



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
2 January 2024

Original: English

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## Seventy-eighth session

Agenda items 13, 117 and 122

### **Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields**

#### **Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit**

#### **Strengthening of the United Nations system**

## **Human security**

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

#### *Summary*

The present report provides an update on developments related to the advancement of human security since the last report on the subject issued 10 years ago (A/68/685). It offers new insights on how best to respond to today's complex crises, including concerted efforts to accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Challenges resulting from myriad causes place our survival, livelihoods and dignity in severe peril. While differences and divisions have confronted us from time to time, we have shown throughout history our resolve to form the unity of purpose for a world of peace, prosperity and dignity for all. It is hoped that with a focus on human security, we can harness the requisite solidarity to recentre our efforts on "We the peoples of the United Nations".

Based on concrete examples and lessons learned from governments and the international community, the present report offers the tools, strategies and partnerships that have proven to reduce risks, enhance trust and, wherever possible, mitigate and prevent the scale and scope of current and emerging challenges. Through a prospective analysis based on the common understanding of human security as outlined by the General Assembly in resolution 66/290, the report considers future action in adapting to climate change, governing the digital economy, limiting pandemics, reducing poverty and hunger, narrowing inequalities and preventing conflict, violence and forced displacement.



## I. Introduction

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to the decision of the Secretary-General to issue a fourth report on human security, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session. In view of major developments since the last report of the Secretary-General to the Assembly on this subject in 2013 (A/68/685), and in line with Assembly resolution 66/290, the present report showcases notable examples of the application of the human security approach by Governments, regional intergovernmental organizations and the United Nations system. It illustrates how human security is a practical framework that has been applied extensively by diverse actors to address complex challenges, harness and amplify the important role of the United Nations and enhance solidarity among Governments and between people and the planet.

2. The state of the world and our multilateral system is in urgent need of approaches that foster cooperation around shared challenges. While some challenges are the same as in the last report on human security, the world today is markedly different than it was 10 years ago. Multilayered crises, whether stemming from a pandemic, disasters or conflict, are no longer isolated events confined to certain countries or regions. Tragedies taking place a continent away are interacting in new ways, reaching unprecedented scale and testing people on every front. The slow progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals reflects the challenges resulting from geopolitical tensions, widening inequalities, worsening climate crises and emerging gaps in the digital transformation. Although these may seem to be disparate issues, the application of the human security approach offers opportunities to find common ground in addressing the underlying drivers of current and emerging challenges.

3. Against this backdrop, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) issued a special report in 2022 entitled *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene: Demanding Greater Solidarity*. Endorsed by the Secretary-General, the report uncovered a paradox: people are living longer, healthier and wealthier lives on average, while also experiencing an increased sense of insecurity. The authors of the report argued for expanding the application of human security in the face of a new generation of interconnected threats. They highlighted the strong association between declining levels of trust and increasing feelings of insecurity, and underscored the need to go beyond fragmented approaches to consider the interdependence among people and between people and the planet. The report contains an outline of how advancing human security could be a way to enhance equity and rebuild trust. Its release led to the establishment of an Inter-Agency Working Group on Human Security in the same year. The main objective of the Working Group was to consider how the human security approach can highlight blind spots in assessing current and emerging challenges that are interrelated and require integrated responses to meet the strategic priorities of the United Nations, including the acceleration of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. The present report builds on the UNDP special report and the recommendations of the Working Group, as well as information generated from a global survey on human security carried out in 2021 with inputs from Member States, parliamentarians, the United Nations system, academia and civil society organizations; a second targeted survey carried out in 2023 of Member States, resident coordinators and United Nations country teams; consultations with Member States by the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Human Security in June 2023; and in-depth analyses of the lessons learned from human security programming through the United Nations trust fund for human security.

## II. Taking stock of the advancement of human security by Member States, regional intergovernmental organizations and the United Nations system

5. In the past 10 years, there has been a surge in activities related to human security at the global, regional, national and local levels by diverse stakeholders, including Member States, regional organizations, entities of the United Nations system, civil society, academia and the private sector.

### Common understanding on human security

6. The adoption of resolution 66/290 was a significant milestone in the advancement of human security. In the resolution, the General Assembly agreed that human security was an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people. The Assembly also agreed on a common understanding which included the following principles:

(a) The right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. All individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential;

(b) Human security calls for people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people and all communities;

(c) Human security recognizes the interlinkages between peace, development and human rights, and equally considers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights;

(d) The notion of human security is distinct from the responsibility to protect and its implementation;

(e) Human security does not entail the threat or the use of force or coercive measures. Human security does not replace State security;

(f) Human security is based on national ownership. Since the political, economic, social and cultural conditions for human security vary significantly across and within countries, and at different points in time, human security strengthens national solutions which are compatible with local realities;

(g) Governments retain the primary role and responsibility for ensuring the survival, livelihood and dignity of their citizens. The role of the international community is to complement and provide the necessary support to Governments, upon their request, so as to strengthen their capacity to respond to current and emerging threats. Human security requires greater collaboration and partnership among Governments, international and regional organizations and civil society;

(h) Human security must be implemented with full respect for the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for the sovereignty of States, territorial integrity and non-interference in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States. Human security does not entail additional legal obligations on the part of States.

7. Agreed by consensus, this common understanding has guided the application of human security across the United Nations system and ensures that its implementation is rooted in the Charter of the United Nations.

### **National application of human security**

8. Human security strengthens solutions that are embedded in local realities. Based on national ownership, it is a tool for governments to break institutional silos and promote integrated responses to interlinked challenges. By placing the survival, livelihood and dignity of people at the centre, a focus on human security allows governments to solve complex challenges.

9. Based on global surveys and information provided by Member States, examples given in the present report demonstrate how the human security approach has featured in national frameworks and policies, as well as in initiatives and planning processes related to sustainable development. A wide range of countries report integrating human security into their constitutions, national security strategies, domestic policy frameworks and official development assistance.

10. The national security strategy of Nigeria, for example, reflects a shift to one which is comprehensive and emphasizes human security, and the national security framework of Mongolia recognizes the importance of a comprehensive approach that guarantees the protection and empowerment of people. Similarly, in Vanuatu, the 2019 national security strategy prioritizes disaster and climate change resilience, justice and human rights and human security to advance an integrated approach grounded in the most pressing and pervasive threats facing the country.

11. Development cooperation and foreign policy frameworks also reflect varied applications of human security guided by national priorities. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency integrates human security into the context of peacebuilding, as well as one of its four dimensions related to poverty. In Japan, human security is the central tenet of its national security strategy, a universal value upon which to strengthen international cooperation to resolve global issues and a guiding principle of its development cooperation. Chile applies the human security approach in addressing transnational organized crime, drug and human trafficking, anti-corruption and counter-terrorism.

12. Surveys and consultations with Member States moreover confirm that a broad range of countries recognize the value of human security for supporting a people-centred and comprehensive national planning process towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In Cabo Verde, the human security approach is integrated into municipal development plans, ensuring a robust governance framework that links the provision of public services with community engagement, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development for the next decade.

13. The Haya Karima initiative highlights the commitment of the Government of Egypt to address multidimensional poverty through the lens of the dignity of people. It provides a framework to integrate efforts by national institutions, the private sector, civil society and development partners to deliver comprehensive services for local communities, particularly for those who are furthest behind. Lessons from the HAYAT project in Egypt, which was funded through the United Nations trust fund for human security, were integrated into the development of the Haya Karima initiative, which is supported by the United Nations country team in Egypt.

14. Lastly, some Member States also underscored human security's emphasis on prevention and addressing the root causes of insecurity as an important contribution to enhancing stability and safeguarding development. For example, in Colombia, human security is central to the country's Constitution and its national development plan, offering a practical framework to facilitate the meaningful engagement of people in discussions around development and security, with the aim of enhancing social cohesion, improving the responsiveness of policies to local needs and reducing

inequalities.<sup>1</sup> In Mexico, human security is featured in diverse national policies related to technology and innovation, migration, refugees and asylum, and public safety. It is also considered an important framework for tackling the threat of small arms and illicit weapons.<sup>2</sup>

### **Regional organizations**

15. Over the past decade, the human security approach has been adopted by regional and subregional organizations across matters related to humanitarian response, sustainable development, human rights and peace and security, given the critical role these play in tackling cross-border challenges and leveraging diverse networks and assets for solidarity and collaborative action. In this regard, the human security approach has helped to define a regional approach to shared challenges by elaborating multidimensional strategies, improving policy coherence and developing tools to assess risks and monitor progress on sustainable development and peace and security across countries.

16. Regional and subregional organizations in Africa have applied human security to peace and development frameworks for nearly two decades. As a result, human security features in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, focusing on a transformative framework to ensure that individuals, families and communities have the support and opportunities to attain a prosperous and peaceful continent. One of Agenda 2063's flagship initiatives, Silencing the Guns in Africa, commits to making peace a reality for all African people and to establishing an African human security index to monitor progress towards this goal. At the subregional level, the Economic Community of West African States has most recently integrated the human security approach into strategies related to disaster risk reduction, gender equality and the empowerment and advancement of children.

17. Human security has also been central to regional frameworks in the Pacific region, beginning with the Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration adopted by the Pacific Islands Forum in 2007. Subsequently, the Forum developed the human security framework to provide a common foundation and strategic guidance for improving the application of human security in peace, security and development initiatives within the region. In 2018, the Boe Declaration on Regional Security was adopted by the Forum, in which it recognized the importance of a broad concept of security that prioritizes human security, environmental security and regional cooperation in building resilience to disasters and climate change and their multidimensional consequences across all aspects of life and society.

18. With a rise in complex crises across the Arab region in the past decade, undermining the region's opportunities for sustainable development, regional entities have promoted a comprehensive approach to peace and development. For example, the Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States endorsed a regional report<sup>3</sup> that called for an integrated framework anchored in human security to advance the Sustainable Development Goals in countries faced with multifaceted and recurring crises. In 2018, human security was incorporated into the Tunis Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction adopted by the fourth Arab Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. In 2022, the League of Arab States launched an initiative on sustainable

<sup>1</sup> Written input submitted by the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations following the informal consultation on human security on 20 June 2023.

<sup>2</sup> As reported by the Government of Mexico in response to surveys administered by the Human Security Unit, informal debates on human security and meetings of the Group of Friends of Human Security.

<sup>3</sup> Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *The Attainment of SDGs in Conflict-affected Countries in the Arab Region* (United Nations publication, 2021).

solutions for human security as a framework for sustainable development efforts, including the operationalization of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

19. The Latin America and Caribbean region has long applied the human security approach to strengthen strategies related to citizen security, migration and health. For example, the comprehensive development plan for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south and south-east Mexico of September 2021 was developed by the United Nations development system, under the coordination of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, at the request of the Presidents of the four countries to broaden the migration narrative through the human security framework. By elevating the dignity and rights of migrants and refugees, it highlights the interplay between displacement, protracted poverty, persistent crime and violence and climate change. Equally, the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has used the human security framework to advance a comprehensive approach to public health, and the Permanent Latin America Committee for Crime Prevention has integrated human security into its frameworks for crime prevention and violence reduction.

20. Human security has also been reflected in strategies promoted by the European Union. The European Security Strategy of 2003 outlined the European Union's approach to building human security by reducing poverty and inequality, promoting good governance and human rights, assisting development and addressing the root causes of conflict and insecurity. The European Union has since reaffirmed its commitment to advancing human security in its Strategic Compass for Security and Defense.

#### **Application by the United Nations system**

21. The United Nations trust fund for human security has been collaborating with governments and the United Nations system organizations since 1999, responding to the increasing interconnectedness of challenges, the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships and the need to facilitate people-centred, comprehensive and preventive responses in line with national priorities in support of sustainable development, climate action and sustaining peace. The wealth of lessons learned from these initiatives demonstrates human security's value as an operational framework to address threats to the survival, livelihood and dignity of people.

22. A United Nations system fit for purpose today and tomorrow has been a priority of the Secretary-General. To this end, fundamental reforms have been enacted, including the reinvigoration of the resident coordinator system, for a more nimble, integrated and anticipatory Organization. Human security has complemented this effort by providing a framework to examine more integrated solutions that cut across pillars, institutions and mandates to address interconnected, complex challenges. Diverse programmes of the United Nations trust fund for human security, including in Guatemala, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Liberia and Tajikistan, among many others, have illustrated how this approach expands the response options available to governments, the United Nations and other stakeholders.

23. This shift in perspective has also contributed to systemic changes to promote integration through, inter alia, the establishment of inter-agency and interministerial coordination mechanisms. This enables governments and the United Nations system to work more effectively at the intersection of issues where detecting gaps and identifying synergies can lead to greater impact and cost effectiveness. For example, through the application of the human security approach, PAHO has built up the capacity of ministries of health to assess the effect of the interactions between climate change, migration, food security and poverty on public health planning. Through interministerial cooperation platforms, the approach has helped to shape health-care

systems that are more responsive to the social determinants of health and the needs of groups that may be in vulnerable situations, such as Indigenous People, women and youth.

24. Making meaningful inroads on entrenched or complicated issues such as exclusion, the socioeconomic integration of displaced persons and post-conflict reconciliation, among others, requires inclusive governance frameworks based on participation and dialogue that, over time, can transform relationships and social dynamics. By placing primacy on strategies to empower people, enhance the capacity of local actors to participate in collective processes and generate platforms for inclusive multi-stakeholder engagement, human security initiatives have strengthened bonds and re-established community networks that create stability and cohesion, thereby facilitating action on sensitive issues.

25. One such example is an initiative in Tripoli, Lebanon, a coastal city near the border with the Syrian Arab Republic, which hosts large refugee populations from across the region. Affected by intercommunal tensions and significant development deficits for refugee and host communities alike, a comprehensive and participatory neighbourhood assessment and household surveys with a human security lens helped the city to define a common understanding of shared challenges and the needs and vulnerabilities of each group. Community dialogue involving local authorities, the United Nations system, the private sector and civil society actors helped to define a collaborative plan to address the shortfalls uncovered in the assessment, enhancing trust across groups, improving intercommunal relations and expanding livelihood opportunities in a highly dynamic and complex environment.

26. Survey responses by resident coordinators and United Nations country teams underscored the challenge of ensuring long-term results within a financing and operational environment that still incentivizes short-term interventions. Against this backdrop, human security strategies produce results that enhance trust and collaboration between communities and governments by combining community-based initiatives with efforts to generate a policy environment that fully integrates local ideas, aspirations and concerns. Replicating and scaling up these initiatives has been a critical contribution of human security to ensure the sustainability of tangible improvements in people's lives.

### **III. Human security as a tool to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals**

27. At the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to make all efforts to achieve the Goals by 2030. They underscored the need for mutual trust and global solidarity to support the common future of present and future generations. At the same time, today more than 1.1 billion people experience acute multidimensional poverty,<sup>4</sup> exacerbated by multiple crises that are often complex, interlinked and cascading. In this environment, operating within silos is ineffective, flawed and costly. As evidenced in its application by the United Nations system through the United Nations trust fund for human security, as well as surveys with United Nations country teams, human security complements existing tools and strategies, strengthens analytical frameworks and bolsters local action to scale up community efforts to accelerate implementation of the Goals; address the interlinkages across the Goals and promote policy coherence to unlock synergies; and

<sup>4</sup> Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023, *Unstacking Global Poverty: Data for high impact action* (UNDP and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2023).

fulfil the commitment to leave no one behind, improve gender equality and engage young people.

### **Strengthening analytical frameworks and bolstering local governance to tackle interconnected Sustainable Development Goals**

28. The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals were envisaged as an integrated and indivisible set of goals. The sheer scope and complexity of today's interconnected challenges underscore the need for integrated ways of analysing, planning, partnering and financing solutions. Based on localized, disaggregated data collection and analysis, human security programmes, cognizant of the multiplicity of challenges faced by governments and people, address on average six to seven of the Goals in an integrated manner by identifying meaningful interconnections among risks, needs and vulnerabilities within a given locality. This ground-up approach harnesses local expertise and assets and promotes the essential bond between national and local authorities for achieving whole-of-government efforts that can catalyse positive outcomes across sectors and feed upstream, successful initiatives into national processes and financing arrangements.

29. As an example, in 2019, representatives from national and local governments, resident coordinators and local champions from Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Ghana, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone came together to define a model to accelerate a diverse range of Sustainable Development Goals at the local level through the human security approach. The model was based on strengthening comprehensive and disaggregated data collection, including through qualitative efforts within communities to address gaps and garner a thorough understanding of the interconnected challenges and the capabilities and resources within communities. Initial lessons highlight the importance of context-specific analysis to uncover actionable synergies that address the most important obstacles to make progress to implement the Goals on the ground, as well as the value of a multilevel approach in concert with affected communities.

### **Future-proofing the Sustainable Development Goals through risk-informed analysis and planning**

30. Investing more in preparedness and strategies to safeguard development gains from downside risks is a decisive lesson from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. While not all crises will be preventable, enhanced global and regional cooperation, along with multi-risk early warning systems, rapid response mechanisms at all levels, including the emergency platform for global crises, and inclusive social protection systems will help to mitigate the impacts of crises. Equally important are frameworks that better capture emerging risks, people's perceptions of these risks and the impact of these risks across multiple areas of people's lives. Human security sharpens ex-ante diagnoses to better inform targeted resilience-building and preparedness strategies. As such, it supports systematic integration of prevention into development and climate action planning.

31. In the past decade, more than 70 per cent of the portfolio of the United Nations trust fund for human security has had an explicit focus on prevention and promoting proactive responses to emerging issues and a deeper focus on the root causes and underlying drivers of protracted or neglected challenges. One such example is an initiative by the Pacific Islands Forum that applied the human security approach to develop the Pacific regional framework on climate mobility to proactively manage the impacts of climate change on the displacement, migration and planned relocation of people, development prospects and national and cultural integrity. Understanding the most pressing concerns of communities, coupled with an analysis of the impact of climate- and disaster-related risks, provided governments with concrete

information to adapt national policies and identify areas where regional cooperation is critical to reduce risks and build resilience across the Pacific Islands.

### **Reaching those furthest behind and advancing gender equality**

32. The decades-long trend in narrowing global income inequality has tragically reversed. The impact of this reversal is felt disproportionately by women and children and by vulnerable and marginalized populations, including persons with disabilities, Indigenous People, migrants, refugees and displaced persons. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires reaching those left the farthest behind. In line with rights-based approaches, human security ensures a thorough understanding of the structural, geographic and identity-based conditions creating marginalization and disadvantage. This enables the development of responses at the policy level that are comprehensive, promote equity and inclusion for all and are coupled with targeted strategies to address the barriers that limit people from benefiting from the transformative promise of the Goals.

33. As an example, in the Sindh Province of south-east Pakistan, promoting greater inclusion of women and girls in employment and education was a critical component for expanding the reach of the Sustainable Development Goals. Given that the region is highly affected by continuous droughts and floods and is dependent on agriculture, an initiative through the United Nations trust fund for human security promoted integrated efforts to mainstream gender equality into strategies to strengthen disaster risk reduction and enhance local development. As a result, women were provided with access to basic services and livelihood opportunities. Through training in income generation and natural resources management, peer-to-peer learning resulted in mobilized community networks, thus allowing for greater replication, income generation and disaster risk resilience.

### **Expanding partnerships and pooling resources**

34. The burden of debt, exacerbated by recent crises and unmet financing commitments, has constrained the ability of many Governments to make progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Mechanisms for debt relief and new long-term affordable financing, as called for in the Secretary-General's proposal for a Sustainable Development Goal stimulus and his policy brief on reforms to the international financial architecture ([A/77/CRP.1/Add.5](#)), are vital to addressing financing gaps for the Goals and strengthening the means of implementation. At the same time, the human security approach calls for action to safeguard social expenditures on food, health and education and promote social protection systems. Donor countries and the multilateral development banks should ensure that fiscal policies related to recovery from financial crises do not lead to reductions in social safety nets for the most vulnerable. Member States should also continue to support the United Nations development system and the resident coordinators, who play a key role in supporting programme countries to accelerate the achievement of their Sustainable Development Goals.

35. While large-scale, affordable and long-term financing for the Sustainable Development Goals is urgently needed, lessons learned from numerous pooled financing arrangements by the United Nations trust fund for human security underscore the importance of combining resources from a broad range of contributors at the country level. Seed funding under this model can be highly effective in mobilizing additional resources that far exceed the original investment, resulting in an expanded network of collaborators. For example, an initial investment of \$3.8 million by the trust fund for a human security initiative in the Aral Sea region of Uzbekistan resulted in the formation of the multi-partner human security trust fund

for the Aral Sea region by the Government of Uzbekistan, leveraging \$20 million from diverse partners.

#### **IV. A framework for action**

36. We are living in uncertain times characterized by complex challenges emerging from a confluence of planetary pressures, technological advances, social, demographic and economic transformations, violations of human rights, widening inequalities and gender gaps. Moving away from crisis response towards a more proactive, forward-looking approach that builds the resilience of people and governments to prepare for, respond to and cope with current and future challenges calls for a comprehensive approach that combines evidence with action and results in tangible improvements in the survival, livelihood and dignity of people.

37. Human security provides such a framework. It offers a multilevel model that links local reality to national and regional dynamics and broader megatrends and demands a forward-looking and longer-term perspective to enhance resilience and avoid human suffering. It helps to identify blind spots in the understanding of today's multifaceted challenges and strengthens coherence at the intersection of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts. It promotes multi-stakeholder partnerships, including the essential roles of governments, civil society, local communities and the private sector, and it guides collaborative efforts that result in more dialogue, greater trust and deeper solidarity in vision and action.

##### **Linking local realities to national, regional and global dynamics**

38. In this era of hyperconnectivity in which localized crises can have broader systemic reverberations and global shocks can quickly touch every aspect of life and society, short-term, compartmentalized, single-actor or single-issue solutions are ineffective. At the same time, given the diversity of contexts, there is no one-size-fits-all approach when assessing the impact of today's crises on people and communities. Focusing on needs and vulnerabilities at the local level provides a nuanced and disaggregated understanding of the combined impact of these crises on people. This knowledge can be translated into action, providing information for tailored responses at the local level, as well as valuable analysis to assess the knock-on effects of crises at the national, regional and even global levels. Through this lens, challenges within a given community are not divorced from broader developments, making prospective analysis dynamic, targeted and effective, and resulting in greater coherence to tackle the impacts of shocks as they manifest themselves at different levels.

39. For instance, the front line of many of today's crises are cities and local governments, which are located closer to people. By interfacing frequently with local communities, they are better informed of what is required to protect and empower people and can steer this information into more responsive national strategies. As local partners, they are critical conduits to build trust in institutions, enhance social cohesion and understand the priorities and capacities of diverse actors. Effective solutions, including efforts to strengthen the multilateral system to meet current and future crises, require the engagement of local authorities and affected communities. Similarly, regional actors have special roles that make them indispensable for addressing issues of local, national, regional and global concern.

##### **Addressing blind spots in today's multifaceted challenges and strengthening coherence**

40. Further to enhancing multilevel integration, an essential element of the human security framework is promoting a multisectoral, whole-of-society approach across

institutions and mandates. Integration is not only about improving efficiency and effectiveness. It is also necessary for identifying blind spots in how a shock or crisis can lead to unintended or unforeseen consequences. For example, as highlighted by UNDP in a special report in 2022, six out of seven people in the world felt insecure before the COVID-19 pandemic,<sup>5</sup> including in very-high-income countries, underlining how an increase in income does not automatically translate into a sense of stability, well-being and protection from diverse risks. Based on the findings of the report, today, a new generation of threats are interacting, with a significant impact on people's sense of stability and security. This understanding is crucial in formulating responses that will be effective in managing the multidimensional consequences of current and future challenges.

41. A multisectoral approach based on collaboration across stakeholders is essential in fragile and crisis contexts to eliminate the re-emergence of tensions and promote stabilization, recovery and long-term development. The mix of local grievances with structural factors, including deprivation induced by climatic events, large-scale influxes of people from neighbouring cities or countries, the presence of small arms and illicit weapons, among others, must be addressed in a whole-of-society approach. This includes strengthening collaboration and coherence across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts through an integrated framework that provides the rationale and evidence for partnership based on reducing vulnerability and building resilience.

#### **Promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships and participatory engagement**

42. Multilateral cooperation must be inclusive, encompassing diverse actors through networked processes of dialogue and decision-making towards shared goals, incorporating the perspectives of individuals and communities to strengthen their agency and resilience, and incorporating their priorities into national and global processes. In addition to public sector and civil society actors, the private sector is an essential partner. Private companies spark advances in new technologies, manage global financial and communications flows and deliver most of our goods and services. They also contribute to global carbon emissions, pollution, environmental degradation and digital threats. However, the engagement of the private sector in solving global challenges has often been ad hoc and unsystematic.

43. With an emphasis on collaborative efforts, human security helps to create structured and sustained forms of engagement across diverse stakeholders, including local actors, who are fundamental in shaping win-win solutions to complex challenges and common issues of concern, such as sustainability, environmental protection, the protection of privacy and gender equality.

#### **Enhancing solidarity across generations and societies and between people and the planet**

44. Achieving long-term stability and prosperity across the globe depends on whether the benefits of international cooperation are transparent, tangible and just. It requires meeting the demands of today in ways that safeguard the interests of future generations. It involves managing global challenges by distributing the costs and burdens fairly and looking with an inter- and intragenerational lens. In this environment, solidarity denotes a commitment to systematically considering that the security and well-being of some people and groups is inextricably linked with that of others now and in the future. It means achieving a world in which humanity lives in harmony with nature. The human security approach helps to provide the rationale for

<sup>5</sup> UNDP, *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene: Demanding Greater Solidarity*, special report (New York, 2022).

why and where greater solidarity is needed in a manner that transcends politics and divisions. Solidarity does not mean, however, subsuming individual priorities to that of a collective. Rather it means committing to working together to navigate current and future challenges by recognizing our interdependencies, whether across and within societies and generations or between people and the planet, and by striving to do well together, rather than to act alone.

## V. Emerging and future challenges: a prospective look through the human security lens

45. In Our Common Agenda, more unified and bolder actions were called for on critical and interrelated challenges from climate change to digital transformation, pandemics, poverty and inequalities, conflict and violence. A series of policy briefs outlined proposed actions for each of these areas to support Member States to agree on ambitious and decisive action by the Summit of the Future. Human security and its principles can be an overarching framework across these and other priority challenges. It can do this by:

(a) Assessing the plurality of threats and their combined effects on the survival, livelihoods and dignity of people, and expanding strategies and resources that leave no one behind;

(b) Identifying blind spots in our understanding of today's interconnected crises and the associated policy and programmatic responses, advancing integrated strategies across critical sectors and institutions;

(c) Guiding a multilevel approach to link the local to the national, regional and global levels and effectively leverage the extensive horizontal and vertical networks, knowledge and resources that are available;

(d) Integrating imminent risk with longer-term perspectives, enabling better outcomes for people, their agency and resilience;

(e) Promoting a solidarity of vision and action between people and governments, and between people and the planet, achieving a world in which humanity lives in harmony with nature.

### **Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution**

46. Addressing the triple planetary crisis requires unprecedented systemic change and global cooperation, including ambitious emission reductions and adaptation strategies. To this end, the climate solidarity pact and the acceleration agenda provide a framework to fast track previously agreed commitments to protect our planet, together with a fair distribution of responsibility vis-à-vis the largest emitters and wealthiest countries. Meeting commitments in the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the 2030 Agenda will also advance sustainable, low-carbon and resilient development under a changing climate.

47. Meaningful progress on climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and natural disasters requires crucial transitions at the local level, complemented by political commitment and actions at the national, regional and multilateral levels. Human security brings risk, vulnerability and resilience into one overarching framework to help identify the convergence of factors that overstretch institutions and cause undue stress on people, particularly those who are the most vulnerable. This provides evidence-based insights for national planning and regional cooperation on high-impact, proactive initiatives that prioritize the well-being and dignity of people.

Examples include adaptation strategies tailored to the specific needs of vulnerable people and communities, effective conservation of biodiversity, pollution reduction and enhancing disaster resilience by managing risks adequately. Human security brings local expertise and capacities into risk management and disaster prevention, focuses attention on increasing investment in risk reduction and underscores the importance of partnership across all stakeholders.

### **Digital technology**

48. Digitalization and artificial intelligence are transforming governance, society, commerce, culture and our personal lives. They bring unprecedented potential to lift people out of poverty, predict and address crises, revolutionize medicine and industry, catalyse sustainability and climate resilience, and improve decision-making through data-driven insights. However, they can also exacerbate inequalities and divisions, create new risks, spread disinformation and misinformation and create distrust and social grievances. Artificial intelligence is blurring the lines between human and machine, calling for an ethics-based approach to balance innovation and responsibility. In this context, a high-level, multi-stakeholder advisory board on artificial intelligence has been convened to inform the elaboration of a global digital compact and to strengthen international cooperation on governance for an open, free and secure digital future for all.

49. A human security lens will add significant value to elaborating a governing framework for digital transformation. By placing people at the centre, it will enable diverse stakeholders to identify shared interests, limit critical risks at all levels and enhance opportunities to improve well-being, protect human rights, deepen trust and expand capabilities, particularly as technology changes the landscape of education and work. In defining safeguards and regulations on interoperable data security standards, as well as global, regional and national oversight mechanisms, a people-centred and preventive approach can better guide a digital transformation. This can also promote investments in next-generation technologies to enhance quality of life, promote sustainability and strengthen the security and well-being of people.

### **Pandemics and health**

50. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed our failure to invest sufficiently in protecting development gains and preparing for fast-moving, transmissible global risks. While the emergency is over, the slow, uneven and incomplete recovery continues to widen inequalities and hamper progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. With future pandemics inevitable, and the probability of their occurrence on the rise in the context of a warming planet, it is imperative that we enhance preparedness at all levels and create mechanisms such as the emergency platform for a coordinated response across Governments and national and local health institutions.

51. As the World Health Organization and national health systems adapt to the lessons learned from the pandemic, the human security lens can help to promote multi-stakeholder partnerships to pool the resources and technologies that are necessary to minimize the knock-on effects on the economy and society at large and propel countermeasures such as developing vaccines, diagnostic tools and therapeutic treatments. It can highlight areas where government capacity may be overstretched and bolster national and global partnerships uniting across cultural and generational lines to build trust. This prospective framework also focuses attention on the importance of resilience through comprehensive social protection systems and equity in access to health services, including the promotion of universal health coverage, as well as innovation through greater investment in digital technologies that enhance the quality of and access to health care for all.

### **Poverty, hunger and inequality**

52. Unrelenting climate disasters, war and conflict, geopolitical instability and an unsteady pandemic recovery have halted the steady progress in poverty reduction, with the number of people living in absolute poverty having increased for the first time in a generation.<sup>6</sup> This has been accompanied by a growing food and water crisis and the largest rise in inequality in wealth and income between and within countries in three decades.<sup>7</sup> In this context, exacerbated by growing sovereign debt burdens and tightening international financial conditions, many developing economies are facing an untenable situation, often unable to make investments in efforts to reduce poverty, hunger and inequality. The triple planetary crisis will continue to affect the agricultural sector most heavily, with impacts on the most vulnerable groups. Efforts must continue to anticipate these risks and their consequences.

53. A cornerstone of our efforts to eradicate poverty, hunger and inequality must be the reform of the international financial architecture into one that better meets the transformative promise of the Sustainable Development Goals and operates fairly in relation to countries on a development trajectory fraught with unprecedented crises and inequitable access to technologies and resources. To create effective interventions and generate lasting results, the human security approach will continue to support comprehensive poverty-eradication strategies that marshal the requisite finance, science, technology, data, social protection, gender equity and early warning systems to promote policies that are triple wins: improving livelihoods today, reducing vulnerability to diverse risks tomorrow and mitigating future hazards.

### **Conflict, violence and displacement**

54. As outlined in the policy brief on A New Agenda for Peace ([A/77/CRP.1/Add.8](#)), the world is experiencing a surge in armed conflict in an increasingly complex conflict environment and a staggering forced displacement crisis. There is a proliferation of non-State armed and terrorist groups with access to sophisticated weaponry and continued recruitment of people through the Internet. However, violence is not limited to conflict zones. Today, crime kills far more people than conflict,<sup>8</sup> with organized crime, gang violence and gender-based violence afflicting large portions of the global population.

55. The mainstreaming of human security into peacebuilding efforts contributes to ensuring investment in prevention. By focusing on the dignity of people with the full spectrum of human rights at its core, the human security approach supports efforts to strengthen international foresight, advance an integrated analytical framework on how technology interfaces with other conflict drivers, and enhance capacities to work more seamlessly at the intersection of issues such as climate change, displacement and conflict. Moreover, the human security approach helps to connect strategic analysis to context-specific assessments in potential hotspots to better understand the underlying drivers that ignite or sustain conflict, as well as contribute to diverse forms of violence, from interpersonal violence against women and children to ethnically motivated violence and armed conflict.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet*, special edition (United Nations publication, 2023).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, UN75 web page.

## **VI. Towards a renewed multilateralism for a prosperous, peaceful and sustainable future**

56. With major transitions under way, a strong multilateral system is key for a prosperous, peaceful and sustainable future. As outlined in the present report, to address the interconnected challenges, minimize human suffering and leverage the opportunities presented by new technologies, an equally interconnected response is required through a renewed, networked and inclusive multilateralism that places people and prevention at the centre. This renewed multilateralism, with the United Nations at the centre of our efforts, must be grounded on shared concerns, goodwill, a fair distribution of responsibilities and burdens, and an accurate reflection of the world as it is. It must draw its legitimacy from being inclusive and representative, incorporating a broader range of actors in efforts to deliver peace, prosperity and dignity for all. And it must be people- and planet-centred, enhancing our ability to predict and respond to change, harnessing the power of digital transformation for large-scale innovation across sectors and accelerating collaboration for pragmatic solutions to deliver on current commitments and prevent the emergence of future crises.

### **Global governance**

57. Strengthening and reforming the United Nations to be fit for a new era is imperative. This includes reforms to the global financial architecture, new mechanisms to provide standards and oversight of digital transformation and reforms within the Organization for greater flexibility and a workforce with the skills for tomorrow. The engagement between the United Nations and local governments and regional bodies must be strengthened for more strategic, timely and realistic investments in sustainable peace and development at all levels. To this end, concrete proposals put forward by Member States for the Summit of the Future, the International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in 2025 and other relevant forums will be critical.

### **Solidarity**

58. Reforms will only go so far. We must also recognize that humanity's very future depends on solidarity, trust and the ability to work together as a global family to achieve common goals. Even with growing divisions, we must seek our common values and shared interests as fulcrums for collaboration that can be broadened over time. In this sense, solidarity will be actionable at different levels, across varied constellations of partners and for a wide range of issues, from accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, to bridging the digital divide, turbocharging climate action, preparing for pandemics and strengthening the capacities of local, national and regional stakeholders for integrated action.

### **Data**

59. Underlying a more networked, inclusive multilateralism is the need for timely and interoperative data, as well as effective monitoring frameworks that can help to design and implement proactive responses to the diversity and the multifaceted impacts of current and future risks. At the global level, a multi-stakeholder platform can support trust and solidarity through a common assessment of risks and new standards for data on human security risks within and outside the United Nations. These tools should also enable and build on data-sharing mechanisms within United Nations system organizations at the country, regional and global levels.

## VII. The way forward and recommendations

60. The scope and the scale of the threats today require a whole-of-society approach at the national level and a whole-of-humanity approach at the international level. With a shared sense of urgency and common purpose, concrete, forward-looking action for a more peaceful, sustainable and prosperous world for current and future generations is urgently needed.

61. To this end, human security can offer a helpful conceptual and operational framework for the United Nations. By bringing together peace and security, development and human rights, it is a unifying approach that can help to enhance cooperation and integrated action at all levels towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. With its focus on the needs of people and its support to governments, it can also help to design and assess the effectiveness of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts. By prioritizing a bottom-up approach, it deepens our capacity to make meaningful progress on the commitment to leave no one behind; and its prospective and prevention-oriented framework guides strategies that build resilience and minimize the potential for sudden or slow-onset crises to grow into human catastrophes.

62. As seen from the global surveys and consultations with Member States, a growing appreciation is emerging of the value of the human security approach and its contribution to the critical challenges of our global community. As evidenced through extensive human security initiatives, it is a practical framework that can offer additional tools as countries seek ways to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the remaining seven years. Efforts to apply the approach in addressing the multilayered, complex challenges of today and tomorrow should therefore be expanded.

63. The General Assembly is therefore requested:

### Approach

(a) To reaffirm the relevance and value of human security and its principles as contained in the common understanding defined in General Assembly resolution [66/290](#) to address multidimensional and interconnected challenges;

(b) To reiterate the importance of national ownership where governments retain the primary role and responsibility for ensuring the survival, livelihood and dignity of their citizens;

(c) To confirm that human security calls for people-centred, integrated responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people and enhance solidarity among Member States, as well as among people and between people and the planet;

### Application

(d) To encourage Member States to apply the human security approach;

### Resources

(e) To acknowledge the unique contributions made by the United Nations trust fund for human security and invite Member States to strengthen financial support to human security initiatives and the trust fund.