

BY: Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS

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Chair's Opening Remarks and Introduction of the Panel

What do we mean by the term “human security”?

Human security means protecting vital freedoms. But it not only means shielding people from critical and pervasive threats and situations. It also means creating systems that give people the building blocks of survival, dignity and livelihood—constructed on the foundation of their inherent strengths and aspirations.

Human security connects different types of freedom: freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to take action on one's own behalf. To do this, human security comprises two general strategies: protection and empowerment.

Protection shields people from dangers. It requires concerted effort to develop norms, processes and institutions that systematically address insecurities. Empowerment enables people to develop their potential and become full participants in decision-making. Protection and empowerment are mutually reinforcing, and both are required in most situations.

This definition of human security points to a shift from a state-centered to a people-centered approach to security—where concern with the security of state borders gives way to that of the people who live within those borders. This people-centered approach puts more emphasis on empowering people for being agents of change and authors of their own security; it challenges them to identify and implement solutions to their security problems.

Why is this topic so important?

In today's interconnected and interdependent world, countries recognize that domestic action alone can no longer assure the security of their people and economies. Indeed, as the flow of people, goods and services, capital, information and ideas across national boundaries intensifies, bringing with it many advantages, insecurity grows.

We have seen this most dramatically over the past two-and-a-half of years following the housing bubble burst that signaled a global financial crisis. The devastation spread among the banks, and now we see contagion in relation to sovereign debt.

These economic crises beget a profound economic insecurity in every recess of the globe. The effects do not simply ripple out into the economy and society—they cascade in tsunami-like fashion, visibly and violently at times, from the Molotov-cocktail-throwing youth in Greece to the Red Shirts in Thailand. And although Africa may have weaker economic links to the rest of the world, African economies and African societies have not been immune to these

effects. Here in Cameroon, as elsewhere on the Continent, we have witnessed violent food riots.

More quietly and insidiously, the economic storm swells the ranks of the food insecure, the jobless, the landless, the urban poor, the homeless, the unschooled, the victims of crime and political violence and the sick.

The tsunami unleashes its destruction through a downward and vicious circle of human insecurity—with implications for individuals, communities, countries and the international system.

Why is this topic so timely?

For decades it has been clear that globalization demands concerted and collective responses to manage increasing interdependence. Today we are at a tipping point. The financial crisis presents the most immediate reason to address human security in both a more collective manner and a more developmental manner.

And there are longer-term problems that must also be addressed to improve security and development. One of the most pressing is climate change. Last year we witnessed the failure of global institutions to keep up with this specific challenge. But we face many more.

We are here today to share ideas on how to better manage the collective commons by improving our concerted responses to security.

What are the links between human security, development and health?

I am here among experts—experts who can explain far better than I the links between these economic crises, development and insecurity. Let me just make three points to help frame our discussions.

First, security and insecurity impact on people's well being. People experience security and insecurity in a multitude of forms—it is core to human well-being. According to Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen (1999), "Human security is concerned with reducing and, when possible, removing the insecurities that plague human lives." Hence, security must form the bedrock of our developmental goals—the underpinning of the more familiar MDGs.

Second, the costs of insecurity are high. It is callous but true to note that those affected by insecurity—by ill health, death, migration—do not contribute what they might to the economy. Moreover, closed roads and empty schools affect the productivity of an economy. The costs of conflict are most obvious on growth, exports, consumption, government investment in the social sectors and the destruction of physical infrastructure. Numerous empirical studies back this up. But it is the human costs that matter. People lose entitlements and capabilities—with implications for the health of children, mothers and others, and for the social and economic fabric that is easily unraveled.

Third, development is closely linked to security. Although many explanations for conflict exist, I agree with my former UNICEF colleague Francis Taylor that it is fueled by inequality and lack of political voice, while "inclusive patterns of development are an important element in avoiding conflict."

What I am saying is that while the security-development nexus reveals a graphic, vicious downward cycle, we can and must deliver the reverse. Our challenge today is to identify what we can do to promote the kind of development that will produce the virtuous circle of inclusive development and human security.

Now let me introduce this illustrious panel. I note with concern that too few are women—and surely it is women who will help to develop new development and security paradigms.

Intervention on HIV and Security

Today I would like to share with you how AIDS is directly linked to human security, national security and international security.

First, we have seen in brutal and tragic ways that AIDS can have a profound negative impact on human security and demographic stability. Since the beginning of the epidemic, AIDS has caused:

- 29 million deaths (end 2009)—almost double the entire population of Cameroon
- 15 million AIDS orphans (end 2009). This is equal to all the children under 18 living in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Central African Republic and Congo.
- 60,000 pregnant women dying every year from AIDS, showing that HIV is a major factor in the rising rates of maternal mortality, especially in East and Southern Africa

These are not just statistics. These are human lives. Each person affected by HIV is an individual with his or her own story, and each of these people convey the profound negative socio-demographic impacts AIDS has had on individuals, communities and societies.

Second, we now know the devastating macro-economic effects of AIDS—the massive cost that AIDS imposes on national economic productivity, and public expenditures.

The effect of HIV is to reduce the working population. With AIDS claiming the lives of the most productive members of the economy, countries have to be supported by a smaller active labour force. For more than 10 million people living with HIV who still have no access to treatment, when they fall ill, they are not only unable to work, but they require costly medical care. In many cases, people living with HIV have to leave their home country, looking for work and access to treatment in other countries, taking their skills and their income with them.

Let us consider the funding that is put into AIDS. In 2008, \$15.6 billion was spent on the global response to AIDS in low- and middle-income countries. And even this was far short of the \$27 billion that we need to reach universal access. This is a massive investment that will just grow in coming years until the cost of prevention, treatment, care and support are met.

For national governments, donor agencies and the millions of people living with HIV, this burden is massive, growing, and must be borne for years, even decades to come. The economic burden of HIV represents a serious threat to the security and stability of national societies and economies in the global 21st century.

Third, I want to mention the experience of AIDS and international security. AIDS is one of the first examples in the modern era of how a transnational threat to human health has prompted a concerted response to global governance. There are three main arguments linking HIV/AIDS and national security.

The first describes the impact of HIV on individuals critical to the maintenance of state and international security: soldiers and peacekeepers. AIDS is now the leading cause of death in military and police forces in some African countries, accounting for more than half of in-service mortality. The loss of highly trained, professional soldiers to AIDS will have a major impact on affected armed forces. For the United Nations, the high rates of HIV among South African and Nigerian militaries are a chief concern because these countries are major contributors of UN peacekeeping troops.

The second argument suggests that the epidemic in some sub-Saharan African nations may cause state instability and failure. The most pessimistic forecasts suggest that this could cause a collapse of economies and societies in hyper-endemic countries. I want to be clear that we have very little evidence that AIDS in itself has directly led or will lead to state failure,

even in hyper-endemic countries. Rather, the impact of the epidemic on state stability is indirect, becoming visible when HIV is combined with and exacerbates other factors that threaten families as the basic social units and livelihoods.

What is clear is that the economic and social costs of HIV are colossal. The epidemic, if unchecked, could undermine the health and development gains of many countries, not simply in terms of national economic growth rates, but also in terms of the broader social indicators that more accurately reflect improvements in the standard of living. No sectors of the economy are immune to the impacts of the epidemic, and all social strata will be affected.

The third argument focuses on the security effects of the epidemic on large, strategically important states such as Nigeria, South Africa, and even Russia, India and China. In all of these and other strategically important countries, HIV prevalence is a serious concern.

This year the world marks the 10th of the United Nations Security Council's adoption of its first-ever resolution on a public health issue. The Security Council Resolution 1308 recognized that the "spread of HIV/AIDS can have a uniquely devastating impact on all sectors and levels of society."

Resolution 1308 was also a milestone on the road to a coordinated international response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, given its possible growing impact on social instability and human security. But by the time this resolution was adopted in June 2000, more people had died of AIDS than in had died in all the civil wars fought in the 1990s.

So against this grim background, what has the AIDS response achieved?

AIDS has shown us that global threats require a global response. In 2001, countries signed the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment. This year, 178 countries have submitted progress reports detailing their national progress in response to HIV—one of the highest response rates in the history of UN reporting.

AIDS today is not only about statistics and numbers. It is about forging powerful and diverse partnerships. The global AIDS response is an impressive coalition of international organizations, national governments, civil society and people living with HIV.

The global movement for universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support was not only endorsed by the G8 in Gleneagles, it has also given hope to millions of people in dozens of countries affected by HIV that they can push for access to life-saving services. AIDS is proof that we can respond to people's strengths and aspirations—that AIDS can build the architecture for human security.

The road ahead

Today, some people want to talk about how AIDS is out of fashion. How we need to move on to other global issues such as climate change, terrorism and financial security. But let us not forget that AIDS remains the leading cause of adult mortality in Africa today, and the sixth leading cause of death in the world. If we do not stop the impact of this epidemic on human health and security, the people of Africa will be unable to adequately address any other development issue.

Even with \$16 billion dollars for AIDS per year, we do not have enough resources to stop this epidemic or extend treatment to all of those that need it.

- We need to take AIDS out of isolation.
- We need to build alliances between AIDS and other movements for health and development.

- We need to use our progress in AIDS to accelerate progress towards other Millennium Development Goals.
- We need to ensure that the link between public health and human security is used as a powerful tool in the global AIDS response.
- Leaders at the international, national and community levels must harness their political clout and resources to push for an end to AIDS and ensure of human security for all.

We will not resolve these challenges overnight. In response to AIDS, there is still a long road ahead.

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Contact: Sophie Barton-Knott | tel. +41 22 791 1697 | bartonknotts@unaids.org

Leveraging the AIDS response, UNAIDS works to build political action and to promote the rights all of people for better results for global health and development. Globally, it sets policy and is the source of HIV-related data. In countries, UNAIDS brings together the resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and 10 UN system organizations for coordinated and accountable efforts to unite the world against AIDS.
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