

*A PEOPLE-CENTRED
REFUGEE RESPONSE:
PARALLELS TO THE
HUMAN SECURITY
APPROACH*

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- 1 GA Res 71/1, UN GAOR, 71st sess., Agenda Item 13 and 117, Supp No 49, UN Doc A/Res/71/1 (3 October 2016, adopted 19 September 2016).
- 2 Volker Türk, 'Prospects for Responsibility Sharing in the Refugee Context' (2016) 4 *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 45, 45.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 The *CRRF* is a document annexed to the *NYD* which sets out the *NYD*'s vision for a more predictable and more comprehensive response to the refugee crises. See UNHCR, *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework* (September 2016) <<http://www.unhcr.org/en-au/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-crrf.html>>.
- 5 *NYD*, UN Doc A/RES/71/1 (3 October 2016, adopted 19 September 2016) annex I para 3; see also paras 11, 22.
- 6 See United Nations ('UN'), *Global Compact on Refugees, (2017) Refugees and Migrants* <<http://refugeesmigrants.un.org/refugees-compact>>: UNHCR envisages that the Global Compact on Refugees will comprise two complementary parts:
 1. The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, as agreed by Member States in Annex I to the New York Declaration ...;
 2. A Programme of Action underpinning the Framework that sets out actions that can be taken—both by Member States and by other relevant stakeholders—to ensure its full implementation.

I INTRODUCTION

On 19 September 2016, the United Nations General Assembly Summit for Refugees and Migrants adopted key commitments to enhance protection for millions of people who had been forcibly displaced. This was expressed through the United Nations Summit, *In Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movement of Refugees and Migrants*, which became known as the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* ('*NYD*').¹ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ('UNHCR') called the *NYD* an innovative direction 'in protection, assistance and solutions for refugees'.² It was said that the *NYD* would help 'to operationalize long-standing principles of protection, transforming them into tangible results for refugees'.³ This article looks at the *people-centred* approach noted in the *NYD* through the *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework* ('*CRRF*').⁴ In particular, Annex 1, paragraph 3 of the *CRRF* states that:

While each large movement of refugees will differ in nature, the elements noted ... provide a framework for a comprehensive and people-centred refugee response, which is in accordance with international law and best international practice ...⁵

The purpose of this article is to first, outline the people-centred approach promoted by the United Nations Development Programme ('UNDP') in 1994 through the *human security* prism. It is suggested that the people-centred approach within the *CRRF* is similar to the approach utilised by the UNDP's human security concept. This article provides a description of the UNDP's human security concept to encourage and generate ideas on revisiting the concept as part of the *CRRF*'s prospective refugee response for the Global Compact on Refugees in 2018.⁶ Second, the article highlights the conceptual commonalities

between the UNDP's human security approach and the *CRRF*'s refugee response.

II UNDP'S PEOPLE-CENTRED HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

The UNDP's concept of human security is based on the Preamble to the 1945 United Nations Charter, which seeks 'to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom'.⁷ This includes the *larger freedoms* propounded by President Franklin D Roosevelt in his 1941 *Four Freedoms Speech* which are: 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want'.⁸ These two larger freedoms became the corner stone to the UNDP's human security concept.⁹ They encapsulate safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and expression; and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life.¹⁰ Subsequently, a third freedom – 'freedom to live in dignity' was associated with the concept.¹¹ The notion of human security as freedom from want has been promoted by Japan,¹² whereas Canada and Norway promoted human security in the context of freedom from fear during periods of particular governments.¹³

Following the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report,¹⁴ Henk summarised the seven constituent parts of the human security concept as follows:¹⁵

- *Economic security*, assuring every individual a minimum requisite income.
- *Food security*, guaranteeing "physical and economic access to basic food."
- *Health security*, guaranteeing minimum protection from disease and unhealthy lifestyles.
- *Environmental security*, protecting people from the short and long-term ravages of nature, man-made threats in nature, and deterioration of the natural environment.
- *Personal security*, protecting people from physical violence, whether from the state, from external states, from violent individuals and sub-state actors, from domestic abuse, from predatory adults, or even from the individual him[her]self (as in protection from suicide).
- *Community security*, protecting people from loss of traditional relationships and values and from sectarian and ethnic violence.
- *Political security*, assuring that people "live in a society that honours their basic human rights."¹⁶

Henk noted that UN endorsement was a powerful incentive to policymakers that would eventually lead to a group of countries, along with scholars, participating in the genesis of human security at ministerial levels.¹⁷ The operationalisation of this people-centred approach called for a coordinated response and at a minimum required effective efforts to develop public sector redistributive capacity, private sector employment opportunity, and the civil society safety-net infrastructure.¹⁸ This is to be achieved together with the complementary development of justice protocols, with some provision of law enforcement, administration of justice and protection of basic human rights.¹⁹ It is said that the development of human security offered a useful guide to assist foreign policies and international development as well as a policy tool for programming in the fields of security, development and humanitarian work.²⁰ The added value has been identified as its capacity for empowerment and prevention, which can be contextualised and administered through partnerships and collaborations. Importantly, human

- 7 *Charter of the United Nations Preamble* para 1 (emphasis added).
- 8 It has been noted that the original UN objectives were formulated on the basis of the US President Franklin Roosevelt's position on 'the four fundamental freedoms': Wolfgang Benedek, 'Human Security and Human Rights Interaction' (2008) 59 *International Social Science Journal* 7, 7 (emphasis added).
- 9 UNDP, 'Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security' (Human Development Report, United Nations Development Programme, 1994) 24 <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr_1994_en_complete_nostats.pdf>.
- 10 Ibid 23.
- 11 Human Security Unit, 'Human Security Unit Strategic Plan 2014–2017' (Strategic Plan, United Nations, 2014) 5–8 <<https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/hsu/hsu%20Strategic%20Plan%202014-2017%20web%20version.pdf>>.
- 12 Hideaki Shinoda, 'Human Security Initiatives of Japan' in Hans Günter Brauch et al (eds), *Facing Global Environmental Change: Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts* (Springer-Verlag, 2009) 1097, 1100.
- 13 Yu-tai Tsai 'The Emergence of Human Security: A Constructivist View' (2009) 14(2) *International Journal of Peace Studies* 19, 21.
- 14 UNDP, above n 9.
- 15 Dan Henk, 'Human Security: Relevance and Implications' (2005) 35(2) *Parameters* 91, 93.
- 16 Ibid citing *Human Development Report 1994*, above n 9, 25–33.
- 17 Ibid 94.
- 18 Ibid 98.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Human Security Unit, above n 11, 5, 14.

- 21 Helen Clark and Filippo Grandi, '3RP: Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2017–2018 in Response to the Syria Crisis: Regional Strategic Overview' (Strategic Plan, UNDP, 24 January 2017) 3 <<http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/3RP-Regional-Strategic-Overview-2017-2018.pdf>>.
- 22 Frances Voon, 'Minding the Humanitarian-Development Gap: Where Do We Stand?' (Paper presented at the Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law Annual Conference 2016, Sydney, 18 November 2016) 5 (emphasis in original).
- 23 UNHCR, *UN Summit Commits to Protect Refugee, Migrant Rights: UN General Assembly Summit for Refugees and Migrants Adopts Key Commitments to Safeguard Those on the Move* (19 September 2016) <<http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/9/57dfa1734/un-summit-commits-protect-refugee-migrant-rights.html>>.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Sadako Ogata was the UNHCR High Commissioner (1991–2000) who advocated for the human security approach to be applied in the refugee context.
- 27 Sadako Ogata, 'Foreword' in Edward Newman and Joanne van Selm (eds), *Refugees and Forced Displacement: International Security, Human Vulnerability, and the State* (United Nations University Press, 2002) x.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Volker Türk, *The New York Declaration: Once in a Lifetime Opportunity to Enhance Refugee Protection* (11 October 2016) Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law <<http://www.kaldorcentre.e.unsw.edu.au/news/new-york-declaration-once-lifetime-opportunity-enhance-refugee-protection>>.
- 31 Ibid.

security is seen as an operational tool for comprehensive multi-sectoral collaboration in protection responses.

While the purpose of this section is to highlight salient aspects of the human security concept, it is suggested that a deeper examination of the human security approach will draw parallels with current refugee initiatives. An example is the Syria Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (or '3RP'). The 3RP is a response to the Syrian crisis 'with longer term interventions bolstering the resilience of refugee and host communities, while also capacitating national systems'.²¹ Voon noted that the 3RP 'incorporates both refugee and host country needs for immediate support *and* longer-term resilience, and has been formulated through partnerships between host governments, the UNHCR and the UNDP'.²² It is suggested that this is similar to the way in which the human security approach is operationalised.

III THE HUMAN SECURITY – CRRF NEXUS

The nexus between human security and the *CRRF* stems from the common goal of addressing freedom from fear and freedom to live with dignity through a people-centred approach applying non-discriminatory and holistic methods. Both see the value of multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral engagement in dealing with vulnerabilities of people seeking protection. In addition, both also place importance on the involvement of non-state actors such as international funding bodies (eg, the World Bank), UN and non-UN agencies (eg, UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration), local private sector engagement, local civil society participation and the involvement of faith-based and academic institutions. Importantly, both promote an integrative approach of law (international human rights law, international humanitarian law, international refugee law, etc.) to deal with common pathologies of forced migration not just in relation to the individuals seeking protection but also to the countries of origin and various transit and host countries involved.

Implicit in this nexus evaluation is that both operate with the notion that refugees and migrants are *not* to be seen as a burden because they offer great potential. The challenge lies in *unlocking* that potential.²³ What is needed to unlock the potential is to 'change gear'²⁴ in the sharing of responsibility for refugees.²⁵ It is suggested that this change of gear especially through the *CRRF* can be achieved, for example, through an appraisal of successful UNDP human security initiatives. Such an approach resonates with Ogata's²⁶ observation that a 'reappraisal of the current refugee regime is needed in order to deal effectively with the nexus between displacement and security and between displacement and development, and with external and internal movements of people'.²⁷ Ogata makes the comment that '[f]or too long the study of refugee issues has been seen as an isolated and often secondary challenge'.²⁸ Importantly, Ogata acknowledges that refugee issues must be 'analysed within a much broader context ...'.²⁹ Here is where the UNDP's human security can add to this *broader context* by exploring responsibility sharing with the refugee related multi-sectoral entities. Interestingly, the people-centred and broader context *thinking* has resurfaced recently in Türk's call for a *whole society approach*.³⁰ Similar to the people-centred methodology, Türk's suggestion is aimed at host countries 'where not only the national governments but also local authorities, civil society groups, faith communities and the private sector pool their forces to respond to refugees'.³¹ To this end, it may be useful to carry out a mapping exercise

on past human security operational frameworks. Such an exercise may expose the fact that we are revisiting parallels to an operational approach which may be reconstituted as the *CRRF*'s people-centred refugee response. Inviting the UNDP human security stakeholders, past and present, to the UNHCR's design and implementation meetings for future refugee response strategies may help shape the UNHCR's future refugee response operational framework.

IV CONCLUSION

By adopting the *NYD*, the UN Members States have indicated commitments which include developing guidelines on, inter alia, refugees seeking protection.³² The High Commissioner for Refugees has a mammoth task ahead in preparing the final proposal for the Global Compact on Refugees in his 2018 report to the UN General Assembly. As the consultative process towards the Global Compact is ongoing, it is timely that we examine ways in which a framework can be developed to include the UNDP human security approach or a hybrid of the concept. This is important because as Newman reminds us '[a]n overarching objective is to [develop] strategies through which legal, political/normative, and institutional frameworks can genuinely confront these challenges...'³³ Furthermore, as Voon noted, 'support for joined up humanitarian and development assistance must form part of fundamental norms of refugee protection'.³⁴ This is central to the UNDP's human security concept.

Policymakers need to be mindful that in developing new strategies we need to avoid new labels. Instead, it is necessary to examine previous modalities and build on the strengths of these approaches. Ultimately, we need the lessons from the past to effectively contribute to the future blueprint. Revisiting the UNDP's human security people-centred approach should be part of the UNHCR's Global Compact planning methodology. Sadako Ogata spent a decade as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees socialising the human security approach. It may be worthwhile for the current High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi, as part of the consultative process, to revisit his predecessor's contribution to UNHCR from the UNDP-human security-refugee perspective. This may add value to the UNHCR's annual report to the United Nations General Assembly in 2018 when the Global Compact on Refugees is unpacked.

32 Daniel Thomas, 'New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants Adopted by All Member States at the Historic UN Summit' (Press Release, 19 September 2016) 1 <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/un_press_release_-_new_york_declaration_-_19_september_2016.pdf>.

33 Edward Newman, 'Refugees, International Security, and Human Vulnerability: Introduction and Survey' in Edward Newman and Joanne van Selm (eds), *Refugees and Forced Displacement: International Security, Human Vulnerability, and the State* (United Nations University Press, 2002) 3, 16.

34 Voon, above n 22, 9.

