2020 UNDP Human Development Report
BACKGROUND PAPER NO. 4-2020

UNDP

Protecting Our Human World Order: A Human Security Compass for a New Sustainability Decade

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Acknowledgements
Many persons contributed to the conception and development of this paper. At a very early stage in late 2019, a conversation with Mely Caballero-Anthony was very useful in identifying some major topics. Comments to a first draft by Des Gasper and an anonymous reviewer pushed us to reconsider some ideas. The paper was presented at the annual meeting of Japan Association for Human Security Studies, where Yukiko Nishikawa and Sachiko Ishikawa offered precious comments. A closed meeting in late November 2020 during which Jennifer Leaning, Yoichi Mine and Des Gasper commented on the final draft was of great help in finalizing the manuscript. Many thanks to all of them and others at JICA and the Human Development Report Office who supported the process. The usual disclaimers apply.

ABSTRACT

This paper locates human security ideas vis-à-vis the concept of sustainability in the context of the new international cooperation challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. The main aim is to show how a robust understanding of human security is necessary for rethinking sustainability beyond a narrow focus on environmental problems. The paper provides first a historical review of the overlaps and complementarities between the two concepts as described through the series of *Human Development Reports.* The review shows how both ideas were initially downplayed and constrained to narrow understandings for over a decade. Sustainability eventually proved broadly appealing to the scientific community and the Global South, as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) show. Still, it failed to include any serious concern for shocks, downside risks and crisis management. The human security approach emphasizes protection and resilience, offering a better frame to cover the whole crisis management cycle of response, recovery, prevention and preparedness. It promotes the consolidation of responsive and capable systems to cope with risks and vulnerabilities, both objective and subjective, by the whole of society. It also advocates protecting human dignity in crises and upholding global agreement on the importance of human life and dignity beyond borders, a notion menaced by increasing protectionism and nationalism worldwide. After the general discussion, we review specific shocks or downside risks compromising prospects for future generations, namely infectious diseases, disasters, climate change, conflict, displacement and technological change. The last section calls for promoting the engagement of the scientific community and actors in the Global South around human security ideas to move forward their operationalization.

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic wreaking havoc across the world has once more demonstrated the need for a broader notion of human security. In a matter of weeks, the virus reached all corners of the world, reminding us of the vulnerabilities inherent in the countless exchanges sustaining humanity's overall prosperity. Disrupted flows of people, goods and funds exposed the extent of global interdependence, while the scramble for emergency supplies severely tested national and international solidarity. Personal liberties have had to be sacrificed for the greater good, while national protection efforts are seen with suspicion because of their long-term effects. Countries have become busy dealing with their own crises, sometime sidetracking advice from intergovernmental organizations, when not scapegoating them. Inequalities inside and between countries have resulted in some populations being disproportionally affected, while governments with fewer capacities or resources struggle to confront the emergency. Overall, the crisis promises to be a critical juncture, a situation "of uncertainty in which decisions of important actors are causally decisive for the selection of one path of institutional development over other possible paths" (Capoccia 2016, p. 89). Or, as Yuval Noah Harari (2020) eloquently puts it:

> The decisions people and governments take in the next few weeks will probably shape the world for years to come. They will shape not just our healthcare systems but also our economy, politics and culture... When choosing between alternatives, we should ask ourselves not only how to overcome the immediate threat, but also what kind of world we will inhabit once the storm passes. Yes, the storm will pass, humankind will survive, most of us will still be alive — but we will inhabit a different world.

As we reconsider our notions of security, the emergency asks us to re-evaluate priorities for protection, and how we think about prevention and resilience during times of peace. Editorialists from around the world have been exhorting a different understanding of security based on this experience. Mikhail Gorbachev, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and the only President of the Soviet Union, argued for human security in opposition to the militarization of world affairs (Gorbachev 2020). Wide gaps between government investment in defense and health now stir outrage in both wealthier and poorer countries (Kulkarni 2020). Traditional security institutions seem outdated for the challenges of today. The silence of the UN Security Council during the emergency—in stark contrast with the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa—suggests a deep rethinking of the institution is necessary (Desbiens 2020).

The call is not limited to better responses to pandemics. In Australia, for instance, the outbreak follows catastrophic bushfires in 2019 with compounding effects on the population (Behm 2020). Areas affected by conflict and instability are also particularly vulnerable, such as South Sudan, Syria and Yemen, as are refugees and migrants in Bangladesh, Colombia and Turkey. In his special address marking three years in office, Republic of Korea President Moon Jae-in asserted: "The concept of security today has expanded from conventional

military security to human security that deals with all factors threatening safety such as disasters, diseases and environmental issues."[1] Further, the call is not limited to the health sector, as the widespread consequences of the virus require economic, social and political considerations (Fukushima 2020). A need for broader global cooperation thus follows from the promotion of human security ideas (Kell 2020), suggesting opportunities for global and regional organizations such as the African Union (Kasambata 2020) or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (The Initiatives for International Dialogue 2020). The emergency is a reminder of our common human condition (Granoff and Kellman 2020), and thus requires wisdom and compassion, along with scientific efforts (Kalin 2020). The general call is for considering a broader range of threats and the different types of institutions required to deal with them. A human security approach should promote prevention and include empowerment, as protection depends on the joint efforts of all members of society.

With the 2020 *Human Development Report* reviewing sustainability beyond its narrow environmental understanding, the present paper argues that human security must be central during and after the COVID-19 crisis. As the human security approach suggests, and COVID-19 experiences vividly demonstrate, crises are frequent and normal occurrences, not exceptional unlucky happenstances, so lacking a security pillar weakens sustainability and sustainable development propositions. On the one hand, the devastating effects of the pandemic will necessarily result in extensive loss of development gains, compromising all types of plans, including those under the SDGs. It will take some time before the magnitude of the harm can be evaluated so the goals can be reconsidered. On the other hand, shocks only played a very peripheral part in the design of the SDGs, so the sustainability agenda has not been particularly useful in the midst of the crisis. Indeed, there is a risk that sustainability will be side-lined if goals are not integrated into recovery efforts in a way that is not seen as an onerous burden on present generations—as sustainability was perceived in the eighties and nineties. Rethinking sustainability must encompass protection and resilience against downside risks and attention to human dignity throughout the full crisis management cycle in order to minimize and prevent further losses, as human security propositions emphasize. Human security and the SDGs are both necessary guiding principles to overcome the crisis.[2] Thus, momentum for transforming the security paradigm should go hand in hand with the reassessment of sustainability to increase the odds that lessons are learned and we bounce back better—and forward—as one humanity.

This paper provides first a historical perspective of the overlaps and complementarities of human security and sustainability ideas in the context of human development. A general discussion is followed by reviews of specific shocks or downside risks that could further compromise plans for future generations down the road, including the ongoing pandemic. The last section offers some conclusions and suggestions.

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[1] The speech is available at: http://www.korea.net/Government/Briefing-Room/Presidential-Speeches/view?articleId=185412.
[2] See, for instance, ex-Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe's conversation with UN Secretary-General António Guterres. Available at: https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/unp_a/page4e_001064.html.

Human security and sustainability in historical perspective

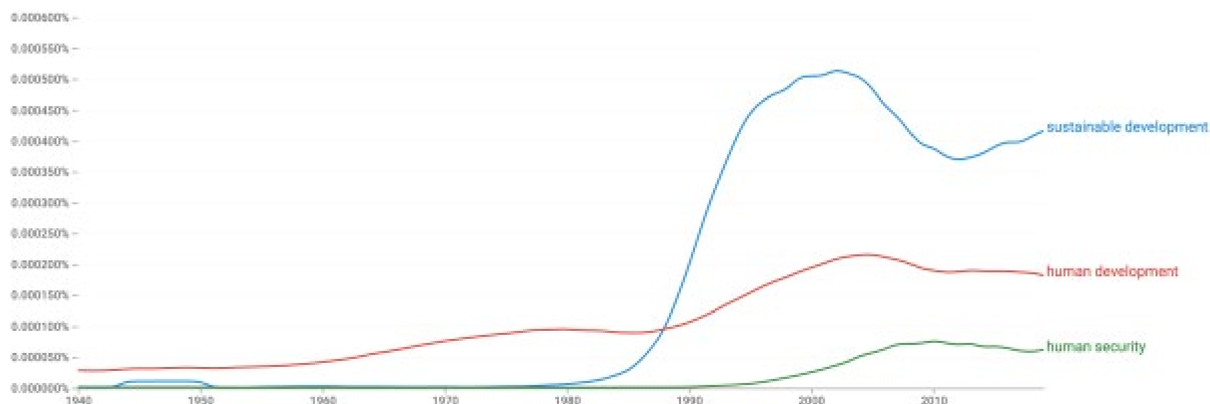
The 1994 *Human Development Report* was of particular importance for the work of the Human Development Report Office, UNDP and the evolution of human development ideas. The World Summit for Social Development was scheduled for March 1995, part of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. It promised an opportunity "to review the achievements of the first 50 years and to define the goals for the coming decades" (UNDP 1994, p. 1). The world was transitioning out of the Cold War, offering wider room for bold, transformative thinking further promoting liberal ideals around the protection of individuals and their dignity, as well as extending prosperity to those in the direst need. The report was thus an opportunity to influence the discussions, set the agenda and devise policy alternatives for the advancement of the human development vision of expanding opportunities.

Two major concepts were discussed in the main chapters of the report but only one was selected as the main umbrella for consideration at the Summit. The first chapter dealt with sustainability and the case for sustainable human development; the second chapter pushed forward a new notion of human security. While both concepts were given careful attention and elaborated in relation to human development ideas, human security was selected over sustainability as "the basis for a new world order" (Haq 1999, p. 117). Security was recognized as a fundamental pillar underling the creation of the United Nations and the international system, so a radical reinterpretation would allow an embrace of human development as the means for that security, through a new social charter, a new cooperation compact, a global fund and even an economic security council. Sustainability was also important, but carefully balanced with a focus on poverty and inequity.

A quarter of a century later, sustainability has become the overarching framework for agreement about development goals while the human security approach—although endorsed by the UN General Assembly (2012a) and by successive UN Secretary-Generals—remains, relatively speaking, a niche concept (Figure 1). The critical juncture after the end of the Cold War did allow some transformation of the idea of security, its priorities and institutions,[3] but global agreement on a wider agenda for global action coalesced elsewhere—around poverty reduction and the environment. The reasoning behind the selection of human security over sustainability, however, and the singular evolution of these two concepts vis-à-vis human development ideas resonate at the present critical juncture created by the pandemic, offering valuable insights about ways ahead.

[3] See Buzan and Hansen (2009) about the recognition of human security ideas as part of international security thinking, and Chinkin and Kaldor (2017) from the perspective of international law and war.

Figure 1. The frequency of references to sustainable development, human development and human security in books published in English



Source: Google Ngrams https://books.google.com/ngrams.

SUSTAINABILITY AS HUMAN SECURITY

Despite being presented in parallel, the idea of sustainability has been about security since the beginning. All the characteristics of the human security approach described in the 1994 *Human Development Report* were already covered by the 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, which put forward the canonical definition of sustainable development. These characteristics included the following.

Sustainability aspires to be **universal**, relevant for all societies around the world. It asks the international community to move 'from one earth to one world', highlighting the global character of problems and the required agreement. As in the human security proposition, it covers both rich and poor populations, encompassing a broad set of common challenges and endeavours, from population, food and ecosystems, to energy and peace.

The Commission emphasized the **interdependency** of the factors underlying sustainable development. It stated that: "[E]cology and economy are becoming ever more interwoven—locally, regionally, nationally, and globally—into a seamless net of causes and effects" (WCED 1987, p. 5). Crises were seen as interlocked, making it difficult to view them as separate, just as the human security proposition included a list of interrelated threats requiring comprehensive attention and a multisectoral approach. In human security analysis, this is usually stressed in relation to domino effects requiring a **comprehensive** or (multidimensional) understanding of people's situations.[4]

[4] See, for instance, Gasper and Gómez (2014) for a review of human security thinking and research between 1994 and 2013.

Sustainability in its more archetypical definition is all about **prevention**. Meeting “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987, p. 43) entails avoiding major threats to the survival of the world community. Prevention implies greater attention to evidence and science underlying the problems humanity faces. Human security thinking also strongly emphasizes **resilience**.

Sustainability is also **people-centred** as it aims to protect people’s lives.[5] The 1992 Rio Declaration made clear that all human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. The consequences of unsustainable behaviours are assessed in relation to losses of environmental services and how they impact human survival and livelihoods. On the other hand, the ‘human’ in human security also implies putting people’s concerns at the centre.

The perspectives of commission chairperson Gro Harlem Brundtland were seen as based on her experiences on the Brandt Commission for North-South issues and the Palme Commission on disarmament and security issues, both considered hallmarks in the evolution of global security thinking—and precursors of human security’s conception (MacFarlane and Khong 2006). The World Commission on Environment and Development report also stresses the importance of building local capacities and empowering other actors such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the scientific community and the private sector, as a broad conception of security requires. **Empowerment** also became a pillar of human security propositions, tacitly in 1994, but fully in the Commission on Human Security’s 2003 report.[6] While ‘human security’ is not literally used in the World Commission on Environment and Development report, the overlap is substantial.

There is, however, a twist in the people-centredness of sustainability that makes it stand out from other human concepts. Sustainable development gives more, or at least equal, importance to future generations than to present ones. This may seem a minor point but is indeed a source of major philosophical and practical debate because of the challenges of including the voices of unborn humans in today’s policy discussions. Parfit (1984) had already shown how problematic it was to include future generations into our calculations of well-being, resulting in repugnant and absurd conclusions that have been widely discussed in the population and development ethics literature. Scheffler (2018) notes how even today we have many more tools to be geographically cosmopolitan—that is, caring about humans alive now anywhere in the world—but find it hard to leave behind our temporal parochialism. In pushing us to care about humans of the future, sustainable development thinking’s original appeal for **protection** is aimed almost exclusively at the environment, as a

[5] In environmental ethics, the anthropocentrism of sustainability has been questioned in terms of its capacity to bring about the changes it promises—see, for instance, Lautensach (2009) linking the criticism to human security ideas. This view will not be explored in detail, mainly because it has not transcended into the practical application represented by the SDGs, but it is worth keeping in mind.
[6] UNDP (1994, p. 13) states that: “Universalism implies the empowerment of people.”

major way to provide the same opportunities in the future as those of the present. That is the case of the World Commission on Environment and Development report, in which protection from shocks and other threats does not receive attention, nor does building resilience in a wider sense. Instead, the focus is on the consequences of present patterns of production and consumption.[7]

This difference in attention to the present and future, and the scope of prevention and protection, underlies the strength of the human security concept in raising awareness around different kinds of shocks and downside risks, as we elaborate later. The concern for future generations was indeed a factor in 1994 for preferring human security instead of sustainability. The world was just embracing poverty reduction as the main international development agenda, after a lost decade of crisis in the eighties—except for East Asia. There was thus much to do about addressing the present generation before worrying about future ones. The report stressed that “sustainability makes little sense if it means sustaining life opportunities that are miserable and indigent: the goal cannot be to sustain human deprivation” (UNDP 1994, p. 13). Later, in 1996, the *Human Development Report* on economic growth included a contribution by the Nobel Prize winner Robert M. Solow criticizing sustainability’s attention to future inequality at the expense of present inequity (UNDP 1996).[8] This clarification of sustainability would be maintained for some years throughout the *Human Development Reports* as a way to reconcile environmental and social agendas, while human security faded away from the reports.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THINKING AND THE SUBORDINATION OF SUSTAINABILITY AND HUMAN SECURITY (1999–2012)

Both sustainability and human security emerged as comprehensive ideas, capable of accommodating different global concerns and multiple goals. Human security was not only about some specific threats or security means, and sustainability was not only about the environment. The following two decades, however, saw a marked tendency to bridle the expansive quality of these two ideas, accommodating them to other dominant paradigms and agendas. As Fukuda-Parr and Muchhala (2020, p. 5) describe sustainable development norms in the eighties, “they were segmented as relevant to the environmental field and were not understood to be firm guidelines for policy making on social and economic issues.” Similarly, human security norms were put in a box that enlarged but did not disrupt security thinking until much later (Paris 2001; Buzan and Hansen 2009; Chinkin and Kaldor 2017).

[7] The World Commission on Environment and Development report also considers protectionism as a problematic form of protection of interest given the present push against globalization, but this is outside the scope of the present paper.
[8] This trade-off between the present and the future was from the beginning a reason for uneasiness among developing countries about the emergence of environmental issues. Fukuda-Parr and Muchhala (2020) describe how the process towards the 1972 Stockholm UN Conference on the Human Environment was almost derailed because of the opposition of countries from the South, alarmed by the consequences of Western environmental concerns. Among many, Mahbub ul Haq played an important role in crafting a broader development strategy incorporating environmental sustainability, which saved the conference and became the basis for subsequent sustainable development propositions.

In the case of sustainability, the environmental ethos was central to its proposition and thus dominated its interpretation. The environment was the main mandate of the World Commission on Environment and Development, building on the burgeoning environmental movement and problems related to acid rain, pollution, the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect, as well as conservation. Sustainability became central to global environmental thinking particularly after the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio and its Agenda 21 agreement. The Millennium Declaration and ensuing Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) further reinforced the understanding that sustainability was mainly about the environment. The seventh MDG was to ensure environmental sustainability. *Human Development Reports* up to 2011 helped cement the environmental understanding of sustainability. Reports on topics like democracy or culture barely referred to it, while reports on environmental issues—such as water and climate change—used sustainability copiously.[9] In the latter reports, sustainability served again to encompass multiple causes of the water and climate crises, as well as the different measures required to confront them, so the wider reach of the concept was not totally lost.

The twentieth anniversary *Human Development Report* (UNDP 2010), aiming to review progress on human development thinking and update the definition, offered an opening to recover the broad understanding of sustainability, now in relation to vulnerability. It recognized the complexity of sustainability and vulnerability, particularly analysing different types of risks, uncertainties and trade-offs. The report stopped there, however, admitting that it could not 'do justice' to the concept, and only included explorations of economic insecurity and climate change.[10] The report did mention the connection between human security and sustainability ideas coming from the 1994 edition, and recommended a focus on sustainability for the next year, just in time for the Rio+20 meeting (UNDP 2010). The 2011 *Human Development Report* was once again confronted with the disjunctive of the 1994 report; nevertheless, the team in charge opted to frame sustainability vis-à-vis equity, in which sustainability was mostly reduced to environmental issues and future generations, while equity reflected present social and economic problems (UNDP 2011).

The aim of the sustainability proposition from the outset was to contest the existing model of development. As mentioned above, future generations were seen as endangered by the patterns of production and consumption underlying the economic model that emerged victorious from the Cold War. Necessary changes thus required confrontation, not only accommodation, and this tension was always present in this evolution. For instance, the 1997 *Human Development Report* denounced the fact that the comprehensive global agenda had been stolen by environmentalists and failed to include discussions on poverty (UNDP 1997, p. 114),

[9] An exception worth mentioning is debt sustainability, which appears several times through the decade, linked to debt relief efforts starting in the late 1990s. This is also a topic very much under discussion nowadays but is beyond the scope of this review.
[10] This suggests again an overlap with the human security approach, not only in relation to vulnerability, but also in terms of the need to address diverse threats.

although the next year's report suggested that: "Human development… can help to rescue 'sustainable development' from the misconception that it involves only the environmental dimension of development" (UNDP 1998, p. 14). The negotiation and adoption of the SDGs between 2012 and 2015, using sustainability as the overall frame instead of being reduced to one of many agenda goals, can be read as a final synthesis through which sustainability ideas catalysed transformation in development thinking, opening new space for development ideas in a changing world.

Contesting the narrowing of human security ideas has been a continuous effort although not as successful. The 1994 *Human Development Report* included a list of seven securities as a guide for widening security thinking. While the list helped in producing comprehensive reports about human security (Gómez, Gasper and Mine 2013), it did not contribute to moving away from silo-thinking about security (Gasper and Gómez 2014). Efforts such as the Commission on Human Security (2003) preferred to make their own contingent lists, while syntheses of academic research such as the Martin and Owen (2014) handbook overemphasize violent conflict situations. Even worse, the issue of which threats should be considered part of the human security approach to make the concept useful resulted in a sterile debate, enduring for most of the first decade of the twenty-first century.[11] Underlying this was the fact that the epistemic community closer to security—i.e., security studies and international relations—was structurally biased towards a specific set of threats and resisted change. In UN debates in the early 2000s, discussions about the human security notion revolved around humanitarian intervention and the responsibility to protect, both of which had a narrower focus on people's safety in conflict-affected or fragile areas. The World Bank, in its 2011 *World Development Report*, stressed the security of people in violence and conflict, and chose the Latin American emphasis on 'citizen security' over human security in order to focus on the narrower meaning of the physical safety of people (World Bank 2011; Gasper and Gómez 2014; Gómez 2015; Gasper and Gómez 2015). Nevertheless, many other streams of human security thinking and research have shown a broader appeal for covering downside risks in general and not just a restricted or fixed set. Some consider not only risks but vulnerabilities, and not only objective risks and vulnerabilities but also subjectively perceived ones.[12]

In development studies, UNDP promoted some alternatives to move the conversation forward, rescuing the comprehensive understanding of the concept and exploring different applications, mostly at the regional and national levels, but only sporadically at the global level.[13] Jolly and Basu Ray (2006) compiled and showcased good practices through the *Human Development Reports*, work continued and expanded by Gómez, Gasper and Mine (2013), resulting in some guidelines for human security reporting (Gómez and Gasper 2013). Efforts to operationalize the concept included the work of the UN Trust Fund for Human Security and the Human

[11] MacFarlane and Khong (2006) are perhaps most representative of this debate, contested later by Jolly, Emmerij and Weiss (2009) as well as Jolly and Basu Ray (2007). See also Gasper and Gómez (2015).
[12] Thanks go to Des Gasper for emphasizing this point.
[13] This is analysed in detail in Gómez, Gasper and Mine (2013, 2016).

Security Unit (Gómez 2012), which facilitated discussion and brokered agreement at the UN level, while producing guidelines for project formulation.[14] Research elaborating the connection between human security and global environmental change has put forward more comprehensive conceptual frameworks, such as in Leichenko and O'Brien (2008). This line of research managed to influence, for instance, the fifth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2014, offering a useful frame to explore different social, economic and political impacts of environmental effects. This is discussed in more detail later in this paper.

Key to recovering a broad perspective of security has been attention to downside risks and crises as well as the institutions that deal with them (Commission on Human Security 2003; Kaldor, Martin and Selchow 2007), as we explore in the following subsection. The work of Kaldor and colleagues has been particularly useful in coming up with new formulations of human security that expand or contract depending on the situations requiring our attention, moving the focus to the types of institutions required to address new and unresolved challenges.[15]

Nevertheless, the evolution of human security ideas through human development thinking hit a new obstacle. The human development concept itself appeared to have outlived its usefulness/novelty, competing with emerging slogans and receiving mainly lip service (Murphy and Browne 2013; Hirai, Comim and Jolly 2021). A key driver of this change has been the emergence of the South and a new global geography of poverty (Kanbur and Sumner 2012). As more and more countries joined the middle-income group and graduated from development assistance, development needed to move away from the top-down impositions that had characterized the MDGs and most agendas before that. It had to be applicable to all countries, rich and poor, in order to reflect a more horizontal relationship among global actors. Although a broader conception of human security was suggested for the 2014 *Human Development Report*, ideas of vulnerability and resilience were instead associated with human development, while human security was narrowly understood again as having to do with violence. The 2016 *Human Development Report* offered a new opening, stating that: "The notion of human security should emphasize a deep understanding of threats, risks and crises for joint action in the human development and human security approaches. The challenges are to balance the shock-driven response to global threats and the promotion of a culture of prevention" (UNDP 2016, p. 8).

Before moving ahead, it is worth drawing some lessons about how sustainability managed to escape from the subordination to development, while the human security approach failed to take off—as far as the *Human Development Reports* show. Sustainability has at least two advantages over human security. Namely, sustainability is a concept owned and carefully investigated by the scientific community (Kates et al. 2001),

[14] Further information is available at: https://www.un.org/humansecurity/. See also Sharpe et al. (2020) for human security projects and their evaluation.
[15] The work of Kaldor is linked to her support for the European Union's process of structuring its external relations, starting in 2003. See Solana (2014).

which has not stopped scrutinizing its theoretical and practical implications. The scientific attention to sustainability also acknowledged the importance of social science (Reid et al. 2010) and thus paved the way to recovering its broader significance while narrow environmental understanding persisted. Moreover, initial broad support to the sustainability agenda in the 1992 Rio meeting conferred an appeal not only among low- and middle-income states, but among all kinds of actors, including civil society and business. This broad buy-in has been essential for the transformative process underlying the adoption of the SDGs.[16] Sustainability thus allowed the idea of development to reinvent itself after its identity crisis. The present pandemic offers a similar window of opportunity for human security ideas.

HUMAN SECURITY IN OPPOSITION TO SUSTAINABILITY

In preparation for the Rio+20 meeting, the idea of human security was not considered in any central way. Given the important overlaps with sustainability so far reviewed, some see it present in spirit. Food security remained a major component of the agenda, and peace and justice were included as an independent goal, echoing traditional and non-traditional security concerns. Subsequently, protection and empowerment, major human security means, became central to the SDG formulation. Vulnerability and resilience, concepts at the heart of sustainability thinking (Folke 2006) and central to the present understanding of human security, are integral as well.[17] Nevertheless, human security ideas have still not gained equal currency among the wider public and remain seen with suspicion by some audiences, despite agreement at the United Nations about how human security is defined (UN General Assembly 2012a).

One outstanding characteristic that plays heavily against human security's broader consideration is that it assumes a bleak present and future as part of its appeal for joint action (Gómez 2014). Security evokes the fear of the threat as the justification for joint action, which is not a positive source of inspiration when imagining the future in peaceful times—as the SDGs do. While the possibility of crisis is usually recognized, it "is not matched by corresponding global precaution" (Gasper 2019a, p. 209). Sustainability contemplates the prospects of a bleak future, but mainly as a precautionary tale that reinforces the need for preventive action and precaution. Shocks, thus, are only mentioned once among the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[18]

Crises, nevertheless, happen, and human security thinking is not limited to the ideal goal of prevention, but embraces the whole crisis management cycle. That includes emergency response, recovery measures, prevention and preparedness for the next crisis. As is the case for human development, the human security approach emphasizes capacity development as well as the empowerment of people and communities, with

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[16] Gasper (2019b) provides a summary of the South's role in conceiving the SDGs.
[17] The 2014 *Human Development Report* also tried to draw these strengths from human security thinking, particularly the attention to downside risks and crises, linking vulnerability to human development as 'human vulnerability' (UNDP 2014).
[18] On the insufficient attention to crises through the SDGs, see also Gaper et al. (2020).

emphasis more on resilience, in other words, capacity development, to cope with various shocks and crises. While the prospects of a safe, bright future remain an aspirational goal, human security functions around threats and their repetition. This offers a partial alternative to the problem of future generations, as those generations are not considered as living in distant, uncertain conditions of plenty, but as part of our constant confrontation with old and new menaces. Progress in security is thus measured in relation to the expansion of protection and strengthened resilience, and to how much of the resources invested in an emergency (e.g., in fighting wars) can be moved to other parts of the cycle, particularly prevention and preparedness, while keeping in mind that all the phases are necessary.

Consequently, human security ideas appeal to other actors playing different roles in emergencies. They are particularly relevant for first responders and institutions aiming to deal with specific issues such as disasters, pandemics, forced displacement or armed conflict. Institutions in charge of crisis management at the national level usually are independent from line ministries, and are entrusted with articulating whole-of-society countermeasures and supporting resilient recovery efforts, while pushing prevention and preparedness in non-crisis times. As we have seen during the COVID-19 crisis, the entire arrangement of health institutions, not only emergency clinics and hospitals for intensive care, but all those involved in prevention in daily lives, sanitation and hygiene, and universal health coverage to help people in need, becomes an instrument to lessen the damage. As the consequences of crises expand beyond one sector, more actors need to coordinate and contribute to containment and recovery. Safety nets are also integral to the security strategy for systemic threats. Actors in charge of these aspects are very different from those gathered around the usual conversations about sustainable development. They are celebrated as heroes in the middle of the emergency but side-lined the rest of the time. Upholding human security as a constant goal aims to counter this tendency.

Kaldor and colleagues have argued for almost two decades about the implications of human security ideas in creating crisis response capabilities. Chinkin and Kaldor (2017, pp. 490-491) emphasize “the blurring of the difference between internal and external security” and how the security capabilities of states become more relevant to contribute to “global emergency services.” Regional and international institutions hence offer an opportunity for pooling global contributions in support of crisis response. International architectures for protection are still organized in supply-driven silos, however, out of touch with the national ownership of emergency responses. This has been specifically observed in how international cooperation is organized, where gaps between development, humanitarian and security actors have been identified particularly since the nineties (Hanatani, Gómez and Kawaguchi 2018b). Multiple efforts have been made to bridge these gaps. Development actors such as the members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) have strived to internalize the crisis management cycle in their work. There are notable efforts on addressing fragility, violence and even crisis in general, as shown in the adoption of DAC recommendations on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (OECD 2020).

Yet structural problems appear insurmountable. A key issue is that for people affected by crises, these differences make little sense. In the words of Chinkin and Kaldor (2017, p. 492), the implementation of human security ideas must be based in the local legitimate authority, explicitly recognizing "the limitations on what global emergency services can achieve."[19] Thus, dedicated regimes for pandemics, disasters, migration, refugees and climate change have been evolving at the margins of supply-driven structures with a different logic of work. These regimes also recognize that local efforts are often in the best position to lead the practice of security, so they concentrate on articulating contributions among peers. By putting people at the core, the human security concept calls for a more horizontal, demand-driven approach, encouraging the capacity-building of local communities, governments and the international cooperation system to deal with crises as well as enhanced partnership among these actors. Human security thinking endorses this movement towards demand-driven approaches that look after the whole cycle, which has been mentioned every now and them, but failed to gain momentum.[20]

Human security ideas appear in the 'present versus future' tension between sustainability and human development thinking, with an ethos of 'crises are opportunities' and a focus on protection preceding the goal of 'prevention as anticipation'. The full embrace of crisis management and the cyclical character of time in security thinking are major divergences from human development and sustainability, which presume that crises are only disruptions in our paths towards prosperity, represented as broken lines that in the end will again move upwards. Making the most of crises as opportunities for protection was already present in the 1994 *Human Development Report*, when special emphasis was made on the peace dividend. Transitioning out of the Cold War, it was expected that there will be some opportunities to redistribute resources, liberated by a new geopolitical reality. The peace dividend was rather small in practice (Aslam 2007), but the overall goal of making sure that transformations after crises advance sustainability remains a major goal to keep pursuing. This is an idea that comes to mind every time crises hit but remains outside the sustainability and human development core preoccupations.

AN ENABLING MILIEU FOR PROTECTING HUMAN DIGNITY

The human security approach's attention to the normal occurrence of crises relates to most vulnerable populations' lives, livelihoods and dignity. Dignity protection must be integral to the management of the full disaster cycle, as stigma and humiliation affect people differently through emergencies, recovery and beyond.

[19] See also Hanatani, Gómez and Kawaguchi (2018a) for a similar conclusion in relation to the humanitarian-development nexus.
[20] See, for example, Churruca-Muguruza (2015) for the potential of human security ideas in bridging the differences between humanitarianism and peacebuilding, with both encompassed in a broader protection agenda.

Indignities are not only threats in themselves but also menaces to social stability, as they erode cohesion and trigger outbursts of dissatisfaction. Systematic attention to dignity compensates for the risks inherent in technocratic approaches to social problems, which can be co-opted by elites and their fears.

Dignity has been a powerful argument for caring about humans beyond borders. Dignity was at the heart of global agreement on human rights during and after the Cold War. The end of the Cold War was also the first time that humanitarian concerns were seen as a justified reason for international intervention (Finnemore 1996). International commitment and action to protect dignity and our common humanity was made possible by the emergence of the Liberal International Order, the set of principles, rules and institutions inspired by Western liberal values that became the global standard as the United States of America became the world's unipolar power (Mearsheimer 2019; Glaser 2019). The Liberal International Order was heralded as 'the end of history' (Fukuyama 1992), suggesting that political convergence towards democracy, economic interdependence and institutional binding would become the endpoint in humanity's political, economic and social systems.

Despite their differences, the ideas of sustainability, human development and human security share a common origin in the enabling environment at the end of the Cold War that embraced respect for dignity. The human face of development emerged as a criticism to the nefarious consequences of economic policies from the late seventies and eighties (Jolly 1991). Sustainability was also a criticism of the deleterious effects of the economic model victorious in the Cold War, emphasizing the fact that we shared only one planet and have a shared fate. Human security thinking directly questioned the narrowness of security thinking during the Cold War, opening the door for a wider set of threats and cooperation to work on confronting them. Multilateral institutions that mediated this international order were key in guaranteeing free debate, participation and agreement. The involvement of scientific communities and civil society added legitimacy and momentum behind the push for change.

Paradigm shifts and respect for dignity under the Liberal International Order were possible due to ideational contestation and rule-abiding. Once some core values are shared (or at least not openly disputed), then respect for those values outweighs the particular interests of governments. In this way, new conceptions of sovereignty and authority were made possible, appealing for legitimacy, and calling for effective protection and empowerment of populations instead of merely border control and non-intervention. Since inconsistency between liberal aspirations and the behaviour of the main powers erodes legitimacy and the rule of law, powers were pushed to lead by example. The reconceptualization of sovereignty stressed the importance of international cooperation, opening the door for transnational transformation.[21]

[21] The responsibility to protect doctrine in its comprehensive understanding encapsulates this characteristic of the Liberal International Order (ICISS 2001).

The Liberal International Order is now seen by many observers to be in deep trouble, if not already defunct (Ikenberry 2018; Acharya and Buzan 2019; Mearsheimer 2019; Glaser 2019). The reasons are multiple, usually including the weakening of Western actors because of their own opportunistic and misjudged behaviour, making disastrous misuse of Liberal International Order ambitions and misreading its principles.[22] In tandem, pressures have arisen from emerging countries, some accompanied by nationalist and populist movements. Specifically in relation to human security and sustainability interests, a backlash against progress through abiding by rules advancing protection has been experienced in old and new agreements, such as chemical weapons, anti-personnel land mines, migration and climate change. Respect for international law and the rule-based international system is also in decline. Freedom of speech and rule of law are threatened in various parts of the world. Some autocratic governments apply advanced technologies for controlling people's behaviour; some areas are controlled not based on local legitimate authority but through violent rule. Flagrant violations against the dignity of migrants have been repeatedly perpetrated at the borders of the United States and in Europe, reflecting hypocrisy about the standards pushed by them through international law (Estrada-Tank 2020; Bilgic, Gasper and Wilcock 2020). Moreover, paralysis at the UN Security Council, trade wars and the spat between China and the United States at the World Health Organization (WHO) are reminiscent of the years of the Cold War, in which "the rivalry between the superpowers made it almost impossible for that institution [the United Nations] to adopt and enforce consequential policies" (Mearsheimer 2019, p. 20). There are thus important reasons to emphasize how embracing human security ideas—and human development and sustainability—can contribute to avoiding further losses compromising universal standards of dignity.

A major challenge is to make sure that we can sustain our human order despite setbacks in trust and support to multilateralism and international cooperation from various parts of the world. The weakening of trust in and support to rule-based international cooperation, multilateralism and universal values gives the global community another serious threat to human security. The recognition of the common value of dignity buttresses our human ethical and legal project beyond the Liberal International Order (Teitel 2011; Estrada-Tanck 2016), and thus needs to be salvaged. The call for human security now must address this challenge by building societies where people can live, through enhanced rule-based international cooperation, not only in freedom from fear and want but with dignity. As Acharya and Buzan (2019, p. 263) point out, the Western-dominated order we have now "is the only international order on a planetary scale that we have ever known." Therefore, it is difficult to envision the type of order that may replace it. Emerging countries are seen as bringing new values, particularly in respect to personal freedoms, that weaken liberal standards, as well as a movement backwards in relation to sovereignty.[23] For instance, agendas such as for internally displaced

[22] Thanks go to Des Gasper for pointing this out.
[23] This is not unique to emerging countries—see, for example, Paris (2020).

populations and to respond to gang violence are seen as obstructed by emerging countries' local security concerns (Gómez 2019).

Acharya and Buzan (2019, p. 281) suggest that nothing "'universal', in the sense of a broad view of what is politically and morally right, will replace" the promotion of liberal values. This means serious danger to the protection of human dignity and leaving no one behind. Still, they recognize that threats making humanity vulnerable to shared fates will incentivize common work, competing with nationalistic logics of action. Haq's selection of human security as the basis for a new world order mirrors precisely this shared fate and the need for transformation. Even if the thicker universalism of liberalism stops resonating with the major powers of the international community, at least a somewhat thinner version that upholds our common humanity will be urgently needed. For this purpose, negotiating the SDGs seemed an equally promising source of insights about the possibility of a different human order (Gasper 2019; Fukuda-Parr and Muchhala 2020). The process showed the importance of the agency of the South, gathering a wide range of stakeholders, enriching the discussion and mobilizing a broad commitment. The process also showed the need for more horizontal relations, in which ownership and reciprocity are more important than a charity view to the problems of the others. Perhaps Southern actors may not maintain multilateral institutions funded at the present levels,[24] but they can show with their behaviour that sustaining standards of human dignity does not require a hegemon, but commitment and solidarity, like support to displaced populations in the South has usually showed. In the 2030 Agenda, multistakeholder partnership is emphasized to achieve the SDGs with broad participation from various sectors in society. In any case, the process of expanding and updating our conception of sustainability cannot stay silent in the face of the backlash against humanity's common dignity, and ignore the threat of being washed away by it.

Human security challenges across selected issues

This section presents short reviews of four prolonged or emerging threats, crises or issues, namely infectious diseases, disasters and climate change adaptation, conflict and displacement, and technological change. The aim is not to elaborate accounts of each but to illustrate how the sustainable development approach falls short in properly addressing them, and how human security ideas can offer the required complement.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Global action against infectious diseases preceded and has evolved in parallel to sustainable development thinking. Agreement and collaboration on confronting them started in the nineteenth century with sanitary

[24] Not necessarily because of a lack of resources, but because of the contradictions of maintaining large bureaucracies in capitals of the North while the global system fractures into different networks of action.

conventions and turned into the International Health Regulations in 1969 (Markel 2014). Important efforts in disease control during the Cold War, including advances in vaccination and general access to antibiotics, resulted in a positive mood about infectious disease control that has lasted since the seventies (Morens, Folkers and Fauci 2004). Thus, the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987, pp. 109-111) does not include health as a separate area but as part of population issues. Health problems were portrayed in relation to environmental conditions and development problems, including examples of air pollution and nutrition, among others. The focus in medical research "on pharmaceuticals, vaccines and other technological interventions for disease management" (ibid., p. 111) was criticized because of its bias towards the problems of the rich, giving less attention to tropical diseases and public health measures.

The position of the World Commission on Environment and Development reflects a paradigm change in global health following the Alma Ata Declaration of 1978 and WHO's call for 'health for all', associated with a comprehensive understanding of health and more emphasis on primary health care. This is usually described as a change from vertical (single disease) programmes to a horizontal approach that includes the full health system. How to balance these two approaches remains a major issue to date, as evidenced by the SDG agenda. SDG 3, "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages," continues the MDG focus on some specific populations (reproductive health, pregnant women and children) and some specific diseases (AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria), but enlarges the list with other issues (non-communicable diseases, traffic accidents, substance abuse), while promoting the horizontal approach underlying universal health coverage.

Significant attention to protection from infectious diseases and potential crises was not as prominent among the SDG targets as could be expected. While the West Africa Ebola crisis is mentioned in the declaration, a dedicated goal on infectious disease emergencies was not included. Despite cases reaching far beyond the three most affected countries and raising global concern, the Ebola crisis was not enough to engender meaningful action beyond the global health community. This happened even while the outbreak underscored the limitations of seeing the emergency as only a public health problem (DuBois and Wake 2015). How to articulate all the other sectors critical to the response and the required strategies for overall recovery were pressing challenges—the same tasks that today the whole world confronts.[25] Broader representation of different expertise while setting common goals seems necessary.

One of the main challenges in expanding the emergency response against infectious diseases is that outbreaks start on a very small scale. While disasters or violence immediately put thousands or more people in need of help, diseases start with one or a handful of cases. Response efforts require small but swift teams able to trace and stop transmission, which are radically different from the large operations for other emergencies. An exponential explosion of the threat can overstretch capacities too fast, however, requiring surge capacity that

[25] See, for instance, lessons learned about the education effects of Ebola (*The Economist* 2020b).

is not easy to define without proper preparations. An alternative tried by WHO and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent after the West Africa Ebola outbreak was to integrate separate branches working on disasters and health emergencies.[26] In this way, the experience of disaster teams working at a different scale and covering the whole management cycle could help inform actions to mitigate challenges from pandemics like the present one. At the national level, 'whole-of-society' system planning and engagement for preparedness is usually not present (Global Preparedness Monitoring Board 2019) and tends to happen ad hoc. This is thus work in progress that would greatly benefit from more attention as part of operationalizing human security.

On the more traditional side of confronting infectious diseases, the SDGs did not build on the advances underlying the International Health Regulations, which were updated in 2005. The regulations offer a middle way in not focusing on single diseases but on any public health emergencies of international concern. The approach "demands more from states in terms of their risk assessment and containment efforts;" and promotes the maximization of information flows and minimization of measures that unduly affect travel and trade (Davies, Kamradt-Scott and Rushton 2015, p. 138). Compared to emergencies before the update, such as the first SARS outbreak and the H5N1 avian influenza, responses to international public health emergencies have shown some improvement. This is particularly visible in sharing information about the outbreak and the pathogen agent, which is affected by different interests and rivalry in developing medical solutions to the problem; the sharing of scientific information in the present emergency has been widely praised. On the other hand, who can access vaccines and diagnostics remains a major cause of concern. In 2009, the H1N1 outbreak was followed by developed countries buying all the vaccines that companies could manufacture (Fidler 2010). This time, trade restrictions and national security concerns have affected the flow of protective gear and diagnostics, and there is a real risk that it will happen again with vaccines (Yamey et al. 2020). As Nkengasong (2020) affirms, this is not a problem of charity but of solidarity and fair access to markets. Lack of global agreement hinders coordinated action, particularly following increasing rivalry between China and the United States, which has impeded action at the UN Security Council level and initially undercut support for joint efforts around vaccine financing.[27]

Adopting a human security approach keeps unequal impacts from disease outbreaks at the centre. The COVID-19 pandemic has showed how migrant workers, the elderly, salesclerks and minorities are more vulnerable and exposed to the risk of contagion and death. Physical distancing and quarantine are a privilege only affordable for those with certain types of stable jobs and access to robust social safety nets. As economic crises have shown in the past, temporary workers are the first to be laid off, and a vicious cycle of taking risky jobs in order

[26] The University of Oxford (2019, p. 68) suggests this should be done as part of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction but "no efforts to better connect and integrate the IHR with the Framework have been established as yet."
[27] See, for example, *The Economist* (2020a).

to recover livelihoods during the emergency can turn fatal. Keeping the human dimension at the centre is vital in rethinking protection after the pandemic fades away.

All accounts about the need for preparation against infectious diseases stress the importance of strong national systems—that is, people-centred and driven by the demands of the most vulnerable. This implies an overlap but at the same time a challenge for the advancement of universal health coverage. This is because there will always be competing priorities and limited resources. The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (2019, p. 29) points to, for example, the limited national capacities for research and development, "as well as for deployment of vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, and other medical countermeasures, and creating new vaccine manufacturing methods." But focus on these areas was precisely what was criticized in the eighties in arguing for a horizontal paradigm for the health sector. The point should be not to exclude priorities but to balance them, case by case, through the crisis management cycle. Davies, Kamradt-Scott and Rushton (2015) suggest security is an enabling framework through which attention, agreement and commitment to the International Health Regulations can be promoted. Yet COVID-19 has also demonstrated that global health security goes beyond the scope of regulations, so a broader examination of preparedness is necessary. In the long term, the active promotion of the human security approach could help maintain the momentum of change that the COVID-19 pandemic will hopefully propel.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Climate change is the quintessential example of sustainability in practice. Climate change was at the heart of the sustainable development definition in the eighties. Early agreement on global action for prevention started at the first Rio conference in 1992 with the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Since then, anxiety has been gradually mounting as research and proposals to confront the threat have not been followed by meaningful success. Climate change is now considered perhaps the greatest challenge of humanity. It has two goals among the SDGs—if we recognize that SDG 7 on energy is profoundly interconnected with SDG 13 on climate change.

Evolution in attention to climate change vis-à-vis human security echoes the process described in the previous section. Attention to climate change started with a focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preventing major atmospheric chemistry disruptions. This emphasis to an important extent remains. Theoretical impacts from global environmental change, such as sea-level rise or increased frequency of disasters, have been used as precautionary tales to muster international commitment. They were not intended to have any practical impact on crisis management institutions and preparations. Therefore, relevant organizations for climate change and disaster risk reduction at the global level have consolidated in parallel and, until relatively recently, been relatively disconnected (Natoli 2019).

This trend started to change as mitigation ambitions began to look insufficient by the mid-2000s, opening the way for more action on adaptation as shown in the 2010 Cancun Adaptation Framework. With this background, the fifth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change included a chapter on human security as part of the working group on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability (Adger et al. 2014). The chapter was an opportunity to highlight relationships between climate change and livelihoods, culture, migration and conflict; it also reflected on how understanding human security requires a wider range of sources for evidence, including natural and social sciences as well as the humanities. Paradoxically, disasters do not have their own section or chapter in the report, and do not even appear in the summary for policymakers. The forthcoming sixth report is not expected to include a human security chapter.

Disaster risk reduction institutions have gradually moved forward during the same 30 years, perhaps with less glamour, but showing more signs of progress. The 2019 *Human Development Report* (UNDP 2019) noted, for instance, how deaths have been decreasing despite more occurrence of disasters. Global attention started with the UN adoption of the International Decade for Disaster Reduction in 1990. Declarations and frameworks for action have followed world conferences in Yokohama (1994), Kobe (2005) and Sendai (2015). These frameworks have been followed by polices and investments not only in civil protection, but also in building resilient systems against all kinds of disasters. Priorities for action and indicators of progress have been agreed and included as part of the SDGs, although subsumed under other goals such as cities and climate change, proof of the limitations of sustainable development without a human security approach that gives shocks more importance.

An underlying tension between these two regimes is the asymmetry between global and national levels of awareness and institutionalization. Global attention to disasters does not parallel that to climate change, about which more global reports from a broad range of actors exist. For example, there have not been *Human Development Reports* or *World Development Reports* about disasters. Yet every country faces different types of disasters on a normal basis, and national disaster management authorities with resources and implementation capacity exist as part of most governments. Given how important guaranteeing the security of citizens is, these offices tend to be close to power, and due to the disaster risk reduction community's emphasis on covering the full cycle of response, recovery and prevention, they have expanded the influence of risk reduction to other sectors in charge of structural prevention measures, such as infrastructure and the economy. Similar national ownership is not as conspicuous in climate change adaptation, in which the Paris Agreement still shows more emphasis on mitigation and a bias towards finance and the flow of resources to support developing countries more vulnerable to climate change effects. In other words, the disaster-risk reduction regime is more horizontal, demand-driven, and guided by countries' ownership and practice, while climate change work remains more vertical, aiming to persuade key countries to change patterns of production and consumption, as well as to contribute to compensating for impacts.

A human security approach to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction will complement sustainability thinking and attention to precautionary prevention with a focus on protection and crisis management. The human security approach still recognizes how climate change acts as a threat multiplier, underscoring the need to reduce if not prevent climate fragility risks (Ishiwatari et al. 2019). It suggests turning the logic for action on its head, however, by empowering actors and institutions in charge of shocks and encompassing climate change as well as other forces exacerbating the risks of water scarcity, desertification, fast-onset disasters and displacement, among other concerns. The 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction could be a vehicle for more tangible advances in adaptation to present and future threats, including climate change effects, as it benefits from different networks working around it, local ownership and horizontal relationships. This general approach to shocks also promotes thinking on other crises where robust emergency responses could build recovery and prevention—observed above for infectious diseases and also relevant for conflict and displacement below—without closing the door on adaptation measures falling outside crisis management institutions, such as heat-resistant crops. Complementarity between sustainability and human security approaches in disaster risk reduction and climate change must ensure that independent agendas do not drain resources that could have been used for both prevention of disasters and mitigation of climate change.

CONFLICT, PEACEBUILDING, REFUGEES AND MIGRATION

Armed conflict was at the heart of sustainable development's first proposition (WCED 1987) in two ways: suggesting that environmental stress is, or could be, a source of conflict, thus requiring attention for conflict prevention;[28] and envisioning a peace dividend following disarmament that could be used to fund action for sustainability. At the 1992 Rio conference, however, the topic of conflict was not included as part of the agenda, neither was it included among the thematic areas of Rio+20 (UN General Assembly 2012b). The inclusion of SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions and the peace pillar in the 2030 Agenda attest to the need for a comprehensive view of sustainability, to which human security thinking can contribute.

During the first Rio meeting, part of the reticence to include violence was the legacy of Cold War geopolitics, from which the South wanted to keep a distance. But after the end of the Cold War, a new generation of conflicts and instability emerged, menacing development gains and requiring different approaches, institutions and skills. Internal conflicts became the most prevalent form of organized violence in the 1990s. After a short lull around the turn of the century, we have witnessed a surge in the number and casualties of armed conflict in the past two decades. As more and more States continue to experience prolonged armed conflict and relapse into conflict, while peace attained after long years of fighting and negotiations remains temporal and fragile at best, a situation of uncertainties has become a 'new normal' for those living in those countries as well as those

[28] The threat of environmental refugees was also part of this argument.

experiencing forced displacement.[29] Faced with these realities as well as the limited achievement of peace operations in recent years, the international community has come to recognize that the traditional linear thinking of a peace process no longer applies. This has led the United Nations to introduce the concept of 'sustaining peace' into the peace and security paradigm (UN Security Council 2016; UN General Assembly 2016).

Sustaining peace is a concept that calls for the need to focus on prevention accompanied by political engagement throughout the whole conflict cycle (Ilitchev 2015). From this understanding, the concept naturally emphasizes the need to strengthen the peace-humanitarian-development nexus, rather than focusing on State-building activities in the post-conflict peacebuilding process, which has proved, depending on the context, too ambitious and unrealistic both in terms of outcomes and timelines (High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations 2015). Renewed understanding of the conflict-peace process as being a tenuous and cyclical one resonates well with the ethos of human security, which embraces the existence of multiple threats and their repetitive occurrence menacing human life, and calls for the integration of crisis management into human development thinking.

The other tenet of sustaining peace is its focus on prevention; prevention not only in terms of stopping a relapse into conflict but also in preventing conflict in the first place.[30] This entails reframing the concept of prevention by moving away from one primarily focused on reaction-based interventions to one that emphasizes attributes that contribute to peace, such as institutions, structures and norms. Prevention can be conceived as an ongoing exercise in society, and involves building and strengthening the factors that foster peace, such as promotion of social cohesion, inclusive development, the rule of law, and ensuring access to food and safe drinking water—the factors that together contribute to 'everyday peace' in a society (IPI 2017). One is required to look not only at negative elements in society that trigger conflict and fragility, but also to highlight what is still working in society and the positive aspects of resilience, and to build on these to sustain peace and prevent a lapse or relapse into conflict (Mahmoud, Connolly and Mechoulan 2018).[31] Sustaining peace, therefore, applies not only to those countries beset by violent conflicts or those transitioning from conflict to peace, but to all States and societies. This is a turnaround in thinking about crisis management, from being reactive to being proactive, which should be useful in revisiting the concept of sustainability from the crisis management perspective.

Complementing and going beyond the problem of armed conflict, the protracted nature of human displacement today has demanded that the international community reorient its refugee/migrant policy to one

[29] For instance, see Petermann and Akbar (2018) and Guéhenno (2017).
[30] See, for instance, United Nations (2015a, 2015b).
[31] This 'positive' approach to prevention resonates with that advocated under appreciative inquiry, a method for studying and managing social and organizational changes. It focuses more on 'what works' than 'what is the problem'. For applications related to peacebuilding, see, for instance, Odell (2018).

with long-term perspectives embracing resilience and sustainability, complementing the effort to provide protection and durable solutions to the displaced. In 2018, the number of those displaced exceeded 70 million (UNHCR 2019), a record high since the end of the second World War. Their years in exile register somewhere around 20 on average (UNHCR 2016).[32] The majority of these people are internally displaced and thus neither refugees nor plain migrants.

With bleak chances for repatriation and durable solutions in the near future, those who are displaced are forced to rely on humanitarian aid and the resources of host nations for an extended period. With humanitarian aid, their chances to live free from fear and want may be guaranteed for the time being, but their long-term sustainability rests with the goodwill of the international community as well as the host communities. Moreover, a life in exile dependent on humanitarian handouts makes it difficult for them to lead a life with dignity. Even when they are entitled to move freely and seek employment in the host country, the chances of getting decent work are limited, and competition with locals is always fierce (OECD 2019).

It is increasingly important to enhance the resilience of those displaced by capacitating them with production and entrepreneurial skills, so that they can produce and trade whatever they can and save the profit, and become more self-reliant even while they are in exile. Furthermore, in order to ensure the sustainability of the refugee response, peaceful co-existence with host communities is indispensable. This often rests on the fair distribution of benefits and deliberate trust-building. Such an approach requires a whole-of-society response that brings together governments, humanitarian and development actors, the private sector, and others to help the displaced and their host communities, and to share the burdens and responsibilities more widely.

This comprehensive focus on building resilience and ensuring sustainability is not new. But it was given renewed attention when it was included as a pillar of the Global Compact on Refugees (UNHCR 2018b) and its underlining strategy, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.[33] These initiatives are complemented by the Global Compact for Migration (UN General Assembly 2019), which provides a broader framework for flows of people that in practice are difficult to differentiate.

While refugees and migration have been affected by changes in leadership in the United States and the effects of the Syrian migration crisis in Europe, the international community has made extra efforts to keep alive the processes under the compacts and framework.[34] Donors, including international financial institutions as well as bilateral agencies, have committed to mobilizing development resources to enhance the self-reliance of refugees in addition to humanitarian support channelled through mandated agencies and civil society

[32] At the end of 2015, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated the duration of 23 protracted situations at 26 years on average.
[33] See: https://www.unhcr.org/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-crrf.html.
[34] For example, the World Bank introduced a $2 billion regional subwindow for refugee and host communities during the 18th International Development Association replenishment period.

organizations.[35] Such efforts have been made, for example, in countries affected by the Syrian situation (Jordan and Turkey) and the South Sudan situation (Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda), to name but a few.[36] In these countries, refugees, including youth and women, are trained on income-generation activities and agricultural production skills, thereby making them self-independent economic agents in the local society. These efforts also involve members of host communities, and are expected not only to contribute to augmenting the resilience and dignity of those affected, but to building mutual understanding and trust among different groups of people who otherwise struggle for the same limited resources. It is also important to improve the situation of internally displaced people in the immediate aftermath of conflict war and raise awareness about people in areas not ruled by legitimate local authorities.

As the world enters a situation full of uncertainties, it is pertinent now more than ever to revisit the concept of sustainability and development through the lens of human security. As we have seen, a change in that direction may already be taking shape in peacebuilding, and work on refugees and migration. With the introduction of the sustaining peace concept, there is a window of opportunity for the international community to deepen understanding of how to ensure durable peace, and to shed more light on multiple and repetitive threats and the importance of prevention even in seemingly peaceful societies. All societies are fragile. Recent international initiatives to address forced displacement and migration issues also underline the need to focus on building bottom-up resilience combined with top-down protections amid protracted situations, as well as the need for comprehensive, whole-of-society approaches to ensure sustainable (not necessarily durable) solutions. These approaches are clearly people-centred and risk-informed, principles at the heart of the concept of human security.

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

Technological change is a critical element for development. The SDGs call for science, technology and innovation to be expanded and disseminated around the world, as stipulated in SDG targets 17.6 to 17.8. A Technology Facilitation Mechanism was established as a means of implementation for the SDGs, promoting multistakeholder discussions and knowledge sharing to foster 'leapfrog' development in developing countries.

Today's technological advancements and their worldwide spread provide great opportunities to build better societies for lives and livelihoods. Medical drones can bring blood and vaccines to health centres in remote areas, for example. More people can gain quality education through online learning, and transfer money with their mobile phones even if they do not have their own banking accounts. On the other hand, technological advancements also bring challenges. If they are abused, people's livelihoods and dignity will be exposed to

[35] Progress in implementing the Global Compact on Refugees is supposed to be reported at the Global Refugee Forum every four years. The first Forum was held in December 2019. See: https://www.unhcr.org/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html, and https://globalcompactrefugees.org/.
[36] For details, see UNHCR (2018a).

risks such as privacy violations, cyberattacks, social chaos caused by fake news circulated on social media, etc. There are persistent digital divides between and within countries along the lines of gender, age, geography and income. If technological advancements proceed without closing the divides, a socioeconomic gap will grow between groups who benefit from them and those left behind in a technology-driven world.

Technological change has had mixed effects on human development and inequality. There has been an overall convergence in access to basic technologies—with 67 mobile phones per 100 people in low human development countries, compared to 132 in high human development countries. New gaps have opened in access to frontier technologies such as broadband Internet. Only 1 in 100 people in low human development countries have access to fixed broadband Internet access, compared to 28.3 in high human development countries.[37]

One difference in this technological revolution compared to previous ones is that much of the current technology is potentially accessible anywhere in the world. This means that technological change in a specific country does not happen in a vacuum but is shaped by social and economic processes subject to human choice.

Luckily, while technology is already shaping labour markets, economies and people's lives, its direction or extent is not yet locked in. While the automation of certain jobs can have a displacement effect, in industries such as accounting, for example, it can also have a reinstatement effect by creating new jobs, such as in data science, cybersecurity, etc..[38] One key lesson from past technological revolutions is that technological change itself is not deterministic. Its scope, direction and effects on human development and human security can be steered using innovative policies and new institutions. Some policies are domestic, such as anti-trust legislation and rules for protecting data users. Others require international cooperation.

Another example of the importance of steering technology to enhance human security and human development in a sustainable way is the differential impact of COVID-19 on countries right now. National preparedness for pandemics can be measured in varying ways, but some key indicators include health infrastructure (number of doctors, nurses and hospital beds relative to the population), information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure (mobile phones and Internet access per 100 people) and inequality. A recent study of preparedness found that the ICT component accounted for around 40 percent of differences among countries.[39]

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[37] For details, see UNDP (2019).
[38] Although often the people who get the new jobs would be different from those who lost the original ones. While employment might be stable as an aggregate, the transition process could be socially destabilizing.
[39] See UNDP's COVID-19 Dashboard on vulnerability and preparedness at: http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/global-preparedness-and-vulnerability-dashboards

In some countries, privacy and freedom of speech have been curtailed by local authorities using ICT-based surveillance powers to contain the virus's spread.[40] These risks make it all the more relevant to apply the concept of human security in making the world more inclusive, resilient and sustainable.

Conclusion

Threats and crises are a normal part of human life and require unambiguous attention for any aspiration to realize sustainability. Any effort to redefine sustainability will not work unless a human security approach is used to supplement attention to protection from and resilience against shocks and downside risks, and to dignity throughout the full crisis management cycle. This paper shows how current sustainable development and human security ideas have a common origin around the 1970s and 1980s, and overlap in several characteristics. There are important differences, however, in relation to protection and resilience that make the concepts useful for different situations.

Both concepts were downplayed for over a decade, from the late 1990s to the late 2000s, but circumstances have shown this was a mistake. Sustainability was preferred over human security in the post-2015 agenda because it is more inspirational in times of plenty, because it is closer to low- and middle-income countries given its origins in the first Rio Conference, and due to its bottom-up ownership by scientists and NGOs. In the process, however, sustainability was accepted as an environmental form of protection, as in the SDGs. It does not yet sufficiently cover protection against other kinds of downside risks.

The human security approach is thus a necessary complement to put more focus on resilience, particularly amid uncertainty and varying threats. The human security emphasis on protection and resilience covers the whole crisis management cycle of response, recovery, prevention and preparedness, and promotes the consolidation of responsive and empowering systems to cope with risks by the whole of society. The approach also advocates for protecting human dignity in times of crises and through the whole cycle of crisis management. The idea of sustainability, as in the SDGs, includes prevention but fails to cover the full cycle and give enough attention to a comprehensive view of emergencies or to the building of capable systems to respond to various shocks. Crises like the 2020 pandemic show that the protection and resilience component is key to complementing sustainability propositions, in terms of the capacity in a society as a whole to respond to and deal with shocks and emergencies. In cases where countries cannot deal with such crises, international cooperation is necessary to supplement response capabilities.

[40] For example, see Lever (2020).

Several emerging and re-emerging challenges reviewed above show different regimes are specialized in dealing with specific situations, running in parallel to the sustainability agenda. Every now and then, concerns are raised about these regimes operating in silos. This becomes an opportunity to reiterate the benefits of joint action—for example, the recovery from the pandemic has been linked to climate action, and outbreak responses connected to disaster risk reduction, as described above. Good intentions in this direction should be carefully considered given unintended consequences,[41] just as the push for sustainability in times of plenty weakened global attention to shocks. Instead, guaranteeing a broad engagement of actors in dealing with emergencies appears to be a more pressing priority. Perhaps the 1994 *Human Development Report* idea of a new security council is impracticable, but some kind of mechanism to keep track of global advances in dealing with downside risks seems justified.

The Sendai framework could offer a platform for such assessments because of its attention to the full crisis management cycle; its openness to a wide variety of actors, particularly science and technology, business and civil society; and its promotion of horizontal relations between countries and actors. An inclusive framework is vital to gather the capacities required to engender resilience, and the horizontal arrangement emphasizes the ownership and local leadership essential for security to be sustainable. Another experience that resonates with the need for inclusion is the model of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Particularly remarkable is how the panel's pursuit of scientific agreement does not disregard political considerations but confronts them head on. Reviewing global advances in covering the full cycle of crisis management through a network of scientists, offering a picture of humanity's learning from tragedies and the actual gains drawn from the 'crisis dividend', could help consolidate a human security backbone for global governance.

Demand-driven, people-centred international regimes should continue growing through the support of all types of stakeholders. Their competition for attention and resources is as unavoidable as it is for development sectors in peaceful times. Moreover, specific attention to the complexities and context of each crisis is indispensable for coming up with practical solutions. It is part of the nature of security to be fragmented, because insecurities can have many faces. It is not always feasible or desirable to cover all under a single security provision roof. What must remain in common across the board is an unequivocal commitment to protect human dignity. Human dignity protection should not be a prerogative of the West, nor a casualty of geopolitics, but ingrained in the essence of governments and societies everywhere. For human security ideas to be embraced and guide policy, it is necessary to maintain global agreement on the importance of human life and dignity beyond borders, otherwise we will move back into protectionism and national security. All efforts

[41] Klein (2007) shows some ways in which disasters are co-opted for different purposes. Besides, Gómez (2018) shows how ideas of transformation after a major disaster actually hinder disaster risk reduction initiatives in the long run.

to promote human security at the national level, as well as international cooperation, should be based on this commitment.[42]

A critical juncture such as the present one is an ideal opportunity to advance human security ideas despite resistance to the negative implications of traditional security institutions. Scepticism and distrust about the use of fear to influence agendas is legitimate and must be addressed. There is a real risk that dignity can be lost in emergency security measures that become technocratic and authoritarian, asking to put democracy on hold (Stirling 2019). Yet as Gasper and Rocca (2020, p. 128) affirm in relation to climate change, human security and human rights analyses "contribute importantly to bringing out the human significances of climate change, which otherwise become submerged under conventions of impersonal scientific language and of wealth-dominated and nation-state centered structuring of discussion agendas." This contribution is not limited to the environment but can be extended to all kinds of threats menacing hard-earned development progress. If we are to make the most of the current crises for the sake of present and future generations, the time is ripe for a global agreement on a broader view of security that puts humans at the centre and makes society increasingly resilient against all kinds of threats.

[42] There have been multiple efforts to embrace human security in practice beyond the West. The series of UNESCO (2008) regional reports offers a wide perspective. On East and South-East Asia, see Pitsuwan and Caballero-Anthony (2014) and Mine, Gómez and Muto (2019); on Latin America, see Gómez (2015).

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