

## As world faces interconnected threats, General Assembly focuses on human security



Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro

14 April 2011 – The interconnected risks that the modern world faces, from conflicts and natural disasters to deep poverty and disease, means a much broader definition of security is needed to ensure that individuals can live their lives with dignity and autonomy, the General Assembly heard today.

Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro [told](#) the Assembly, which is holding an informal debate on human security, that recent events such as the tsunami and earthquake in Japan or the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa show that populations – whether in countries rich or poor – are as vulnerable as never before.

“That is why we need an expanded paradigm of security that encompasses a broad range of conditions threatening the survival, livelihoods and dignity of individuals,” Ms. Migiro said, noting that “threats can be as sudden and unpredictable as a tsunami or they can be as protracted and unyielding as an oppressive dictatorship.”

Today’s [debate](#) and panel discussions, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, follow the release of a human security report by [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon last year in which he urged governments to devise policies that are “people-centred.”

UN Member States are discussing how to define human security, beyond the outline from the World Summit in 2005, when global leaders agreed that it includes both freedom from fear and freedom from want.

General Assembly President Joseph Deiss told today's debate that any definition or concept of human security must put the three pillars of security, development and human rights at the heart.

He stressed that events today indicate the need for holistic responses to crises and problems which transcend national borders and clear subject boundaries.

The participants at today's panel discussions include: Margareta Wahlström, the Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction; the former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo; and Cheick Sidi Diarra, the UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

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