

Foreword

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Human security is indivisible. A general dynamic of equitable and balanced development is its best cornerstone. The growing interaction of societies on a worldwide scale increasingly demonstrates the overall need for human security, though it is not yet enough to prevent all forms of violence or conflict. The world's future depends upon a growing need for human security and a better understanding of all the risks and threats that affect populations and individuals.

(From the Agenda for Action of the International Security
Network for the Promotion of Human Security and Peace)

As the aftermath of the tragic events of 11 September 2001 in the United States unfolds throughout the world, we are again called upon to renew our efforts both to better understand the nature of the rapidly evolving large-scale risks and threats that can have a major impact on individuals and populations, and to strengthen mobilization of the wide array of actors actually involved in participative policy formulation in the various fields it encompasses today.

In Africa, the number of conflicts is still overwhelming, as are the consequences for civilian populations. In his address to the 37th Summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Lusaka (Zambia) in July 2001, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan, warned that 'we are confronted with persistent conflicts and crises of governance and security that threaten to derail our hopes for an African Union of peace and prosperity'.

But it is also clear that the number of African actors involved in

conflict resolution and prevention has increased considerably, as has their effectiveness, in particular in the framework of subregional initiatives. One of the major issues is to explore the ways and means of enhancing that effectiveness at both regional and subregional levels. Indeed, lessons can already be drawn from the past and ongoing processes of negotiation and mediation with a view to reinforcing conflict-prevention mechanisms, including the discussions on the nature and purposes of an African peace-keeping force.

But the main challenge is to link conflict prevention to the promotion of human security, on the basis of the common priorities already identified and on the widely shared concern for meeting the needs of the most vulnerable populations.

This concern can be expressed through four questions:

- How can we ensure that major dimensions of human security will be taken into account in regional, subregional and national policies as we move from the resolution of conflicts to the building of democratic and stable societies, respectful of all human rights?
- Have we adequately identified all the priorities that require long-term action, or are we limiting ourselves to dealing only with the most urgent matters?
- Which capacities have to be built in order to move forward in the promotion of human security, in particular through education and training?
- Which strategies can contribute to the mobilization of the most vulnerable populations, which must emerge as stakeholders in the democratic process, through participation and dialogue?

With a view to answering these questions and building on the Agenda for Action and the Final Recommendations of the First International Meeting of Directors of Peace Research and Training Institutions held at UNESCO's initiative in November 2000, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) of South Africa and UNESCO hosted on 23 and 24 July 2001 in Pretoria a high-level expert meeting on peace, human security and conflict prevention in Africa, with the participation of regional and continental organizations and selected representatives of civil society.

This volume contains the proceedings of this expert meeting, the first of a series of regional meetings held under the auspices of the International SecuriPax Network for the Promotion of Human Security and Peace.

Indeed, Africa is one of UNESCO's key priority areas and action in

its favour is being structured around four complementary objectives, all of which are essential for advancing human security:

- promoting human capacity-building in the Member States of the region;
- helping African countries to establish a strategy for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other contagious diseases;
- mobilizing and acting as a catalyst for international cooperation in support of initiatives by African Member States; and
- promoting the active participation of communities and representatives of civil society in the planning and implementation of development programmes.

Particular attention should be drawn to the key proposals for action made at the Pretoria meeting on the basis of a series of in-depth analysis papers, also reproduced here. These key proposals aim at reinforcing many dimensions of the human security paradigm, such as the relation between human security and the culture of peace, the need for further research on human security indicators, the functions of early-warning systems, the capacity-building of African parliamentarians, common legislative agendas on issues such as HIV/AIDS, poverty, environment, and human rights. At the same time, the participants stressed the importance of reaffirming the overarching principles of the African Union (AU), the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) as complementary to the concept of human security.

UNESCO and ISS wish to profoundly thank all the participants at the meeting for having formulated these key proposals based on their evidence, research and a wide-ranging exchange of ideas. Indeed, the proposals will be most useful in strengthening the joint action of both institutions in promoting human security but, more importantly, in ensuring that all the actors concerned will be able to engage in a renewed effort in favour of African societies, in particular to ensure security for the most vulnerable populations. Indeed, this is the priority of priorities if the indivisibility of human security is to be achieved.

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