

**General Assembly Plenary Meeting on the Report of the Secretary-General:  
Follow-up to General Assembly Resolution 64/291 on Human Security  
New York  
4 June 2012**

**Introduction**

The General Assembly met to consider the Secretary-General's report *Follow-up to General Assembly resolution 64/291 on human security* (A/66/763). The report was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/291, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the notion of human security, including a possible definition thereof, and to submit a report to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

In accordance with GA resolution 64/291, Governments of all Member States were invited to provide their views through written submissions and informal consultations with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Human Security. Based on contributions from Member States, the report provides a summary of discussions on human security at the General Assembly; outlines key aspects towards forming a common understanding on the notion of human security; suggests a common understanding on human security based on the views expressed by Member States; and considers areas where the application of human security can bring added value to the work of the Organization. The report closes with a set of recommendations for the consideration of Member States.

**Opening remarks**

The President of the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, opened the plenary meeting by extending his gratitude to the Secretary-General for producing an "important report" and to the Special Adviser on Human Security for consulting widely with Member States. He recognized that while human security is not new, "there is an urgent need to bring policies and institutions together in a far more effective way than the stand-alone or fragmented responses that we see today". "Human security", he continued "provides a viable framework to bring our various approaches into a coherent and concerted effort that puts people at the forefront of decision-making". In closing his remarks, the President noted that the General Assembly "must take a momentous step forward and strive to achieve consensus on a common understanding on the notion of human security and how it can best be applied to United Nations activities".

**Inputs by Member States**

During the plenary meeting, Member States commended the Secretary-General's report for being comprehensive and well balanced, offering a good basis to take stock of and further advance the discussions on human security in the United Nations. Many delegations further appreciated that the report not only outlined the main features of human security, but also took into account the reservations and concerns raised by Member States in previous discussions on the notion of human security.

Many delegates also welcomed the decision by the Secretary-General to present a set of parameters on a common understanding of human security instead of offering an exact definition. Delegates affirmed that this provided the clarity many Member States were

seeking without prioritizing certain threats or fields of activity over others. Meanwhile, some delegates agreed that while the common understanding outlined in the report provided a good basis to carry forward discussions, further elaboration of a definition however would be necessary in order to build a more solid foundation for future work on human security. Lastly, a few delegates expressed concern that a common understanding, without an exact definition, could leave some ambiguity regarding the application of the human security approach.

Delegations overwhelmingly agreed that the application of human security should not bring additional layers of work to the Organization or add further legal obligations for Member States. Rather, human security can be a useful framework for guiding responses to widespread and cross-cutting challenges by bringing together the three pillars of the Organization in a more coherent and targeted manner. In this regard, Member States noted that efforts should be made to identify ways in which human security could be further advanced through the UN system. Accordingly, several Member States stressed that decisions on human security should be adopted under the purview of the General Assembly.

Echoing the report of the Secretary-General, many Member States also reiterated that Governments retain the primary responsibility for ensuring human security; that human security is distinct from the responsibility to protect; and that human security does not entail the use of or the threat of use of force. While calls for national ownership and respect of sovereignty were shared, some Member States drew attention to the need for cooperation and partnership between, *inter alia*, Governments, international organizations, and civil society actors in pursuit of human security goals.

## **Conclusion**

The plenary meeting marked an important milestone in the trajectory of discussions on human security in the General Assembly. While consensus has not yet been reached on a common understanding, the report of the Secretary-General provided a clear set of parameters that outline the principles and values of human security as well as delineates the notion from other frameworks utilized in the UN system. From this foundation, Member States can continue their discussions and consider areas where the application of human security can bring added value to the work of the Organization.