"Human Security in Difficult Times II"

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It is my sincere pleasure to be with you this morning.

I'm enormously grateful to the Center for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University, and to our host, Kadir Has University, for their commitment and generous hospitality in convening the Eighth Annual Conference on Human Security.

We meet at a time of considerable crisis. Whether it is the scourge of conflict, the devastation of natural disasters, or the indignity of abject poverty, our inability to respond to these challenges have led to levels of discontent not seen in recent history.

Today, the rising deficit of trust between States and the international system, between Governments and their citizens, and between the UN and those we serve, test the efficacy of our international system.

Challenges such as unresolved global tensions, internal conflicts, and the ongoing prevalence of violent extremism and mass displacement have given rise to unprecedented human suffering and a resurgence of populism, xenophobia, and nativist tendencies.

At a time when existing paradigms fail to address the root causes of discontent, and anger continues to flare and erode the bonds of our common humanity, we are reminded of the importance of human security and the aspirations of "we the people" to live free from fear, want and indignity.

The human security approach calls for people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of those most vulnerable.

Well-suited to the multifaceted challenges of our times, a focus on human security looks at the interconnectedness and the cross-sectoral consequences of current and emerging threats and their impact on different facets of people's lives.

Such an analysis provides institutions – whether they are States, intergovernmental structures, or non-governmental entities, with the necessary and effective tools to limit the conditions under which insecurities may grow and result in tensions. This ultimately contributes to greater human, national, regional and international security.

Colleagues,

The advancement of human security is at the core of the work of the United Nations and its reform agenda, and considerable progress has been made to integrate its principles and methodology into the work of the Organization.

As you are all aware, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015. This transformative agenda was the result of a two-year consultative process in which a record number of civil society and academic institutions participated and played a critical role in our collective efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms by 2030.

But 15 years to achieve a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and violence, with no one left behind, will not be an easy endeavor.

Reaching this goal will require the concerted efforts of all of us. It will require new and innovative solutions that match the scale and ambition of the SDGs. As I'm sure you can imagine – along with its many opportunities, implementing this broad yet differentiated agenda also presents a number of challenges, which the human security approach can help address.

Specifically, to meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda, a context-specific analysis at the local level – a hallmark of the human security approach – is needed to further extend the benefits of economic growth across and within countries.

Whereas national measurements may not adequately address disparities at the community level, the identification of bottlenecks at the local level can foster an inclusive economic growth with significant gains across societies.

The application of human security, moreover, addresses not only developmental challenges but also challenges stemming from other factors that impede economic growth and poverty reduction.

By addressing the root causes of poverty and by highlighting the impact of income and other inequalities on broader development, the human security approach can respond in a more inclusive, integrated and multidimensional fashion.

Based on its core vision to achieve freedom from fear, want and indignity, a focus on human security helps clarify how diverse issues ranging from deprivation in all its forms (whether it's food, health, education, employment, etc.) to violence and environmental degradation interact and require comprehensive and context-specific solutions.

Today we can confidently say that the application of human security will complement and significantly enrich the mechanisms that will be needed to attain the SDGs.

In addition to supporting the SDGs, the application of human security also contributes to ongoing efforts in a number of important areas which I would like to share with you this morning, notably a balanced approach to better manage migration and forced displacement; a more inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding architecture; a stronger transition from humanitarian relief to longer-term development; and, more effective mechanisms to prevent, prepare, and recover from natural disasters, particularly at the community level.

Colleagues,

We live in a world that is increasingly on the move. In recent years, multiple crises from conflicts to natural disasters have resulted in human displacement at levels unknown since World War II. For many migrants and refugees, leaving one country for another can be a complex process, fraught with risks and insecurities.

Viewing displacement through the human security lens highlights the social, political, and economic dimensions of those on the move. Within a framework of protection and empowerment, a focus on human security promotes multi-stakeholder partnerships that combine institutional policies with community-based empowerment activities to address gaps in the management of forced or voluntary migration.

By building the resilience, expanding the opportunities, and enhancing the dignity of migrants, refugees and their host communities, the application of human security helps strengthen cooperation between international organizations, Governments and local communities.

In Lebanon, for example, the northern city of Tripoli, where over 70,000 Syrian refugees currently reside, is an impoverished region that has long struggled to provide adequate employment, decent housing, and basic services to its neighbourhoods. As a result, the recent arrival of refugees has added considerable stress on existing services and has created tensions between host communities and the incoming refugees.

With funding from the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, which the Human Security Unit manages, several UN agencies are developing a comprehensive and integrated programme with the active engagement of national and municipal government, civil society, refugee and host communities, to provide the necessary protection and empowerment strategies, including access to education, health and employment; improvements in public safety, infrastructure and housing; and the provision of legal counselling, cultural exchanges and psychosocial support. The programme has subsequently lessened fears and discrimination; enhanced economic

opportunities and social harmony; and highlighted the benefits of a community rich in culture, skills and diversity.

Colleagues,

After two decades of a steady decline, conflicts are once again on the rise. As noted in the reform of the peace and security architecture, the success of sustaining peace "critically relies on uniting the peace and security, human rights and development 'pillars' of the United Nations."

In this regard, the human security approach is an invaluable tool for building multi-stakeholder partnerships for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Despite daunting challenges, post-conflict situations provide significant opportunities to address the root causes of conflicts; to heal fragmentation; and to strengthen state-society relations. The success of peacebuilding strategies however rests on the ability to deliver the dividends of peace to all people and communities in a manner that is transparent, participatory, and fair.

To this end, the application of human security underlines the inclusion of protection efforts – such as providing public safety, essential basic services and the rule of law, with empowerment measures that promote partnerships with local stakeholders.

Local partners can play a significant role in reinforcing ownership in the future of their country, nurturing reconciliation and restoring trust in the institutions that return stability to post-conflict situations.

Together, this dual approach can minimize the space in which societies may relapse into conflicts.

At the same time, by promoting a comprehensive and context-specific response framework, the application of human security can help ensure that support from across the international community is based on the actual realities on the ground.

Subsequently, the needs, vulnerabilities and capacity gaps of conflict-affected countries are continually assessed and actions that address these gaps are supported by a peacebuilding architecture that strengthens local and national capacities.

Colleagues,

The transition from humanitarian relief to long-term development is another complex and rarely linear experience. Far too often, violent conflicts or environmental crises devastate the same vulnerable communities time and time again.

Without addressing the underlying causes of these crises, I'm afraid our best efforts to build back better will remain unfulfilled.

As a multi-stakeholder, comprehensive and integrated approach, the application of human security can contribute significantly to our ongoing commitments in this area.

Human security underscores the need for joint analysis, planning and implementation among humanitarian and development organizations, and provides the rationale and evidence by which to transcend this divide.

At its core, human security is rooted in the notion that threats to people's survival, livelihood and dignity are seldom singular in nature. Rather, a mix of factors comes together to generate situations that are often complex and multidimensional. Therefore, human security advocates for comprehensive solutions that encompass all key stakeholders from Governments and civil society, including those responsible for emergency relief, rehabilitation and longer-term development.

Moreover, human security is premised on the recognition that long-term sustainable results are more likely to be generated by activities that go beyond responding to an immediate crisis.

By looking at the root causes of a threat, the human security approach identifies the structural and behavioural changes needed to mitigate negative impacts, and help prevent the re-occurrence of current and future crises.

Lastly, climate change and its interactions with other insecurities is one of the most pressing issues of our time. Climatic fluctuations, environmental degradation and extreme weather patterns disrupt harvests, deplete fisheries, erode livelihoods and increase the spread of infectious diseases. Vulnerable groups are particularly at risk, not only from the immediate impacts of natural disasters, but also from knock-on risk factors such as, displacement and migration.

Since 2008, an average of 26 million people have been displaced each year as a result of natural disasters.

Climate change is also a "threat multiplier" particularly in situations where the loss of land, together with persistent poverty, displacement and other insecurities, trigger competition over increasingly scarce natural resources that often intensify into societal tensions.

Colleagues,

In all these scenarios, the application of human security has resulted in considerable benefits in how we conceptualize, plan and respond to current and emerging challenges. It has provided the rationale and methodology for why different entities must come together to support a more inclusive and shared prosperity in greater peace and resilience.

From the Sendai Framework to the 2030 and the Sustaining Peace Agendas, the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration, and the reform of the United Nations system, perhaps the most significant accomplishment of human security has been the growing recognition that without a people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented approach that protects and empowers people, we will not be able to resolve today's challenges.

Therefore, allow me to underscore my sincere hope for the success of this conference and our joint efforts to advance human security and its application to manage risks, save lives, prevent distrust and promote greater peace and prosperity for all.

In a world where what is local and global is increasingly blurred and hard to differentiate, no country can survive without the human security of its people and that of the others.

I thank you for your attention.