



Disaster Risk Reduction and Human Security: Effective Responses to Strengthen Resilience and Protect and Empower People in Response to Natural Disasters

Tuesday, 17 March 2015, 13.30 – 15.30

Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
Sendai, Japan

1. Background

Natural disasters and their interface with human security challenge us at numerous levels. Natural disasters have claimed more lives and affected more people in recent years than ever before. In 2012 alone, there were 364 natural disasters, threatening approximately 139 million people worldwide and inflicting more than US\$158 billion in damages. These events disrupt and erode livelihoods, increase the spread of infectious diseases and threaten the coping mechanisms of individuals and communities. Vulnerable groups are particularly at risk, not only from the immediate impacts of natural disasters but also from the knock-on risk factors such as displacement, growing competition over scarce resources and rising tensions. Since the consequences of natural disasters are multiple and often devastating in nature, a human security approach that helps mitigate the multidimensional consequences of natural disasters is an urgent priority and an important step in building the resilience and the capacities of communities to manage these risks in a sustainable manner.

2. Objective

On 17 March 2015, the Human Security Unit and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, will host an event titled “Disaster Risk Reduction and Human Security: Effective Responses to Strengthen Resilience and Protect and Empower People in Response to Natural Disasters” at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) in Sendai, Japan. The event will highlight the effectiveness of the human security approach in tackling disaster risk reduction and how it adds value to strengthening the resilience of communities, especially those most vulnerable. Through a combination of top-down protection and bottom-up empowerment measures that are people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented, the human security approach has proven to be an effective tool to prepare, adapt and mitigate the risks associated with natural disasters around the world.

3. Programme

Mr. Yukio Takasu, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Human Security will open the event. Mr. Takasu will provide the opening remarks and present an overview on the added value of the human security approach to the broad range of challenges confronting us

in the 21st century, including the rising trend in the frequency, variability and intensity of natural disasters.

A short video capturing the experiences of vulnerable communities in Kenya, Uzbekistan and Serbia will follow. The video will highlight the multidimensional consequences of natural disasters and the way in which these communities have responded to them through the application of the human security approach.

Mr. Akihiko Tanaka, Member of the Advisory Board on Human Security and President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), will provide the keynote address. Focusing on the added value of the human security approach to disaster risk reduction, Mr. Tanaka will consider how the application of human security can result in improved early warning systems, resilient coping mechanisms and targeted adaptation strategies to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of people and their communities. By illustrating the differentiated impact and compounding consequences of natural disasters on people and their communities, Mr. Tanaka will reflect on the value of the human security approach in developing disaster risk reduction strategies and contributing to the discussions on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

An interactive panel discussion will proceed with inputs from H.E. Mr. Ahmed Sareer, Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations and Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States, Mr. Peter Burgess, Professor at Peace Research Institute Oslo, Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, Mr. Stefan Priesner and Ms. Irena Vojackova Sollorano, the United Nations Resident Coordinators in Kenya, Uzbekistan and Serbia respectively, and Ms. Yukie Osa, President of the Association for Aid and Relief, Japan. Mr. Burgess will focus on how the human security approach can provide the conceptual tools for better understanding the relation between social values and the resilience they generate. Based on concrete experiences with the implementation of human security in disaster prone communities, Ms. Bekele-Thomas, Mr. Priesner and Ms. Vojackova will provide further analyses on the importance of a holistic and people-centred perspective that recognizes the broad spectrum of challenges faced by people and communities and highlights the need to tailor disaster risk reduction strategies to local capacities and resources, promote local engagement in resilience-building efforts, and advance multi-sectoral solutions to the pervasive consequences of natural disasters. Lessons learned from the earthquakes in Kobe and Tohoku will further underscore the multidimensional and differentiated consequences of natural disasters on communities. Based on recent experiences from Japan, Ms. Osa will present the trend and distribution of natural disasters on communities, highlighting their impact on the most vulnerable and emphasizing the urgent need for a human security framework towards disaster risk reduction among developed and developing countries alike.

Following presentations by the panellists, the floor will be given to participants for questions and answers. A senior official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, will close the event with concluding remarks on the way forward.

4. Participants

UN Member States, senior officials from UN agencies, funds and programmes, as well as NGOs/CSOs, academia and other entities interested in human security and disaster risk reduction.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Time	Programme
13.30 - 13.40	Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Yukio Takasu, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Human Security
13.40 - 13.50	Video on Human Security and Disaster Risk Reduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A short video on the impact of natural disasters on communities and the added value of the human security approach through activities supported by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security
13.50 – 14.00	Added Value of the Human Security Approach to Disaster Risk Reduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Akihiko Tanaka, Member of the Advisory Board on Human Security and President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency
14.00 - 14.10	Panel Discussion on the Application of the Human Security Approach <i>Moderator</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior representative from UNISDR Perspective from the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) on the multifaceted challenges of natural disasters and their impact on the broad spectrum of human security concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Mr. Ahmed Sareer, Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations and Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States
14:10 - 14:20	The human security approach and resilience building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Peter Burgess, Professor, Peace Research Institute Oslo
14.20 - 14.30	The application of the human security approach in addressing the nexus between climate change, poverty and violence in Northern Kenya <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Kenya
14.30 - 14.40	Building resilience of communities affected by the Aral Sea disaster through the application of the human security approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Stefan Priesner, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Uzbekistan
14.40 - 14.50	Lessons learned from the application of the human security approach to address disaster risk reduction in Serbia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Irena Vojackova Sollorano, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Serbia
14.50 - 15.00	The added value of the human security approach based on experiences in Kobe and Tohoku <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Yukie Osa, President of the Association for Aid and Relief, Japan
15.00 - 15.15	Q&A Session <i>Moderator</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior representative from UNISDR
15.15 - 15.20	Closing Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior official of MOFA