



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

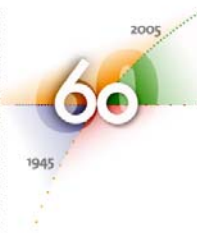
Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

# Human security



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## Human security

Poverty, pollution, terrorism – the threats to human security are increasing. UNESCO is remaining faithful to its ideals of peace and security, reinforcing its actions in these areas over the past ten years.

Since the concept of human security first appeared, ten years ago in the 1994 UNDP World Human Development Report, it has not ceased to evolve. And, as the nature of the risks and threats facing the world change, so does the definition of what human security means.

### NEW THREATS

The 1990's saw new hotbeds of violence emerge, with complex origins and underlying issues. Threats to human security are no longer confined to events and processes occurring within territorial limits. The individual is no longer in danger only from the barrel of a gun, but also when he is hungry, when his home is threatened, and when his day-to-day life is unsafe. Security is no longer a matter for states alone, but has human beings as its central concern. Human security has many faces today, such as political security (violations of human rights and democratic principles); individual and personal security (conflicts, poverty, drug-related crimes, violence against women and children, terrorism); environmental security (degradation of the air, water, land and forests); food security (availability of food in the right quantity and quality, being able to trace the origin of foodstuffs); health security (diseases, epidemics, respiratory illnesses caused by air pollution); economic security (unemployment, precarious work, inequality of income

and resources, poverty and homelessness).

### A FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT

UNESCO has put the concept of security at the heart of its actions. International cooperation is the natural framework to address this question, extending beyond inter-governmental exchanges, to include efforts to “build on the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind”, to which UNESCO is dedicated. Human security is not a state to be achieved, but a process involving the conditions for human dignity.

A whole battery of new international instruments has emerged to wage the war, across national borders, against organised crime, drug trafficking, terrorism and environmental degradation, which increasingly affect peoples' lives.

UNESCO has played a

pioneering role in this domain. It has successfully integrated human security into an interdisciplinary project entitled “Towards a Culture of Peace”. This project has contributed to the international debate on new dimensions of security, as the 1996 conference, “From Partial Insecurity to Global Security”, showed.

In the year 2000 a veritable interregional movement was born, with the international conference “What Agenda for Human Security in the Twenty-first century?”, organised by UNESCO, which brought together peace research and training institutions.



*Love and Peace*, Benn, 1987  
(C. Bablin ©UNESCO)

# Human security

## Promoting human security: Ethical, normative and educational frameworks

UNESCO has wanted to stress a) the need for a **solid ethical base**, resting on shared values and leading to a commitment to human dignity; b) the strengthening of this ethical dimension through **existing and new normative instruments**, which should be made available for human security, while assuring that human rights are protected; c) the need to reinforce the **education and training** dimension by focusing on themes such as education for peace and sustainable development, human rights training and inclusion in the democratic agenda for human security.

As a result, ethical, normative and educational standards were drawn up, in several regions. The Organization's Medium-term Strategy for 2002-2007 made human security one of its strategic objectives. "Improving human security by better management of the environment and social change" applies to the Organization's major scientific programmes as well as specific actions aimed to further promotion of the concept of human security.

### A TRANSDICIPLINARY APPROACH

UNESCO's action is being developed along two fronts: accrediting references to human security as a concept encompassing the actions of peoples, nations and international organisations; exploring various approaches to the problem without losing sight of the core issues of globalisation, security and human rights. The Organization has therefore adopted an intersectoral and complementary approach to address a wide spectrum of situations:

- in the area of education, an awareness of the threats has to be integrated into education systems at all levels, especially the training of scientists. There is an urgent need to train teaching staff, students and researchers in professional ethics that also integrate conflict prevention;
- in the area of environmental security, water, and the prevention of natural disasters, the objective is to see that early warning systems are in place, and to draw up prudent plans for settlement in areas at risk;
- regarding human rights and the fight against discrimination, the goal is to bolster UNESCO's cooperation and

commitment to human rights, and to provide services to Member States.

- as far as communication and information are concerned, a significant part of the Organisation's work is devoted to the promotion of press freedom, media pluralism and the security of journalists.
- culture, as a tool for dialogue and reconciliation, is also an essential area for promoting human security. UNESCO is committed to protecting cultural diversity and heritage.

Although UNESCO and the various international organizations can work together to face the complex challenges of preventing and consolidating peace, human security is, above all, a matter for each and every one of us.

### Contact :

Social and Human Sciences Sector; Philosophy and human sciences section

### To Find Out More

[www.unesco.org/securipax](http://www.unesco.org/securipax)

International conferences on human security in:

- Central Asia (with the OSCE Academy, September 2005);
- South-East Asia (with ASEAN, July 2006);
- Africa (with the African Union, 2006).

Inter-regional conference on human security (UNESCO, Paris, 2007) whose conclusions will feed into a Global Report on Human Security