Introduction:
Human Security at 20—Lysøen Revisited

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The 1994 *Human Development Report*, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), introduced and formalized the concept of human security. The UN agency argued that the concept of security should be expanded beyond the traditional state-centric, politico-military dimension. According to the Report, human security means economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. The concept is generally defined as "freedom from fear" (from direct physical violence) and "freedom from want" (from indirect and nonphysical or structural violence) (UNDP 1994). Although the idea of human security was not entirely new, the UNDP Report made a global impact on intellectual and policy thinking. Sorpong Peou (2014) argues that the study of human security has now emerged as an academic field. However, as David Black, Astri Suhrke and others point out in their respective articles in this special issue, human security as a normative concept has lost much of its persuasive power among policymakers. Our purpose here is not to ignore this policy challenge but to assess the progress the human security agenda has made, identify remaining obstacles, and continue the search for more creative ways that would help us build a more humane world.

How has the concept of human security evolved? More can be learned from the various papers presented in this special issue, but a brief discussion is necessary. While the UNDP and the UN Secretariat under the leadership of Kofi Annan played an instrumental role in pushing the human security agenda forward, it was a group of individual intellectuals and government officials who pioneered this agenda. Although the UNDP championed the new security agenda, it was a Pakistani government official, Mahbub ul Haq (after his appointment in 1989 as Special Advisor to the UNDP Administrator) who led a

team of international scholars that published the first UNDP *Human Development Report* in 1990; and it was Haq who provided leadership in formulating the concept of human security introduced in the 1994 Report.

Although the UNDP approach to human security was widely regarded as too broad, encompassing too many elements, a number of state leaders took up the challenge of pushing the idea forward. Canada and Norway in particular played a joint leadership role in advancing the concept in the international arena, but their approach departed from that advocated by the UNDP. The two Western states took a more narrow approach, emphasizing what came to be known as "protection-based" human security: protecting civilians against sources of direct physical violence, such as armed conflict and genocide.

On December 3, 1997, Canada's Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy and his Norwegian counterpart Knut Vollebæk met for the first time in Ottawa, Canada. Norway had been among the first countries to join the "Ottawa Treaty," the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. The Treaty process set a precedent for multilateral cooperation. Norway, Canada and other like-minded states agreed to collaborate around providing resources towards demining and aid to victims, and assisting in the creation of a new scheme at the civil society level for monitoring progress made by states in meeting their treaty obligations.

Canada and Norway wanted to create a road map and pursue a course where middle and small powers could exert a kind of influence that contributes to a safer, more secure world. Over the years the two states have closely cooperated in promoting human rights and have been actively involved in economic development around the world, but they are also members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and allies of the United States. While acknowledging this relationship with the United States, they wanted to allow space to define their own course. Axworthy and Vollebæk wanted to ground their foreign policy in the concept of human security and to promote a rules-based international system that favored the protection of human rights over military and economic interests. In this project, they saw a need to build partnerships with like-minded entities—states, business enterprises, and civil society—in an effort to work towards finding durable solutions to the security problems facing humanity.

In May 1998, the Canadian and Norwegian foreign ministers met again, this time in Bergen, Norway. Deliberating on the challenges they were faced with as foreign ministers, they committed their governments to "a framework for consultation and concerted action in the areas of enhancing human security, promoting human rights, strengthening humanitarian law, preventing conflict, and fostering democracy and good governance, as well as cooperation in the Arctic" (CCFPD 1998). The underlying principle for this thinking was based on a conviction that the true rights-holders in this world are not states and

governments but rather individuals for whose benefit states and governments exist and in whose interests states are supposed to act. As they saw it, and still see it, the rights that states possess are derivative. States have first and foremost *responsibilities*, not rights.

This bilateral undertaking came to be known as the "Lysøen Declaration," named after the small island outside Bergen, Lysøen (Island of Light), that once belonged to the famous Norwegian composer and violinist Ole Bull whose old mansion played host to the meeting and where the Declaration was signed. The Lysøen Declaration created not only a lot of interest but also enthusiasm among a number of other foreign ministers who were also interested in signing the Declaration. Thus, the undertaking between Canada and Norway was subsequently expanded to include eleven other countries: Austria, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, The Netherlands, Slovenia, South Africa (observer status only), Switzerland, and Thailand. At the constituent meeting of the Human Security Network in Bergen, in May 1999, representatives of these 13 countries were joined by the representatives of several international organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Save the Children, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Red Cross Federation, Amnesty International, Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, Coalition to Combat Land Mines, and Coalition to Combat Small Arms.

This type of global cooperation among various sets of actors—individuals, states and non-state groups—gave rise to what was termed "new diplomacy." Lloyd Axworthy characterized this type of diplomacy as "a new kind of global politics … where non-traditional actors, citizen diplomats, have an important role to play in the formulation, promotion, and enactment of foreign policy" (Axworthy 2001). Has this new diplomacy maintained its momentum?

Advocates and critics of human security alike now seem to suggest that it has not. The difference between their assessments is that the latter see the glass nearly empty, whereas the former tend to see the glass half-full and continue to pursue the shared vision for building a more humane world. This special issue of the *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* focuses on the optimistic outlook. In May 2013, representatives from most of the thirteen countries that signed the Declaration gathered again at Lysøen to mark the 15th anniversary of the Human Security Network. This time, a number of internationally renowned scholars took part. Taking stock of the progress on the original agenda of the Network, the conference observed the prominence of human security on the agenda of the UN Security Council and in international discourse since the Lysøen Declaration. If one looks back on the series of developments over nearly 15 years—including the Rome Treaty creating the International Criminal Court; ground-breaking Security Council thematic resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict, and on Women, Peace and Security; and major breakthroughs on the protection of

civilians, including the unanimous adoption in 2005 by UN member states of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P)—it is clear that the Human Security Network has been active in trying to build international institutions and practices that promote a rules-based system of global cooperation and the protection of people.

In spite of lingering skepticism and doubt, real progress has been made in the push towards building a more humane world. Axworthy and Vollebæk have now concluded that the old model of separating state security from human security cannot sufficiently respond to the current generation of challenges around the globe. More needs to be done before humanity can be better secured. This global vision represents a steppingstone in the further development of what the legal scholar Ruti G. Teitel calls "humanity's law"; that is, a humanity-based framework for determining how to address conflict and the protection of civilians on an international level (Teitel 2011). Both human security and its underlying norm embedded in the idea of R2P are representative of a shifting paradigm in the study of international relations and institutions: They mark a clear shift of emphasis from the state-centric concept of national/international security to the *people-centered* concept of security.

The 15th anniversary was more than just about reliving the Human Security Network's efforts and successes. Time was taken to recognize the areas where the Network has fallen short, including the unfulfilled ambition to regulate the circulation of small arms and light weapons. Some of the scholars present at the conference worried about the elasticity of the concept of human security and whether by trying to include too much it might, in the long run, achieve too little. There was, however, a strong consensus that the time has come to revitalize the *human security agenda*, to examine its makeup, and to ensure that Network members qualify through ongoing commitment, and not just participation. Therefore, it is now necessary to invest fresh energy and dedication, and to define goals for the human security agenda that reflect contemporary policy priorities and concerns. A number of possible topics were discussed, with the use of drones in targeted, extrajudicial killings leading the list.

Both Lloyd Axworthy and Knut Vollebæk believe that the 15th anniversary conference could play a role in revitalizing the Human Security Network. They recognize that the Network has been an important innovation for addressing issues not effectively pursued by other existing means and, as such, can still offer much to the world.

The most critical question remains: To what extent has the human security agenda been successfully implemented and what else can be done to ensure more effective implementation—translating words into more effective actions and more desirable outcomes? One of the challenges facing advocates of the agenda is that, though they agree on human beings as the referent object of security, they disagree on how to provide, or who should provide, for their security. While some governments champion the idea of protecting individuals against sources

of direct physical threat, others (in particular, Japan under recent governments) tend to follow more in the footsteps of the UNDP by seeking to empower individuals through human development. While these two approaches differ on how to promote human security, nevertheless they have a lot in common. In other words, they complement each other in various ways. Human development cannot be achieved without the presence of security (the absence of threats in the form of direct physical violence), but this type of security may not be sustainable or complete unless development in the form of freedom from want can also be sustained.

The achievements and shortcomings of each approach need to be critically assessed and a search for more creative ways to promote the human security agenda should be pursued. The articles included in this special issue seek to answer the above question, while allowing room for constructive disagreement. It begins with the article by Neil MacFarlane who provides some interesting historical background about the United Nations' significant role in pushing the human security agenda. He is careful, however, to point out that the UN and its agencies are only one set of actors and "is probably not the most significant actor in this process." Other sets of actors include individual leaders, international civil society, and like-minded governments. Resistance from member states of the United Nations has circumscribed the organization's agenda. "The Syrian case," for instance, "suggests clearly that international society has not fully established the fundamental principles of human security."

In his article, David Black discusses the role of the "various forms of civil society organizations (CSOs)—whether activist, tamed, or postmodern," and argues that these non-state actors have played a significant role in terms of "both pressure and engagement." Indeed, without the active involvement of CSO coalitions, "the advances that *have been* made in human security practice would not have been possible, while the prospect of more far-reaching or transformative change would be even *more* elusive than it often seems in the current context." Nevertheless, the number and pace of breakthroughs evident in the early days of human security have "stalled, or at least significantly slowed." Black explains why this has been the case, and offers a useful prescription for possible action to reenergize the work of international civil society and other actors, including international organizations and governments, in relation to the human security agenda.

The article by Astri Suhrke focuses more on the role of states—especially Canada, Norway and the United States—in advancing human security. While she presents a perspective supportive of human security, she recognizes ongoing challenges. In her view, the normative concept was once powerful but has now "lost much of its punch." She argues for taking up specific, urgent issues such as the need to protect civilians from drone attacks outside recognized war zones, and to develop international law regulating the use of drones. "This strategy

would not only help to keep the concept alive, but also create greater security for people living in exposed communities."

Surin Pitsuwan and Mely Caballero-Anthony present a development-based perspective, with Southeast Asia as their focus of analysis. In their assessment, the normative framework remains compelling, but "progress on moving it beyond discourse to action has been less than impressive." The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) still has a long way to go. Violent conflicts still exist. More can be said about community security, as many social and ethnic communities remain displaced by armed conflicts. The search for economic security remains elusive. Migrant workers remain vulnerable. Natural disasters, such as earthquakes and cyclones, remain sources of threat to people.

Together these papers strike a note of cautious optimism about the human security agenda. They acknowledge ongoing challenges to this global vision for a more humane world, but still seek to make the case for the protection and empowerment of individual human beings. Evidence shows that progress has been made, but more concrete action is needed for human security to become more than just a normative concept. The conflict in Syria remains a hard case for the responsibility to protect civilians, and Southeast Asia represents another case showing how difficult it has been to ensure human development.

Acknowledgement

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