



# HUMAN SECURITY *first*

## *A Human Security approach to the post-2015 Development Agenda*

### **The Case**

Security is key to development. Development projects do not stand a chance when violence and armed conflict destroy all progress that is made, while traditional state-centered security policies wrongly assume that peace and stability can be attained through defensive, military approaches alone, disregarding other dimensions of security. The lack of a goal for peace and security was the biggest omission in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). No low-income fragile or conflict-affected country has achieved a single MDG.

Now we have a chance to put *human security first* and create a framework in which the reduction of conflict and violence is a priority. Such a framework should include ambitious targets, aiming not only for the reduction of violent conflicts and deaths, but also for creating the conditions for sustainable, positive<sup>1</sup> peace and development. This can only be achieved when security initiatives involve the very people and communities that are central to these targets.

*Human security* refers to the security of the individual rather than the security of states. The human security approach recognises the need for analysis of structural causes of conflicts, such as social, economic and political exclusion, grievances and inequalities. It also acknowledges that progress can only be made making use of existing local capacities for peace, along with the establishment of coordinated strategies between governments and civil society, as part of a long-term commitment to peace. Key components of the human security approach therefore include *context-specificity; local ownership and inclusiveness; and multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral engagement*.<sup>2</sup>

***“Insecurity is too high in the state (Jonglei), so we cannot bring development to the state. We need to join hands to pursue these two fronts simultaneously. But we can only do it if we all recognize that it is our mutual responsibility.” (Rev. James, South Sudan)***

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<sup>1</sup> Galtung's notion of positive peace points out that peace is more than just the absence of overt violent conflict.

<sup>2</sup> The Human Security Approach in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding: A Civil Society Position Paper - Input to the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions on Human Security, in particular 66/290 and 66/763; GPPAC, the Civil Society Network for Human Security, IKV Pax Christi, April 2013.

### **The Campaign**

We think the UN and its member states should put the security of people first. Therefore we have developed a campaign in which people from conflict affected areas share their stories about security. Based on this we make the following *recommendations*:

1. Include a standalone human security Development Goal with clear ambitious targets and drivers for change in the post-2015 era.
2. Ensure the overall framework and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda is conflict sensitive and oriented by human security principles.
3. Ensure that security initiatives by the UN and member states are people-centered, based on an inclusive approach in their preparation, execution and assessment.

### **The back-up**

The report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda recognizes the centrality of peace and good governance to the post-2015 development agenda. This indicates a possible paradigm shift in how the international community could approach development; a window of opportunity that should not be missed. There is ample support for this shift, both from the HLP and beyond:

- "Violence and fragility have become the largest obstacles to the MDG's"<sup>3</sup>
- "The gap in MDG performance between conflict-affected countries and other developing countries is large and increasing. No low-income fragile or conflict-affected country has achieved a single MDG."<sup>4</sup>
- "Conflicts and instability have halted or reversed progress in many countries."<sup>5</sup>
- " ...a rights-based framework and cognizant of the nexus between peace and development — these are the overarching objectives of sustainable development."<sup>6</sup>
- "Freedom from fear, conflict and violence is the most fundamental human right, and the essential foundation for building peaceful and prosperous societies."<sup>7</sup>
- "So we are calling for a fundamental shift—to recognize peace and good governance as core elements of well-being, not an optional extra."<sup>8</sup>
- "At least 1.5 billion people are still affected by current violence or its legacies"<sup>9</sup>
- "A country experiencing major violence over the entire period (1981–2005) had a poverty rate 21 percentage points higher than a country that saw no violence."<sup>10</sup>
- "Children living in fragile states are twice as likely to be undernourished and three times as likely to be out of school. And the effects of violence in one area can spread to neighboring states and to other parts of the world, hurting development prospects of others and impeding economic prospects for entire regions."<sup>11</sup>
- "Until 1990 Burundi and Burkina Faso had similar rates of growth and levels of income. But in late 1993 civil war erupted in Burundi after the assassination of the president; 300,000

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<sup>3</sup> UN System Task Team; A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 , Report of the SG paras 21,95.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The Secretary General of the UN, A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, July 26 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

people died in the next dozen years, most of them civilians. Placid Burkina Faso is now two-and-a-half times richer.”<sup>12</sup> (see figure 1)

- “The total economic impact of containing violence is estimated to be US\$9.46 trillion in 2012”<sup>13</sup>
- “When violent conflict breaks out, development is derailed”<sup>14</sup>

### ***The actions and targets***

So what needs to happen now? The UN and its member states can make history by correcting the flaw in the current MDG framework. We welcome the inclusion of “ensuring stable and peaceful societies” as one of 12 universal goals and national targets proposed by the High-level Panel on the post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP). However, the HLP’s vision on what is needed to secure peace is limited to the functioning of state institutions - leaving out the necessary formal and informal spaces and capabilities for interaction, dialogue and cooperation across different sectors and groups. In order to create a successful framework, the UN goals and targets should relate both to the reduction of conflict and violence as well as to the proactive development of resilient and peaceful societies where diverse groups and people are included in setting the security agenda.

*“Peace means work, but peace also means life.” (Community member, Ezekere, Ituri)*

The post-2015 development agenda is an opportunity to boost the investments in sustainable infrastructures for peace<sup>15</sup> that “allow societies and their governments to resolve conflicts internally and with their own skills, institutions and resources”<sup>16</sup>. These range from national peacebuilding platforms, conflict early warning and early response systems and local peace committees, to dedicated laws and policies, indigenous dispute resolution systems and peace education. Whilst diverse and necessarily context-specific, the development of such national capabilities in peacebuilding and conflict prevention are utterly measurable and concrete.

Therefore, whilst initiatives such as the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development have contributed goals, targets and indicators to help us measure and monitor armed violence, the global development framework is still missing the practical peace drivers needed to mitigate such violence in the longer term. We need a post-2015 approach that does not only include goals, targets and indicators to reduce the number of people affected by war and violence, but also an approach that ensures sustainable results for the local populations it concerns. This calls for human security initiatives, based on local perspectives and the complexity of situations on the ground.

*“Why are you only here for half an hour? Do you really expect to know our problems that way?”  
(Community member, Lusheberi, North Kivu)*

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<sup>12</sup> The Economist, The Economics of violence, February 14, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Global Peace Index 2013.

<sup>14</sup> OECD Report: Evaluating Peace Building Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility.

<sup>15</sup> UNDP ‘societal resilience’ strategies include “infrastructure for peace” - formal and informal structures of local facilitators and mediators, backed by local governments and/or communities, which help address the residual issues from past violent conflict, adjudicate past abuses, foster reconciliation, and avert further outbreaks of violence.

<sup>16</sup> UN SG (2006) Report on ‘Prevention of Armed Conflict’ (2001:16).

### ***The approach***

Security is key to development, but it is an empty and ineffective concept if the people and communities whom it concerns are not part of the initiation, implementation and assessment of security initiatives. In South Sudan, for instance, both the Government-led disarmament campaigns and the UN peacekeeping mission UNMISS are suffering from a disconnect with communities. This means not only that people are left out, but also that the result of these initiatives are not addressing the security of the communities targeted.

*“The SSPS and the SPLA cannot provide citizens just any form of protection. They should provide the appropriate form of protection that citizens need. And these needs can best be defined and articulated by the citizens themselves.” (Rev. James, South Sudan)*

On the other hand, there are many examples from the world over which illustrate what a people-centered, human security approach concretely means. For instance, at the local level in the DRC, local communities self-organize through the *Haki na Amani* system, which serves as interlocutor between the communities and relevant actors in security and development. They mediate in conflicts, organize *barzas* where people can vent their frustrations, and accompany victims of violence to relevant institutions. At the regional level in the Pacific, the intergovernmental mechanism the Pacific Island Forum has been working with member states, the UN and civil society towards a Human Security framework based on key principles : preventive, localized, collaborative, people-centered and inclusive. The ‘Preventive’ Principle includes conflict sensitivity in programs and policy, as well as the addressing of root causes and mobilization of grievances.

### ***Putting Human Security First***

Security initiatives by the UN and member states are more effective when based on a people-centered and inclusive approach in their preparation, execution and assessment. Thus, as a general rule, national security activities and international peacekeeping have to be based on local strategies. To date however, the policy – practice gap in human security and development strategies has frustrated progress. While governments claim to promote a human security approach, people and communities are not involved in defining what security means to them, what their needs are and how local capacity can both be enlarged and successfully used. This can - and must – change.

*“Thank you for asking me this. You are the first who comes here and asks my opinion.”  
(Ex-combatant, Tchofi, South Kivu )*