



Human Security at the United Nations

Newsletter - Issue 1 (Fall 2007)



United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Human Security Unit

This is the first issue of "Human Security at the United Nations", a quarterly newsletter produced by the Human Security Unit of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The aim of this newsletter is to share information with interested civil society members on human security and related topics at the UN, and promote partnerships to advance human security amongst civil society, the UN and the wider international community.

To subscribe, please write to:
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1. Human Security: Towards an Integrated Approach

The evolution of threats, especially during the last decade, has considerably altered our understanding of insecurities. Intra-state conflicts, ethnic confrontations, terrorism, forced displacement, extreme poverty, environmental degradation, and deadly infectious diseases threaten the lives of millions of innocent people across the world. At the same time, the opportunities for working towards removing insecurity are also larger now than ever before.

In September 2000, at the **UN Millennium Summit**, the United Nations called upon the world community to advance the twin goals of "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear". As a contribution to this effort, the **Commission on Human Security** (CHS) was established in January 2001. In its 2003 report, **Human Security Now**, the Commission surveyed the efforts of the international community in working towards a new and broader concept of security and helped articulate the paradigm of human security as a framework whose focus is on the security and well being of people.

As defined by the Commission, human security seeks to "protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment". As such, human security entails both "protecting people from critical and pervasive threats" and "empowering them to take charge of their own lives". The Commission noted that protection and empowerment are mutually reinforcing and cannot succeed in isolation. It therefore emphasized the need for comprehensive, integrated and people-centred solutions that together can help people develop the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.

At the United Nations, numerous initiatives to address human security challenges faced by the international community -- from complex emergencies and peacebuilding to sustainable development -- are currently underway. As former UN Secretary-General Annan observed in his Report, **In Larger Freedom**, "we will not enjoy security without development, development without security, and neither without respect for human rights. Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed. In this new millennium, the work of the UN must move our world closer to the day when all people have the freedom to choose the kind of lives they would like to live."

Yet, in our efforts to promote human security, little progress can be achieved without the participation, commitment and determined action of community members and civil society. Today, the role of civil society is more important than ever before in advancing the goals of human security. Partnerships amongst civil society, the UN and the wider international community are key to promoting comprehensive policies and lasting solutions that can strengthen the triangle of development, freedom and peace. We hope this newsletter will be a first step in that direction.

To learn more on human security -- including the work of the Unit, the Advisory Board and the UNTFHS's current funding guidelines -- visit <http://ochaonline.un.org/humansecurity>

2. Human Security at the UN:

The Human Security Unit (HSU)

The **Human Security Unit** (HSU) was established in May 2004 in the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The Unit's main objective is to integrate human security in all UN activities.

By combining the management of the **United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security** (UNTFHS) with **promotion and dissemination activities**, the Unit plays a pivotal role in translating the concept of human security into concrete activities and highlighting the added value of the human security approach as recommended by the CHS.

The Advisory Board on Human Security (ABHS)

The Advisory Board on Human Security (ABHS) was established to carry forward the recommendations of the CHS and advise the UN Secretary-General on:

- The general guidelines for the UNTFHS;
- Methods to increase the impact of projects and activities funded by the UNTFHS; and
- Ways to promote and disseminate the human security concept and deepen its understanding and acceptance worldwide.

The ABHS is an independent body composed of 10 distinguished members known for their breadth of knowledge and their deep commitment to human security. For further information please visit **our ABHS and Outreach** section.

The UNTFHS - An Overview of Projects

In its first seven years, the Trust Fund has undergone several changes as its operations have matured and as the concept of human security has gained greater clarity.

By providing funding to UN organizations and their partners, the Trust Fund highlights the operational impact of the human security approach. Notably, the Fund requires that projects provide concrete and sustainable benefits to peoples and communities threatened in their survival, livelihood and dignity; employ the "protection and empowerment" framework; promote multi-sectoral and integrated responses; and seek to work in close partnership with civil society. The Fund also calls on the applying UN organizations to avoid duplication with existing programmes and activities supported by the international community.

These distinctive qualities have resulted in a growing number of projects that among others focus on comprehensive responses that contribute to rehabilitation and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons in post-conflict situations and other humanitarian disasters; empowerment and capacity building of local communities; enhancement of health care services and improvement of educational opportunities and training, especially for girls, women, and the most vulnerable; and strengthening of economic and food security for those whom other initiatives have not reached successfully.



Girl in Tanzania
© UN/Julie Pudlowski

Resources on human security

- **Human Security Now**, Report by the Commission on Human Security - 2003
- **In Larger Freedom**, Report of the Secretary-General - 2005
- **A more secure world**, Report of the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change - 2004
- **Human Security for All: Integrated Responses to Protect and Empower People and Communities**, OCHA Human Security Unit - 2006
- **The Human Security Framework and National Human Development Reports**, Richard Jolly, Deepayan Basu Ray - UNDP 2006.

For more, please click [here](#).

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Projects have also addressed specific issues such as reducing human trafficking in Asia, curbing the use of illicit drugs in Afghanistan, protecting and empowering women and girls in Latin America, and stabilizing refugee host communities in Tanzania.

Since its establishment in March 1999, the UNTFHS has supported 168 projects in more than 65 countries. For detailed project overviews, please visit our [project profiles](#).

3. Latest News and Recent Activities:

Conferences and Meetings

• **Workshop on “Climate change – From the perspective of human security” – New York – 31 July 2007:** organized jointly by the Permanent Missions of Japan and Mexico, and OCHA, the workshop examined the international community’s response to climate change from the perspective of human security. Specifically the workshop focused on the impact of climate change on vulnerable communities, the challenges of disaster risk reduction and the interlinkages between development and climate change.

• **9th Ministerial Meeting of the Human Security Network – Ljubljana – 17-18 May 2007:** hosted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, the 9th Ministerial Meeting of the Human Security Network strived to draw international attention to the emerging threats to people's safety, security and well-being and to advance human security issues at all levels. For more information, please click [here](#).

• **Second Meeting of the “Friends of Human Security” – New York – 20 April 2007:** Held at UN Headquarters and co-chaired by Ambassador Yukio Takasu (Japan) and Ambassador Claude Heller (Mexico), the meeting was attended by representatives from 34 Member States and 12 international organizations. Intended as an informal forum, the meeting was an opportunity for participants to gather and discuss the concept of human security and explore possible collaborative efforts to mainstream human security and formulate joint initiatives. For more information, please click [here](#).

From the Field

• **South Lebanon - Removing the threat of cluster bombs and promoting socio-economic development:** Under the UNTFHS, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and UNDP have teamed up in a two-year project that combines clearance activities with social and economic rehabilitation, thus seeking to restore both freedom from fear and freedom from want in rural communities of South Lebanon. Multiple efforts are underway to clear the land from dangerous explosive remnants of war and help local populations recover their livelihoods and regain a sense of normalcy. The estimated budget for the project is US\$ 2.9 million.



A clearance team working in South Lebanon © UN/August Felix Heid

• **The North Caucasus – An integrated and multi-agency approach to empower and restore the livelihoods and dignity of vulnerable, displaced and conflict affected persons:** The North Caucasus has suffered from a long series of conflicts and has seen significant population displacement as a result of regional instability. In an effort aimed at empowering vulnerable and displaced populations, the UNTFHS is supporting a joint multi-sectoral programme involving 4 UN agencies (UNDP, UNHCR, FAO and ILO) that seek to provide local communities with durable solutions for their survival, livelihood and dignity. This initiative includes capacity-building for local governments and civil society organizations, development of sustainable housing solutions for displaced families, and support for job opportunities at the community level. This project will be implemented over 3 years with a budget of US\$ 3.6 million.

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