

CERTI

Crisis and Transition Tool Kit

Human Security in Crisis and Transition: A Background Document of Definition and Application

Executive Summary

Jennifer Leaning, M.D., S.M.H.
Sam Arie
Harvard School of Public Health
Human Security Program

September 2000

Prepared for CERTI by the Human Security Program, Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies and Humanitarian Crises, Francois Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights



This project was made possible through Cooperative Agreement Number HRN-A-00-96-9006 between the US Agency for International Development and Tulane University



Executive Summary

HUMAN SECURITY emerged in the 1990s as a conceptual response to two changing dimensions of the international order, referred to as globalization and the end of the Cold War. These political and economic transformations have increased the risk of internal conflict and shifted the locus of 'insecurity' from the nation state and its allies to the individual and community. This shift, defined and explicated in the 1994 UN Human Development Report, has led to the recognition that to protect and promote human development in the future, donors will first have to address the issue of human security--the question of security in people's daily lives.

Interest in further explicating the meaning and relevance of the concept of human security has led to the analysis offered in this paper, whereby it is suggested that human security be seen as centered on the fulfillment of basic, psychosocial needs (home, community and sense of the future) and as reliant on access to minimum survival supports. In developing this working definition of human security, with the intent of later testing the applications suggested here with more rigorous and systematic study, it is believed that the insights gained could strengthen and focus international response to crisis and transition, with particular reference to Africa.

I. The proposed working definition is as follows:

Human security is an underlying condition for sustainable human development. It results from the social, psychological, economic, and political aspects of human life that in times of acute crisis or chronic deprivation protect the survival of individuals, support individual and group capacities to attain minimally adequate standards of living, and promote constructive group attachment and continuity through time.

Its key measurable components can be summarized as: a sustainable sense of home; constructive social and family networks; and an acceptance of the past and a positive grasp of the future. It is suggested that these components can be best measured by trends in their inverse indicators (social dislocation, shifts in horizontal inequality, and discount rate) according to metrics and units that will require further specification.

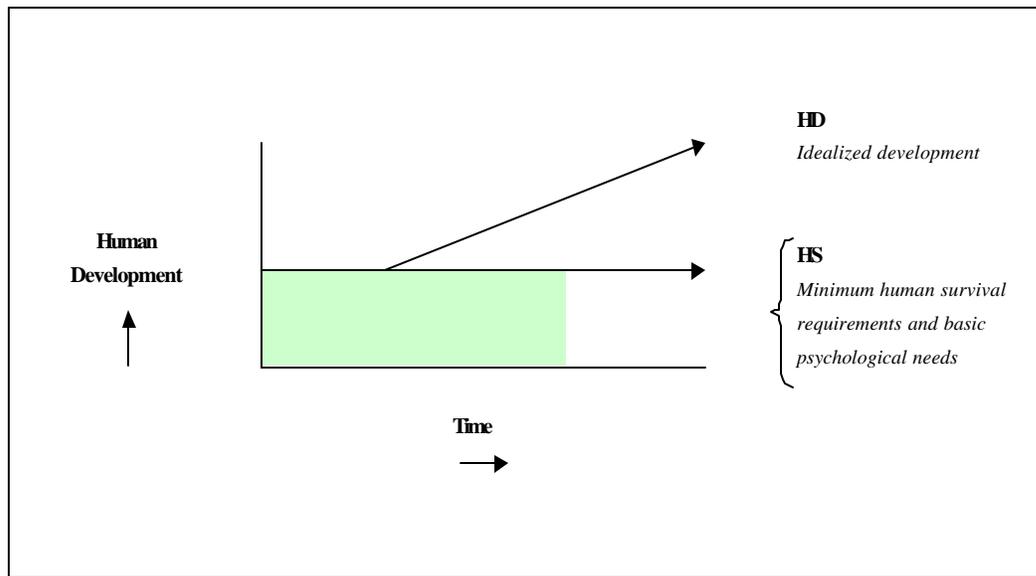
The concept of human security elaborated here contains two main components:

- a. those dealing with minimum inputs to sustain minimum levels of survival (water, food, shelter);
- b. those dealing with supports to basic psychosocial human needs (identity, recognition, security, participation, and autonomy).

We suggest that if the international community could manage to provide or help to introduce in a given society at a given time these two main components of human security, then the essential platform conditions, the minimum base, would have been laid for human development efforts. In other words, we see human security as establishing the floor, the crucial starting point from which all human development efforts could then

push off. For a human being to have human security, he or she must have a quantum packet of resources, human and material, that constitute an indivisible set of necessary inputs and conditions. These necessities that make up human security must be achieved before human beings can be expected to be receptive to or capable of participating in any development strategy. In sum, we view human security as a state of being that must be attained prior to and as a pre-condition for the launching of human development efforts. (See Graphic 3.1)

Graphic 3.1 Human Security as Minimum Platform for Human Development



Core Psychosocial Needs

The human security concept we advance here focuses on the second of these two components (basic psychosocial needs), because the first component, dealing with defining and providing basic human survival needs of food, water, and shelter, has been extensively explored and developed over the last 30 years of work in relief and development. The fact that we do not further elaborate on this component does not mean that there is no need for further work to be done in this area. Current assessments would suggest that there is still room for improvement in providing these basic inputs in accordance with norms of human rights and cultural competence, as well as in closing the gaps in our understanding of how to provide these inputs without aggravating communal or group hostilities. It is in this context that the source document returns to the topic of provision of material supports.

Those engaged in the work of promoting human development and economic development, however, have long been concerned with how people behave and how their behavior can be influenced in ways that foster or enhance individual and group well being. Drawing from insights in psychology, it would seem that to understand human

behavior in any context, including periods of crisis and transition, it is necessary to look to see whether certain basic human needs, psychological and social, are being met. A vast literature on this topic is succinctly integrated in Sam Amoo's discussion of ethnic conflict in Africa, where he lists four basic human needs for identity, recognition, participation, and autonomy. (He includes another parameter, security, by which he means physical safety, and for the purposes of this discussion we have addressed in the slightly different context of population protection.)

The four basic human needs for identity, recognition, participation, and autonomy can be seen as involving core connections to self, to others, and to a sense of time. In an attempt to move from the level of concept to the level of practical assessment, we sought to find perceptible facets of human relationships that would tell us whether or not these basic human needs were being met. In this way we arrived at three key relationship areas, which, in overlapping ways, in our view capture the main meanings of identity, recognition, participation, and autonomy.

- a. location (a sustainable sense of home and safety; providing identity, recognition, and freedom from fear)
- b. community (a network of constructive social or family support; providing identity, recognition, participation, and autonomy)
- c. time (an acceptance of the past and a positive grasp of the future; providing identity, recognition, participation, and autonomy)

These three sets of relationships themselves overlap and reinforce each other, in that having a sense of home allows one to feel linked to a geographic and social community, as does knowing something about one's history, etc. The fact that these three sets of relationships overlap does not, as we attempt to show in the source document, detract from their usefulness as independent categories of understanding and assessing the human condition, or the condition of human security.

II. Application to Policy in Crisis and Transition

USAID strategies and policies for development and humanitarian response incorporate insights gathered from a robust assessment and evaluation process and from attention to the accumulating critical literature. In the specific arena of crisis and transition, current USAID strategies and policies also demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the issues as discussed in the accumulating and increasingly sophisticated literature.

A. Value added by Human Security approach

We see three general benefits from applying the human security perspective to current USAID strategies and policies, with special reference to crisis and transition in Africa.

- (a) Descriptive:** There is a need for USAID to be able to describe its overall efforts in human security terms, if only to enter the discussion now underway in the international community. The descriptive aspect developed in the source

document serves a conceptual and diplomatic purpose and is not summarized here.

(b) Prescriptive: The human security perspective allows us to frame, at a high level of generality, focused on strategy and policy, an annotated list of interventions that may promote efforts aimed at anticipation, prevention, and sustainability in the field. This summary presents an abbreviated list of suggestions elaborated in the source document. These suggestions are derived from reported lessons learned and insights from the field. None of the listed items have been rigorously assessed or validated. In a non-rigorous sense, this proposed list could be used as the basis for developing a more comprehensive gap analysis, identifying areas where the human security perspective and USAID strategies and policies now diverge. Since it is possible that many of these suggestions are in fact reflected in USAID country or sectoral programs, and since a survey of such activities is outside the scope of the present paper, a formal gap analysis is not attempted here.

(c) Threat assessment: The human security perspective, as expressed in a measurement scheme, can be used to monitor and evaluate progress in shoring up or undermining human security. We propose that human security measures will be most useful in their inverse mode, as measures of human insecurity, in an overall effort at threat assessment. This aspect is also summarized here from a longer discussion in the source document.

B. Prescriptive: Suggestions for USAID Policy on Crisis and Transition from Human Security Perspective

The prescriptive discussion began with three general suggestions:

- 1) That USAID maintain a somewhat sharper distinction between crisis and transition phases because different interventions are needed in each. In the crisis phase, the human security perspective calls for priority to be placed on measures that provide basic survival supports and building a sense of home (population protection and resettlement). In the transition phase, this perspective shifts the emphasis to rule of law measures (fostering a positive sense of the future), health service provision (community engagement), and infrastructure development, particularly roads (community engagement).
- 2) That further attention be given to inclusive and egalitarian approaches (because infusion of external resources can adversely affect human security by aggravating existing horizontal inequalities).
- 3) That practice enhancement would derive from improved training and procedures for expatriate staff in the field. Such improvements would include establishing common guidelines for expatriate exit strategies, developing mechanisms to support psychological strength of expatriate staff, and providing safe procedures for reporting human rights abuses.

C. Specific Suggestions for Response in Crisis Phase

The characteristics of these crises, in terms of their impact on human populations, determine the human security priorities we attach to strategies and policies for response. Several key impacts are noted: mass population dislocation; high levels of insecurity for the affected people; high levels of insecurity for the responders; gross human rights abuses with serious health consequences; and widespread destruction of infrastructure, including that infrastructure supporting local and external health care delivery (utilities, buildings, transportation, communications systems, records and record-keeping capacity).

In advancing these suggestions, we assumed that fundamentals of USAID response and transition (operating principles, programming, and practice) were in effect. Within the human security perspective taken here, the emphasis is placed on assessing and ensuring emergency and public health care (including psychological supports). Another list of suggestions could be usefully generated from the viewpoint of supporting livelihoods and group economic activity.

Some of these suggestions are ones that USAID can do unilaterally or in coordination with other donors and agencies. Some will involve direct interaction with the military (the term used here very generically).

We grouped these suggestions according to the human security framework presented here: basic survival supports (food, shelter, water); home (issues of population protection and issues of identity, recognition); community (issues of participation); and future (faith in the future, empowerment, sense of autonomy).

(i) Basic survival supports

- Develop techniques for counting large and rapidly moving populations
- Establish procedures for anticipatory citing of refugee camps

(ii) Home/Population protection

- Expand observance of the Geneva Conventions
- Negotiate humanitarian zones
- Improve mass crowd control
- Disarm and de-militarize refugee camps
- Reduce the size of refugee and displaced persons camps
- Identify and institute best practices for reducing sexual violence in the refugee camps

(iii) Home/identity

- Develop protocols and agreements for possible evacuation of the seriously ill and injured, as appropriate
- Introduce programs to support and help heal psychological distress at an early phase

These actions should take place in the context of having established provision for population protection as noted earlier. It is unwise and counter-productive to begin these activities until people are safe from external attack.

(iv) Time (Positive sense of the future)

- Build in support and training for local health care personnel

D. Specific Suggestions for Response in Transition Phase

To envision steps to take in this early post-fighting phase, it is important to remain vigilant, since the key issues that led to the war still smolder. The immediate objectives for those designing and managing response efforts in this phase are thus to:

- a) establish an effective process for enforcing and monitoring the ceasefire or whatever stand-down agreement has been reached;
- b) create increased levels of safety for local people of all groups and for expatriates;
- c) introduce the rule of law, by first establishing regime stability, presence, and consistency; and then by building public confidence in due process and administrative coherence;
- d) introduce essential services, such as health care; and
- e) build infrastructure, particularly roads.

The human security perspective would insist on the primacy of the first three steps in terms of sequencing. Ceasefire enforcement is outside the scope of this paper. Population protection is discussed in the section on crisis response. Because the impact of introducing or failing to introduce the rule of law is so profound, before proceeding to health care provision we address this topic, through the lens of human security.

(i) Establish early cornerstones of rule of law

- Respect political context and human rights:
- Provide incentive to economic investment and specialization
- Distinguish between rule of law (security and consistency) and democracy

(ii) Provide health care as essential good but also as hotly contested resource

- Guard against entrenchment of elite agendas
- Avoid accentuation of horizontal inequality

(iii) Home/Population Protection

- Reduce potential for violence and encourage resettlement
- Insist that all health care be delivered in zones of safety and respect for IHL
- Participate in demobilization process

(iv) Home/Identity

- Provide support to the tracing and reintegration activities of the Red Cross and local agencies

(v) Community

- Provide support to epidemiologic health needs assessment
- Provide support to emergency and public health interventions

(vi) Community and Time (Positive sense of the future)

- Participate in reconstruction of physical infrastructure
- Participate in physical and mental rehabilitation efforts
- Participate in training of local health personnel and community leaders

E. Human Security as Threat Assessment

In this section, we employed human security measures in a threat analysis, springing from the recognition that latent in the effort to provide development and humanitarian aid are trends that may decrease human security; that decreases in human security are ultimately associated with a greater likelihood of social unrest; and that attention to the key elements of the human security concept (home, community, and sense of time) will allow policy makers an early window on this unwelcome dynamic.

Our aim is to outline a surveillance capacity, a set of practical measures that could provide a way of taking the social temperature of a community or region in terms of its propensity to erupt into marked social unrest or inter-group conflict. What we are in fact proposing is that such a scan be oriented towards assessing trends in human insecurity, the inverse of human security, by tracking and then evaluating trends in dislocation (home), horizontal inequality (community), and discount rate (time). In this way we suggest that the human security approach could add a measure of threat assessment to incorporate in early warning operations, relevant to any phase of international action in the field.

Specific early warning activities are indeed limited by what USAID notes are the important practicalities of lack of information, political constraints, and resource constraints. (Mock 2000) Our suggestions begin at a prior stage of strategic assumption, where what we propose is that USAID begin with the presumption that action in the field may well aggravate pre-existing tendencies towards conflict. We suggest that USAID view its entire approach to intervention in Africa (at whatever phase it gets involved—development, humanitarian response, transitional post-conflict) as an enterprise that brings resources and distortions to situations already marked by high social and political tension. (Keen 1998)

On this basis, from the outset of its work, we suggest that USAID institute an appraisal mechanism that monitors for the presence of and trends in the negative indicators of human security: social dislocation, horizontal inequality, and high rates of discounting. The import of these trends might be that a region is slipping into increasing social instability, or that the region is not yet ready, in one important dimension or another, to move into the next phase of evolution from transition to development

Scope of Application and Methodology

Analysts of complex emergencies have identified a number of factors warranting further investigation, in terms of their power to predict or monitor crisis potential. These factors include: chronic deprivation and poverty; existence of marked horizontal inequality; aggrieved histories and chosen traumas; accelerated shifts in perceived or actual

relationships among and between groups; elite mobilization or manipulation of these shifts; declining state authority and effectiveness; exacerbating influence of external aid; opportunity to pillage rich resources. Key to these analyses are questions about which of these factors are sufficient, necessary, instigating, or simply predisposing.

The human security perspective does not aim to nor can it settle this analytic debate. What it can do, we submit, is add measurement potential and interpretive insight, because it views these factors at the level of the individual and group living in the society at risk. As one wing of a monitoring or early warning enterprise, we suggest that efforts to assess trends in negative indices of human security will provide relevant and focused information about those events and factors that contribute to or sustain crisis.

The world has become accustomed to the use of measures and composite indices since the UN first introduced the Human Development Index (HDI) ten years ago. Tracking progress in key aggregate social and economic areas of education (adult literacy and school enrollment), health (life expectancy at birth), and economy (GDP per capita), the composite index has been used to rank countries and follow trends in human development over this past decade. In 1997, the UN introduced an inverse measure, the Human Poverty Index (HPI), in order to measure deprivations along these same dimensions of education, health, and economic life. (UNDP 2000:147)

We propose that a measurement construct for human security, developed here as an essential pre-condition for sustainable development, could be constructed similar to the HDI and could be helpful to those who plan and evaluate international aid programs.

Human security requires minimum fulfillment of basic survival and psychosocial needs. If conditions have been created that allow human beings a survivable standard of living, then the material rudiments are satisfied. In the material domain, human security sets the floor; human development establishes the stretch. Agreement on what constitutes a minimally acceptable HPI (describing basic survival levels of food, water, and shelter) might come closest to expressing this minimum survival condition for human functioning that fits the human security perspective.

In terms of measuring psychosocial needs, we have chosen to focus on three domains of human security when attempting to apply the definition to an analysis of USAID strategic objectives: home, community, and positive sense of the future. These three domains address the three important ways that human beings relate to themselves, each other, and the world: they are anchored and seek safety in a sense of home; they find meaning, identity, and functional support in their relationships with family and community; and they build their lives through time, depending upon their sense of trust in the future and their sense of freedom from the past.

An immediate problem is the relative intangibility of these concepts. Finding sound and potentially quantifiable ways of measuring a concept so enmeshed in relational aspects of human activity might prove difficult, especially given the relative paucity of data of all kinds in areas of the world where human security is most threatened. We propose to use the negative measures of these three psychosocial domains as the more sensitive way of delineating the presence or absence of these dimensions of human security in a given situation. These three negative measures are: dislocation (for home); horizontal inequality (for community); and high discount rates (for a positive sense of the future).

Negative indicator: Social dislocation

War and economic forces can cause marked social dislocation when they force people to leave established social ties and familiar territory or travel long distances, often to wind up at a destination but never then to truly settle down. We introduce here the concept of social dislocation as representing a potentially measurable aspect of threat to this domain of human security (a sense of home). An example that has been analyzed from this perspective, the Ghana Volta River Project, suggests the long-term political and economic consequences of moving people against their will

Negative indicator: Horizontal Inequality

In assessing the disruption of community that occurs in the setting of the crises and transitions now confronting many regions of the world, the concept of 'horizontal inequality,' as introduced here by Frances Stewart, may be particularly useful. Infusion of resources, or interventions that upset prevailing inter-group dynamics, can, in Stewart's view, exacerbate fundamental community ties.

Negative indicator: High Discount Rate

In this context it is useful to think in terms of a negative measure of an individual's or group's sense of the future. In economic terms, such a measure is the discount rate, the value you place on something you might possess in the future. When people do not think the future holds much promise, they tend to apply a high discount rate to future goods, and to investments that will yield future goods. Their decisions appear short-sighted, yet from a human security standpoint, life has to start making sense at the local level, and in the present, before people will constructively participate in the collective or state enterprise.

Thus to monitor and evaluate development strategies through the lens of human security is to create a balanced scorecard of measures. Some would be minimum material baselines derived from the standard quantitative measures already used for the HPI. Some would be new measures, aimed at capturing intangible human needs for home, community, and sense of the future, and these would be expressed as their negative, in the measures of social dislocation, horizontal inequality, and high discounting. With such a set of a few empirically based measures, it might be possible to assess progress in establishing human security and to anticipate impending collapses into conditions of grave instability and distress.

III. Conclusion

It will take time and effort to design, implement, and evaluate strategies and policies through the lens of human security. This paper constitutes only an early step--by outlining concepts, offering general suggestions for issues to measure, and identifying possible candidate indicators.

Four general recommendations arise from our fundamental argument that war and disaster profoundly degrade human security, and that external assistance in crisis and transition is not benign, containing within that infusion of resources several sources of destructive tension relating to our three domains of human security (location, community

and time). In these circumstances, "it is difficult for aid agencies to meet human needs without playing into and reinforcing existing conflicts." (Anderson 1996: 5)

Two recommendations pertain to the task of monitoring and evaluation.

General Policy Recommendations for Crisis and Transition

- 1. Intervention objectives should target human security in advance of crisis by addressing the sources of psychological and social stress, such as loss of home, sudden disruptions of community and traditional social networks, and foreshortened, fearful sense of the future*
- 2. During crisis and transition, interventions should guard against increasing competition between groups for goods and power and should focus on building habits of respect for dignity and fairness. Every effort should be made to avoid creating or playing into social divisions along lines of winners and losers.*
- 3. In the crisis phase, emergency relief objectives should target human security by providing basic survival inputs, protecting populations from attack, and reinforcing identity and family reunion.*
- 4. In the transition phase, efforts should focus on encouraging resettlement through disarming and demining initiatives, strengthening community ties through participatory and egalitarian service delivery, especially health, shoring up a positive sense of the future by restoring police authority and reconstructing roads.*

General Policy Recommendations for Monitoring and Evaluation

- 1. Threats to human security, inadvertently augmented or aggravated by external intervention, can be identified in the negative indicators of these human security domains--social dislocation, shifts in horizontal inequality, and high discount rates.*
- 2. Measures of minimally acceptable inputs to basic survival, as expressed in the HPI, should be integrated with these negative measures of psychosocial components of human security, in order to construct a balanced scorecard of measures.*

The human security perspective would redirect our attention from the health of nation states to the health of individuals and communities, conceived in practical and minimal terms. By paying attention to these terms, USAID may stand to improve its strategic capacity and operational effectiveness. The human security perspective, however, demands of USAID a broad base of local knowledge, a more extended time frame (beginning the human security analysis well before the onset of crisis) and a heightened awareness of the capacity of external donors to exacerbate local tensions as well as to alleviate them.

Throughout this paper we have stressed that human security does not denote everything valuable in life. It defines a core concept that refers to the critical elements of being

human and being secure. People who have human security are resilient in the face of shocks and have maximized their personal and social capacities for coping with a range of threats to life and livelihood. However, they are not necessarily healthy, wealthy, joyful or long-lived. These predicates lie in the realm of human development, for which human security may be a pre-condition but cannot substitute. Yet as an approach to human distress, the working definition advanced here has a broad reach. It is intended to apply to the ways in which the international community assesses and responds to the continuum of need, deprivation, and hazard that enmeshes over half the world's people.

IV. Next Steps

The source document advances a tentative argument about the meaning and nature of human security, a set of suggestions regarding application to USAID policies and strategies in crisis and transition, and a proposal for using this concept of human security in a methodology geared towards threat assessment. Further conceptual, empirical, and technical work needs to be done to take these ideas to a place where the applications and methods could be amplified and validated. Specific steps are outlined below.

A. Application of the definition of human security to policy and strategy in crisis and transition in Africa:

The applications suggested in the source document have not been rigorously assessed through retrospective case studies (including looking at USAID experience in a number of key settings in Africa) or in prospective monitoring of experience. Next steps would require both kinds of investigations. In each of these investigative modes it would be necessary to decide what would constitute a uniform data set, determine process and outcome measures, and develop mechanisms for cross-checking and validating findings and conclusions.

It is proposed that retrospective case studies be carried out in Angola (with a focus on the return to civil war in the mid-1990s); Mozambique (with a focus on post-crisis transition events in the 1990s); and Sierra Leone/Liberia (with a focus on the genesis of the regional civil wars of the 1990s).

It is proposed that prospective case studies be carried out in Sudan (with a focus on efforts to accomplish an enduring ceasefire); Somalia (with a focus on efforts to establish a national government); Kenya (with a focus on development and regime stability); Zimbabwe (with a similar focus); and Nigeria (with a focus on management of centripetal tensions).

Proposals would be submitted describing in each instance the rationale for the country choice, the hypotheses relating to human security, the process and outcome measures, the scope of investigative work, and the validation mechanisms. The final product for each case study would include an analysis of the relevance of the human security concept and implications for future policy and strategy in the area.

B. Constructing methods and measures:

We proposed a methodology for measuring human insecurity to use in threat analysis, by assessing increases or decreases in one of the three major domains of human security, expressed as a negative measure (social dislocation, increasing horizontal inequality, or high discount rate). To do this requires defining a robust, specific, and sufficient set of metrics for each measure. Since each of these negative measures could be assessed through a number of different metrics, it will be necessary to specify in a systematic way the actual metrics to use within each measure. (For instance, social dislocation could be expressed in any number of metrics, such as numbers of miles travel from home, number of years away from home, number of family ties broken, number of household heads forced into penury, number of landless laborers, number of disposed). Some of these metrics will need to be quantitative (such as number of people in flight from home) and some will be qualitative (responses to surveys or other indirect measures of sense of fear regarding safety or sense of isolation from community).

In the source document we also proposed that efforts could be directed at constructing a human security index, according to which some mix of basic survival inputs, perhaps expressed as the Human Poverty Index, or HPI, and of basic core psychosocial needs (the negative measures of human security) could be rolled into a common weighted index of Human Security (HIS), analogous to the Human Development Index, or HDI.

In the next phase of this effort, it is proposed that candidate metrics and a candidate HIS be developed from a distillation of the information analyzed in the eight case studies. This phase would be accomplished by establishing a methodological wing of the case study effort that would be devoted

- a. to defining and testing metrics for each inverse measure of human security and
- b. defining the minimum survival levels of the HPI.

Steps in this phase would entail evaluating existing data sets, assessing their usefulness in the actual context of the case studies, and developing the rationale and argument for the final candidate metrics proposed.

It is further proposed that the products of efforts outlined in A) and B) be shared as written documents and in a seminar or workshop setting with a wider group of policy experts and academics.