Parliamentarians for Global Action
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It is indeed a great honor and privilege to address the annual forum of Parliamentarians for Global Action, representing legislators dedicated to address impending issues of international concern. The scope of the network of parliamentarians is indeed impressive. It is my understanding that 1300 representatives from 113 countries have been mobilized to examine global issues that range from peace and democracy, international law and human rights, population and development, peace keeping and peace building among others. I am particularly pleased to be given the opportunity to share with you my perspective on "human security," a concept that is drawing increasing attention and relevance.

Our globalizing world and a "paradigm shift" in security thinking

Let me first address the importance of "human security" in our globalizing world. The globalization process has transformed relationships between and within states, bringing both positive and negative results to people's lives. Money, goods, information and people now move quickly across borders and within states. The increasing openness in trade, investment, and information flows has contributed to a remarkable rate of economic growth, all over the world. At the same time, this rising interdependence has also made all regions and peoples vulnerable to adverse developments elsewhere.

In spite of such fluid situation, until recent years governments have focused their security thinking centered on the state --- protecting their boundaries, people, institutions and values--- from external encroachment or aggression. But since 9/11, we have become aware that even the strongest states cannot fully meet the multiple security related needs of the people living within their borders. In the highly interdependent world of today, all states depend to a large extent on the acts and omissions of others for their security, and even survival of their people. In many situations of internal conflict, states themselves threaten their own people through repressive and punitive measures.

The realities of the changing world have called for the updating if not the revamping of the traditional concept of state security. States must now deal with threats that derive from poverty and environmental degradation; infectious diseases notably SARS and HIV/AIDS; transnational crimes and terrorism. What is now needed is a "paradigm shift" from the state-centered security thinking to one that focuses more directly on the security of people and community.

Human Security Concept in an Era of Globalization

The focus on human security began more than a decade ago. In the l990's while serving as the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees, I first came to realize that a new approach which focused on the security of people was necessary to help millions of those who were forcefully displaced and endangered. New forms of conflict and social crises were emerging following the end of the Cold War. The nature of war was shifting from inter-state to intra-state conflicts. As a result, those of us in the refugee protecting community, had to grapple with the challenges of providing protection and assistance to refugees, internally displaced and other affected persons.

The l997 financial crisis had a disastrous effect globally. Particularly in Asia, it hit the weakest strata of society, in spite of the rapid economic growth that had been noted in many countries in the region. Confronted with the critical regional situation, the then Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan drew world attention to the security threats facing the people. In a speech he gave in Hanoi in December l998, he referred to the need to uphold "human security," stating that all governments in Asia must collectively engage in seeking innovative approaches to defend people's existence against a wide range of internal and external threats.

The UN Millennium Summit of 2000 took up the issue to advance it one step further. Secretary General Kofi Annan declared that people should be assured of "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear", and stressed the need to address the twin challenges of development and security in the new millennium. Japan responded to the Secretary-General by launching two major initiatives: the establishment of an independent Commission on Human Security and a UN Trust Fund to support programs underpinning human security.

The commission was charged not only to provide the definition of "human security," but also to pave the way for translating the concept into concrete policy programs. I had the pleasure of co-chairing the Commission on Human Security together with Professor Amartya Sen, Nobel laureate in economics and professor at Harvard University. Two years later in May 200   Professor Sen and I presented to Secretary-General Annan the report titled "Human Security Now." I am pleased that the report contributed to bring about a sea change in security thinking. Further exploration continues up to the present, as new security thinking is required to meet the ever explosive security threats of today.

The conceptual significance of human security: protection and empowerment

Let me now turn to the central theme of the commission's report and introduce to you a few salient points.   After two years of concerted efforts by dedicated members, the commission developed a conceptual framework that incorporated two approaches: bottom-up and top-down. The "bottom-up" approach concentrates on empowering people. It is to enhance people's ability to act on their own behalf through various development measures such as education, access to information, assurance of health care and provision of social safety nets.   People's empowerment can be best attained in a community context. It works even better where a public space is provided that allows active discussion among the people.   Local leadership on the one hand, and fair and open opposition on the other, can jointly move to reach agreement on the common good.   In short, the commission believed that community development can be best advanced in an environment of freedom of information, conscience, belief and press.

The "top-down" approach emphasizes the importance of protecting people, their safety, basic rights and freedoms.   Through firm establishment of the rule of law and strong judicial institutions, the state must protect the people from violence, arbitrary detention as well as prevent ethnic, gender and other forms of discrimination. Accountable and efficient administrative capacity should be nurtured to better serve the people.

The "bottom-up" formula leads to the empowerment of people to better govern themselves.   The "top-down" formula advances and assures the security of people.   It is important to emphasize that "human security" is not intended to replace "state security." Certainly, empowered people would provide the basic components for good governance. But what is really new is that people are regarded not only as the beneficiary of "state security," but also the major constituent of security assurance.

Applying "human security" to development assistance, peace and post-conflict peace building.

In promoting the "human security" approach, the commission never foresaw a piecemeal implementation of specific projects to achieve the security objective. In other words, it never thought, for example, that a health, education, water or sanitation project could in itself bring "human security." While giving due recognition to individual action points, what the commission had in mind was to interlink these projects in the overall

context of community development. Furthermore, its aim was to bring together the "bottom-up" socio-economic development programs with the strengthened "top-down" protection inputs by the state. In short, it was through the enhanced overall good governance framework that "human security" was to achieve its objective.

The commission's approach was basically developmental and preventive. It opened ways for the international community to cope with serious and sudden downturns with a more concentrated attention on the fate of the people affected and victimized. For economic downturns of the kind that traumatized the people of Asia, international financial institutions had been in possession of rescue mechanisms, even if not adequate. There were consultation procedures, however inadequate, through which to extend financial policy recommendations, and conditional lending. What became clear was the need to accelerate social safety measures to help cover the "human security" of affected population.

In situations of serious political downturns that threaten security within states, there are no ready made international security mechanisms that can trigger quick action. The existing security system gears towards stopping aggression between states and attempts to control or limit the use of force. However, when conflicts turn rampant within states, and when the state authorities possess neither the will nor the capacity to protect the people, others are left to work out ad hoc means to come to the rescue.

It took the contributions from the Canadian led International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty and the UN High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change, to broaden the "human security" framework to address actions related more directly to conflict management and, collective security and peace building. The issue of humanitarian intervention became hotly debated within the United Nations. The United Nations Charter in Article 2 stated that nothing in the Charter authorizes the UN to "intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state ", and many member states strongly held the non-intervention principle, as they suspected and condemned intervention without state consent.

Both Secretaries General Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan had observed that the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty was over. The genocide in Rwanda and the massacre in Srebrenica had exposed the inadequacies of the existing international system. From the end of 2003 for one full year, I participated in the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, commissioned by Kofi Annan to draw up a new security consensus for the twenty-first century. The panel clearly moved away from the UN

preoccupation with state security, and recognized the need to cope with the wide range of threats that undermine human security.

When peaceful prevention measures fail to stop the decent to violence and conflict, the panel endorsed "the emerging norm that there is a collective international responsibility to protect, exercisable by the Security Council authorizing military intervention as a last resort." The panel's main focus was to cope with the realities of threats that undermine the human security of people and states, but also to uphold the legitimacy of the international collective security system.

In the last few years, both analysts and practitioners have come to better understand the causes and consequences of violent conflicts. International interventions are under way that range from UN taking over the temporary administration of a country, international and regional civilian and military missions dedicated to monitoring different aspects of conflict resolution and institution building, peace-building efforts combining security, humanitarian and development assistance, to cite a few examples. In these efforts at conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict stabilization, "human security," has increasingly come to serve as the all encompassing concept.

Of all efforts at building peace in states and societies coming out of conflict, I wish to refer to the question of justice and reconciliation as a crucial entry point to reconstruction. I have referred to the "top-down and bottom-up" framework for ensuring "human security." Especially for situations that face the critical need to recover from mass violence among groups of people--- whether religious, ethnic, tribal or social ---there is the special challenge to find ways to enable them to live together again.
Establishing the rule of law is indeed is the all important framework, but in such circumstances, the rule of law must stand not only to serve justice, but also to inculcate reconciliation and trust among all the groups.

While I served as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the l990's,UNHCR had to help people return to communities which had remained unhealed after mass violence and unprepared to receive back neighbors, be they victims or perpetrators of violence. Whether in the Balkans or in the Great Lakes region of Africa, our mission was to find ways to encourage contact and collaboration in order to restore the trust among the conflicting groups, so that the returning people could be safely reintegrated, and communities would gradually turn stable.

Meanwhile, the international community tended to seek solutions to peace and

stability, primarily through strengthening the institutions of justice and human rights. The United Nations set up the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia, followed by another, the Tribunal for Rwanda. The establishment of the International Criminal Court was a milestone event in the formalization of international institution building. Human Rights groups continued to actively promote the refinement of the human rights mechanisms. I welcomed all these developments. The formalization of legal institutions and instruments while significant, however, remained inadequate to guide the initial phases of reintegration of a large number of people returning and resettling in divided communities.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in its more judicial function, attempted to collect factual evidence somewhat similar to the process of criminal prosecution. It also entertained, however, a serious reconciliation mission. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu said at the time, "the purpose of finding out the truth is not in order for people to be prosecuted. It is so that we can use the truth as part of the process of healing our nation.

After much experimenting and soul searching, UNHCR which had advocated amnesty and reconciliation, moved on to experiment and adopt a novel approach which we termed "coexistence." "Coexistence" formula incorporates devises to introduce small-scale, non-judicial and community based activities that can help bring people to live and act together and eventually recognize common interests. In Bosnia-Herzegovina or in Rwanda, millions of refugees and displaced persons returned home, partly because they wanted to, but also because they had to. Upon return they faced many problems from general animosity to security threats, housing shortage and property restitution difficulties. The ethnic or tribal divide that had caused the conflict, continued to affect the return. In Bosnia, many refugees and displaced people only returned to areas where they would be part of the majority ethnic group.

In Rwanda some two million people returned in l996, forming about a quarter of the population. Reconstruction needs were daunting. UNHCR had to embark on an extraordinarily large shelter program, giving priority to families headed by women, children and war victims. Some 130,000 perpetrators of genocide were imprisoned. "Justice" was the dominant social and political call, reflecting the deep wounds of genocide. It was in l998, that I noted that people were beginning to refer to "reconciliation." The government set up two commissions: the Commission on Human Rights, and the Commission on National Unity and Reconciliation. It also reintroduced the traditional village justice system of "gacaca" in which judicial hearings were held in

village opens with elected judges listening to individual cases. The sentences ranged from hand over to formal criminal procedures to atonement through social services. I witnessed the "gacaca" court function when I visited Rwanda in July, and felt that the healing process was now beginning to move.

You will now ask me what difference would the International Criminal Court bring? We all expect a great deal from ICC as the culmination of individual ad hoc courts that had been established to respond to the need for justice in the Balkans and in Rwanda. I am pleased to be informed that serious efforts are underway for Japan to become party to the Rome Statute of ICC in 2007. There is no doubt that those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity must be held responsible and stand trial. ICC clearly points to the future in which justice is assured and rule of law predominates.

The current controversy involving Joseph Kony, the Uganda rebel leader charged by ICC is a case in point. Should the arrest warrant move ahead, or should peace negotiations between Kony and the Uganda government and/or other international mediators be carried out? Should justice prevail over peace negotiations or possibilities for reconciliation? The answer will be most likely on a case by case basis. I would certainly add that while justice should be a strong basis for containing violence and settling conflicts, the need for reconciliation will always prevail at the popular level as the last long term determinant for stabilization. It takes time for people and communities to learn to live together in trust and mutual respect.

The last appeal I wish to make to the distinguished Parliamentarians for Global Action is to remain involved in building long term solutions, while coming in for decisive action at crucial points, not only near your respective home front but also for the global common good.

Thank you very much.