotho Institute for Public Administration (LIPAM), the Public Affairs and Parliamentary Support Trust (PAPST) of Zimbabwe, the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation of Tanzania, the Department of Development Studies, University of Zambia, and the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA).
- 3 SADC Treaty, Article 23.
- 4 Kofi Annan, Secretary General salutes international workshop on human security in Mongolia, Two-day session in Ulaanbaatar, 8-10 May 2000, Press release SG/SM/7382, <www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2000/20000508.sgsm7382.doc.html>.
- 5 The 1994 UNDP Human Development Report: New Dimensions of Human Security. Chapter 2 found on <<http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1994/en/>>.