




Chapter 18

Prioritising Human Security by the African Union at the Emergence of the New Global Hegemony

Tazoacha Francis 

Nkafu Policy Institute,
Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation, Cameroon 
ftazoacha@foretiafoundation.org

Introduction

Human security concerns are primordial in addressing the peace and security challenges that the African continent is facing today. Human security encompasses, firstly, the protection of individuals as a strategic concern for national as well as international security; secondly, it spells out that the security conditions for people's development are not bound to traditional matters of national defence, law, and order, but rather encompass all political, economic, and social issues enabling a life free from risk and fear. The world is characterised by insecurity and full of threats on many fronts. Natural disasters, tenacious poverty, violent conflicts, protracted crises, epidemics, and economic recessions inflict adversities and undercut prospects for peace, stability, and sustainable development (UN 2018). Such crises are intricate, necessitating numerous forms of human insecurity.

When these challenges intersect, they can expand rapidly, transcending into all ways of people's existence, destroying entire communities, and crossing national borders. As noted in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolution 66/290, "human security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of their people"



(UN 2018). It calls for “people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people” (ILO 2020).

The current Russia-Ukraine war has demonstrated the dire need for the African continent to prioritise and harness human security to guarantee sustainable peace, by recognising the social, economic, and political grievances that are often the root causes of conflict and societal violence in the continent (Galliolo 2015:19). The UN definition of human security is driven by the belief that everyone deserves the right to live with freedom from fear and want. As such, there is a need to prioritise the six areas of human security through programming and activities in Africa, especially at these critical moments when the world is on the brink of a global security quagmire.

The human security approach regards people as objects of intervention but also as providers of security. The African Union (AU) thus seeks to promote a sustainable and peaceful continent in which knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer are encouraged as tools to meet the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), AU Agenda 2063, and grassroots level peacebuilding (AU 2022). The fragility of African states’ self-sustainability and continuous dependence on other countries as a lifeline seem at stake. Therefore, African leaders should prioritise the security of their people at the heart of peacebuilding, recognising the various gripes that are often the root causes of violence, to avert conflicts.

Contextual Analysis

The issue of human security has evolved along with changes in security threats in the world. These theories and perspectives on security have evolved to explain and sometimes rationalise and legitimise states’ actions through a security lens. Human security is a conceptual approach to national and worldwide security that gives dominance to human beings and their multifaceted social and economic relations.

The concept of human security presents a new and important facet to the security and human development debate. It places importance on the person, as opposed to the nation,

as non-military. The dangers presented to the individual in the human security context include diseases, environmental problems, the violation of human rights, and bad governance. The security of the state depends first on the security of the individual. Therefore, human security is fundamental to national security (Lautensach & Lautensach 2020:46).

The notion of human security epitomises a shift from the conformist security concept, which focuses on state security. The themes of the human security approach are meant to protect people from traditional and non-traditional threats such as poverty and disease. Moving the security agenda outside state security does not insinuate substituting it, but somewhat involves perfecting and consolidating it. Dominant to this approach is the understanding that human security deficiencies can dent peace and stability within and between states, while over-relying on national security can be damaging to human wellbeing (Hussein *et al* 2004:8). The state remains a pivotal provider of security, but national security is not a sufficient *sine qua non* for human safety.

Since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 that ended the Thirty Years' War, the concept of security was linked to the state. Therefore, the state had the exclusive right to decide what security was and how to guarantee it (Croxtton 1999). The all-inclusive idea of protecting the security of individuals advances itself to a variation of elucidations fashioned by relative comprehension of what founds a threat to the security of individuals, how the intensity and impact of any given threat can be measured, and by what means the threat could be avoided. The impression of spreading the notion of security from national security to individual human beings was first expressed by the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues in 1982 (Walt 1991). The Common Security Report provided the first wide-ranging criticism of the military method as the sole route to security, while stressing the need to dedicate due attention to the relationship between security and the welfare of individuals.

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union led to a shift in world hegemony, thus leading to the transformation of the OAU into the AU in 2002 (SAHO 2017).

The collapse of communism thus gave way to the restructuring of the African initiative to guarantee sustainable development through the advancement of participatory democracy and good governance. The development of the security treatise was also shaped by the need to address the global social problems at the threshold of globalisation (Frey 2008:46). The probable threats to individuals' lives and welfare were extended from being primarily military to broadly covering economic, social, environmental, and health apprehensions.

With the immediate post-Cold War era and the new development roadmap, the initial definition of human security was coined in 1994 when Mahbub ul Haq drew attention to the concept in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Report. Beyond territorial and military concerns, the report argued that human security is fundamentally concerned with human life and dignity (Jolly & Ray 2006:14).

Lending credence to this premise, the AU working modality is based on principles rooted in the human security approach and focuses on people's aspirations to be free from fear, want, and indignity. What Africa envisages in Agenda 2063 is a prosperous continent where citizens feel safe in all aspects of their lives, have the income and opportunities to attain wellbeing, and know that their rights and dignity are entirely treasured. As such, the application of human security in the development of an index for advancing and monitoring progress towards Agenda 2063 and the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative is a natural extension of venerable practice within the AU (UNTFHS 2019). To further galvanise the concept as a priority, the AU has come up with the African Human Security Index (AHSI), which is an initiative to provide a holistic valuation of human security through the seven dimensions of economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. This follows both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda on the supremacy of human security as an enabler and prerequisite for sustainable and inclusive development (AU 2018).

The AU human security programme in the areas of peace and security is clearly expressed in Article 4(h) of the Constitutive

Act (CA) of the AU. Article 4(h), which empowers the union to intervene in the affairs of a member state to “prevent war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity”, was inserted into the CA, as several informed writers on the CA have eloquently argued, intending to protect ordinary people in Africa from abusive governments (AU 2020). To provide an operational arm to this specific human security element, the AU made room for the creation of an African Standby Force (ASF) charged with the task of intervening militarily in states for humanitarian purposes.

The condition put in place for human security intervention under the AU exceeds the establishment made for interference in the internal affairs of a country in the UN Charter. The CA has set fewer restrictions compared to those outlined previously in any global legal procedure. The conditions of war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity by the architects of the CA as grounds for intervention have made a clearer set of principles for the union to arbitrate in a state to protect human security (AU 2020). The AU, disparate from other international organisations, does not need the consent of a state to get involved in its internal affairs when populations are at risk.

Currently, Africa seems to stand at a crossroads as the East and the West struggle for supremacy at a theatre in Ukraine. Ukraine’s urge to join the European Union (EU) has been a clear demonstration of human security in earnest. Having dealt with the imperialist West and expansionist Russia, the African countries are constrained to adopt a cautious approach towards the Russia-Ukraine war by only pleading for the secession of aggressions (Harshé 2020). Understandably, despite their growing relations with Russia, African countries have had well-structured ties with the EU countries and the US for some decades.

If the West aspires to reduce its dependence on Russia for energy security, the African countries, endowed with energy, could well be used as an alternative source of energy to strike partnership deals with EU countries and the US in the long run. For instance, Tanzania has the sixth largest natural gas reserve in Africa, Senegal has recently discovered 40 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and Nigeria is already a liquefied natural gas (LNG)

supplier to several EU countries. Along with Niger and Algeria, Nigeria is also embarking on a huge project, the Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline, to enhance the energy supply to the EU markets (Harshé 2020). Thus, just like Russia, the EU countries and the US will also continue to see the importance of closer relations with the African continent.

Russia's violation of international law through its aggression in Ukraine has provoked several African countries to be on a very precarious course without siding with any of the contending parties. The positions of African states could be better understood through the prism of imperialism. Though in the past, to counter Western imperialism, the former United States of Soviet Republic (USSR) had supported the anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles in Africa, Russia has now emerged as one of the expansionist powers in Africa, with imperialist tendencies. Taking into consideration some African nations' dependence on the Russian Federation as well as the Western powers, several African nations have adopted a cautious style while serving their national interests in the process of navigating the conflict between Russia and Ukraine (Harshé 2020). Therefore, the AU should muster this cautiousness to prioritise the security of its citizens.

Conceptual Framework

The Commission on Human Security (2010) defines human security as the ability to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical and pervasive threats and situations. The General Assembly Resolution 66/290 (2012) holds that human security is “an approach to assist the Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of their people.”

It necessitates responses that are centred on people, comprehensive, tailored to the specific context, and focused on prevention, thereby enhancing the protection and empowerment of all individuals. The approach is a recognised analytical and

design framework that supports more inclusive and preventive responses by the UN, cutting across sectors, developing contextually relevant solutions, and adopting collaborations to help realise a world free from fear, want, and indignity. It gives primacy to people and their complex social and economic relations.

These understandings lay emphasis on the fact that human security places the individual at the centre of analysis and, therefore, take into consideration a broad range of circumstances that threaten survival, livelihood, and dignity, and identify the threshold below which human life is unbearably vulnerable. They also capture that human security is as well based on a multisectoral understanding of insecurities. So, human security necessitates an expanded understanding of threats, including causes of insecurity relating, for instance, to economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security (UNTFHS 2009). Therefore, the objective of human security is to protect the important fundamentals of all human lives from critical persistent threats, in a way that is dependable on long-term human fulfilment (Alkire 2003:2).

Many believe that, to guarantee human security, there is the need to deliberately be protective. This is by recognising that people and communities are fatally susceptible to inevitable events such as financial crises, violent conflicts, AIDS, national policies that undercut public and private investments in healthcare, terrorist attacks, water shortages, enduring penury, or pollution in a distant land (Alkire 2003:2). Many threats are far more destructive if they are unexpected. Thus, it becomes crucial to adequately prepare and safeguard for such occurrences. The human security approach desires institutions to offer protection which is institutionalised, not intermittent; receptive, not unyielding; and anticipatory, but not reactive. In this way, people will face inevitable downturns while maintaining a sense of security.

Other schools of thought believe that human security is contained in scope and that it does not cover all necessary, important, and profound aspects of human living. Rather, it

identifies and protects a limited vital core of human activities and abilities (Olufemi & Bello 2017). These may be described multifariously, taking into consideration fundamental human rights, elementary aptitudes, or absolute needs. The 'vital core' is a non-technical term for the concerns that lie behind human security. It may be defined in terms of capabilities – referring to the freedom individuals have to act and achieve their potential. Foundations of the vital core are fundamental to human rights, which all persons and institutions are obliged to respect or provide, even if the obligations are not perfectly specifiable (Alkire 2003:3). The rights and freedoms in the vital core pertain to survival, to livelihood, and to basic dignity. Persons who enjoy fundamental security in their survivals, livelihoods, and dignities, even during terrible circumstances like poverty, war, or disaster, would be in a more favourable position than billions are at present. The task of prioritising rights and capabilities, each of which is argued by some to be fundamental, is a value judgment and a difficult one, which proper institutions may best undertake. Yet the judgment is necessary if human security is to be genuine and operative (Alkire 2003:4; UNOCHA 2009:7).

To other researchers, human security is people centred. Thus, it focuses the attention of institutions on human individuals and their communities worldwide. This emphasis on human beings distinguishes human security from the objective of protecting state territories that dominated security policies in the 19th and 20th centuries. Human security shifts focus onto persons, regardless of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, or other distinguishing characteristics. In this way, the human security approach parallels the movement in economic development and international law to shift the emphasis from instrumental objectives such as growth, or state rights to human development and human rights. In doing so, the human being becomes the 'end' of development, not only as a 'means' to increased economic productivity or legal coherence, and these various activities in turn become "people centred" (UNOCHA 2009:7).

Some other people focus on the fact that human security is squarely on human lives. But to protect human lives successfully, stakeholders must consciously identify and prepare for discrete

threats. Threats to human security are critical in that they threaten to cut into the core activities and functions of human lives. Such terrorisation sometimes is unexpected for example in economic collapse. Furthermore, some threats are pervasive. That is to say, the threat is within the population under deliberation. The threat may be recurrent; it is not an abnormal event for which strategic preparation is impossible. Of course, persistent threats may not occur *en masse*; a man may be incapacitated by a work accident or by a wild animal, and his family may live henceforth in penury. This may seem to be an isolated rather than inescapable incident, yet it is multiplied millions of times over, making health insecurity qualify as a pervasive menace.

Human security focuses on a limited core of individual activities and abilities, on a minimal subset of human development and human rights. It is not sufficient for human fulfilment or flourishing, which is the ongoing process of seeking and realising values by people in groups and communities. It would be unfortunate or even tragic if institutions aiming to achieve human security were to accomplish their objective in such a way that weakened people's aptitude to be fulfilled and enjoy a far greater range of freedoms. People's lives must not only be protected *per se*; they must be protected in a manner that is consistent with their long-term good. The importance of processes – governance, participation, transparency, capacity-building, and institution building – can hardly be overestimated (OHCHR 2022). The appropriate way to affect this consistency between protection and longer-term development will vary. Rudimentary poverty programmes may attend to wider goals simply by encouraging deep participation; refugee camps may teach transferable vocational skills or may be sited where they will not degrade the local environment. In some places, dangers, climate, or the rhythm of grief may be such that longer-term considerations should be set aside for a while. But they should not ever fall entirely from view.

The well-known paradigm of the concept of sustainable development kindles governments to re-evaluate and redefine their policies so that they can address a wide range of current development issues more efficiently. The quest for sustainable

development changes the perception of the future by influencing decisions about process designs, product designs, and city configurations. In this sense, sustainable development offers both opportunities and challenges, but most importantly, it offers solutions (Roosa 2008). Considering that Africa has become the farmland for the West, developed countries have based their development on the exploitation of the natural resources of Third World countries, including the exploitation of people. According to the environmental drive, developed countries have propagated whatever practices will alleviate poverty and enhance peace and security. The present tug-of-war between the East and the West has shown the amber light that Africa must prioritise enhancing its human security, and this can only be done through sustainable development initiatives. Sustainable development is a development model that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Considering that Africa has become the farmland for the West, developed countries have based their development on the exploitation of the natural resources of the Third World countries, including the exploitation of people.

Prioritising Human Security Concerns

Human security challenges facing Africa are huge, extending from conflicts to poverty, food and health insecurities, refugeeism, bad governance, and environmental dilapidation (Akokpari 2007:46). They deal with the protection and expansion of the people's fundamental freedom. They need to shield people from severe threats and enables them to take charge of their lives with integrated policies that focus on people's existence, livelihood, and dignity, during downturns as well as prosperity (Etim *et al* 2018:1190). Geopolitical tensions are rising due to global power relations. Fanaticism and bigotry are rising among different groups, including ethnic and religious groups, and the numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide have hit record highs. Additionally, vital aspects of human dignities, such as the rule of law and freedom of speech, continue to be infringed.

Currently, when the world order is at a crossroads, African countries must rethink co-operation, development, and self-reliance in the face of the fight against global hegemony whose theatre is in Ukraine. The war is impacting African countries that rely on Russia and Ukraine, especially in terms of food supply and agricultural inputs, among others. African countries' overreliance on the developed countries for survival has been exaggerated despite the abundant resources that the continent is endowed with. The events unfolding in Ukraine mean that African countries must make meaningful use of their resources to enhance their sustainability, development, and self-reliance.

The nefariousness of these challenges necessitates the shared exertions of the AU, RECs, and individual African countries. The AU and the RECs must break down the repositories across sectors and institutions because g and people can no longer provide broken and disjointed responses. Africa must enhance wide-ranging partnerships that profit from the proportions of youth, women, and those whose contributions are hardly taken into consideration, such as the indigenous peoples like the Khomani San of South Africa. The focus of the stakeholders must shift, and resources allocated towards prevention to anticipate crises and act early to lessen their most distressing effects. Thus, the AU needs to harness and exploit resources and invest in human security challenges.

Developing Good Governance

Africa has thrown its doors open to the rest of the world and its resources are being carted away at the expense of its citizens in the name of globalisation. This unwarranted consumption and indiscriminate resource exploitation results in growing injustice and environmental degradation. Each of these above-stated factors magnifies the other, leading to a double exposure of spiralling insecurity, which calls for good governance. The mutual reinforcement between these trends can only be interrupted if active steps are undertaken toward environmental governance and security by the continental body, regional blocs, and nation states in Africa. Adherence to these steps will positively reposition the destinies of continental Africans. Countries like Botswana

and Mauritius are promoting good governance and investing a lot to guarantee the security of their citizens through rigorous sustainable use of their resources in a judicious manner.

Promoting Food Security

Africa is endowed with vast arable land and human capital to enhance the continent's quest for abundant food and development. The Russian invasion has taught Africans a veritable lesson that self-reliance and food self-sufficiency is indispensable. If the continent prioritised and invested in this sector, it would spur food security and improvement in livelihood, including sustainable development and enduring peace. Food security exists when all people always have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO & UNTFHS 2016).

Prioritising Healthcare for Human Security

Health is an indispensable component of human growth and individual wellbeing, and this is increasingly being recognised at the universal level. Health has been documented in most constitutional documents as a basic human right. It is important to know that health security, human security, and human rights are hence closely interrelated. This obligation needs to be vitalised. The right to health was not adequately translated into special claims on available resources, nor did health status become the test of social and economic development. The commitment to this right depends on the value assigned to health by individuals, states, and the international community (WHO 2002:5). This commitment should also be a determining factor in the way African states should allocate resources to development priorities. However, the compelling force of the committee has not found concrete expression in continental and national policy.

Despite the challenges, the AU has made numerous efforts to enhance health-related human security. In 2007, the AU developed the first Africa Health Strategy (AHS) 2007–2015, supported by the 3rd Conference of African Ministers of Health

held in the same year and adopted by the 11th Session of the Ordinary Executive Council in 2008. In 2015, the meeting of the 1st African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Health, Population and Drug Control (STC-HPDC) recommended that a revised African health strategy be developed for the period 2016 -2030, according to an appraisal of the early strategy the under consideration of the AU health policy instruments and integrating research and innovation for health (AU 2015).

The epidemics such as the Ebola virus and the COVID-19 pandemic that took the world by surprise in late 2019 have taught African countries that it is vital to build their healthcare systems for any eventualities. Thus, there is the need to prioritise equity of access to healthcare for every African country rather than depend on the developed world. Every national health scheme should safeguard universal access to adequate quality care and evade prejudicial and unfair acumen between individuals, groups, and communities. The need for equity in access to healthcare must be an ultimate objective of the health sector reform process. Health security can be significantly strengthened in Africa by its major creditors through the enablement of indiscrete conditionalities attached to assistance. While conditionalities play a crucial role in certain situations, like preventing aid intended for poverty alleviation from being redirected to military expenditures, it is unwise to apply them universally (Akokpari 2007:51). Health is one of the vital building blocks of every society (WHO 2002:7). It is essential for economic growth, poverty alleviation, and social justice. It is therefore a prerequisite for hope, peace, development, and tranquillity.

Human Security through Economic Development

The 1990s experienced sweeping changes in conflict around the world. The swift waning in interstate conflicts was matched in the opposite direction by the fast rise in intra-state disputes, conflicts, and emergencies. The economic ramifications of conflict are devastating. This is because, during a conflict, a society diverts some of its resources from industrious activities to demolition. For example, Somalia has been reduced to a failed state because of prolonged war in the country. Therefore, there is a double

loss: the loss of resources that contributed to pre-conflict production, and the loss from the damage inflicted (Lautensach & Lautensach 2020).

The active labour force is lost with the death and migration of people, and the damage to the country's infrastructure and environment encumbers economic development and activity. The impact of conflict on the economy of a nation is not limited to the country experiencing it. As countries are closely interwoven by the global economy, when conflict affects the economy in one country it often affects others, especially neighbours. For example, the Russian war in Ukraine has impacted not only Europe but the rest of the world, with Africa the most hit. From some of these ugly experiences experienced in Africa, the AU should continuously harp Silencing the Guns by 2030 while improving other human security challenges across the continent.

Prioritising Human Dignity

It is the absolute right of every human being to live a quality and valuable life with dignity and to make choices and seek opportunities that empower them. According to Mary Robinson (2002), the only long-term guarantor of security is through ensuring respect for human rights and humanitarian law. In that light, African leaders should make every effort so that every African has the right to exercise his or her civic rights, choose their leaders, worship, and belong to any association. Africa should be transformed into a continent where every person has access to justice, peace, and security.

African leaders should create an environment to sustain a healthy and productive life, where illiteracy and ignorance are reduced drastically, where people are free to live and to live freely, and where peace and justice is the order of the day. Human indignity and insecurity are threatened when some Africans are seen as strangers in the continent and their rights are threatened. Thus, breaking barriers in the continent should be a milestone to guarantee human security in a sustainable way in Africa. As the world navigates this critical moment, African leaders and lawmakers at the national, regional, and continental levels should

create the enabling environments for the implementation of self-reliant policy for the benefit of all.

Individual and Community Security Concerns

Studies on the protection of lives pay specific attention to the preservation of human lives and pressures that hamper the fulfilment of people's basic values. They aim to reorientate the essence of prioritising the concept of security, towards safeguarding the basic needs of ordinary and vulnerable people, thus answering the question 'whose security?' with: 'each of us and all of us'. The satisfaction of human wants and the art of living a happy life, free from wants, are what Africans all cherish. Therefore, it is plausible to advance an argument that human insecurity in Africa has killed many Africans, taking into consideration the increase of millions of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) over the past few decades. Between 1970 and 2020, for example, Africa suffered more than 40 wars, most of them stemming from, and aggravating, human insecurity (UN 2022). Of the 16 wars that took place in Africa between 1990 and 1997, only two were interstate; the other 14 were intra-state. In South Sudan and Somalia, for example, the civil war has killed about 382 900 people since 2013, while the violence in Somalia has killed more than 500 000 people since 1991 (Makinda & Okumu 2022).

If the AU, the RECs, and the respective African nations cannot protect their people and communities by providing their basic needs, there is no *raison d'être* for the state whose people are dying of basic needs. Therefore, in these moments of global geopolitical uncertainty, Africans should strive to put the interest of their citizens at the forefront by strategising earnestly to meet the basic needs of their people by judiciously making use of the abundant resources with which the continent is endowed for the interest of fellow Africans.

Therefore, policymakers in Africa must make every effort now to contribute immensely to the restructuring and concretising of continental peace, justice, and sustainable development initiatives to provide benefits to a broad share of

Africans. The efforts should meet the goals and objectives of the United Nations SDGs 2030, Goal 16 and Aspiration 4 Goals 13, 14, and 15 of the AU Agenda 2063 (AU 2020).

Environmental and Human Security Concerns

Environmental and human security concerns are crucial to states' security in Africa. This is because most people are involved in daily struggles to survive. Persistent and worsening resource inadequacies and deprivations fuel these individual struggles for survival, coupled with political conflicts among different groups competing to manage and benefit from scarce resources. Therefore, there are many concords on the importance of enlarging the theory of national security in African states, but there is no consensus on the best possible approach for improving environmental and human security challenges (Purkitt 2009).

African countries have been suffering too much from the unfavourable impacts of climate change and, as a result, the AU has been presenting their stance to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). African states and the AU have repeatedly insisted that richer industrial countries, which carry the greater responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions, should therefore take the initiative to solve the problems associated with climate change. According to the African parties involved in the UNFCCC, Africa's special destiny should be taken into account as far as reducing the exploitation of fossil fuels is concerned. Recently, the AU developed a comprehensive strategy to address climate change and its challenges. This strategy is meant to develop resource-efficient industry and make key sectors such as agriculture and food systems, water resources, energy, infrastructure, and transport more climate-resilient (Pichon 2022; UNFCCC 2020).

Even though there are some efforts to address climate change, they must ensure environmental security as a crucial factor of human security in a continent challenged by three pressing issues – climate change, environmental degradation, and migration. These environmental challenges have been the drivers of conflicts in Africa. A focus on climate change, environmental

degradation, and migration as separate but important subjects, the impact of these on human security, and the potential for conflict, has not received the required level of attention from the AU, RECs, and member states (IOM 2008).

Conclusion

In the current global landscape marked by a hegemonic struggle, the African continent is undergoing a process of strengthening its regional approach to security. This involves prioritising the security of individuals through a human-centred approach. The AU, at this critical moment, needs to take into consideration human security concerns at various levels in its strategy to build a continental security system, as demonstrated by its crisis prevention and peacekeeping mechanisms and other programmes in response to the present struggle, among major global powers, for the international balance of power.

Considering the war between Russia and Ukraine as an 'Armageddon' between the East and the West, African countries must not only be non-aligned, but create avenues for resilience by investing in their human security. The era of dependency should be over. Therefore, the battle for peace should be fought on two fronts. The first is the security front, where victory spells freedom from fear. The second is the socio-economic front, where victory spells freedom from want. Only victory on both fronts can assure the African continent of enduring peace through a sustainable development paradigm.

The adoption of a human security approach has the potential to greatly strengthen Africa's Peace and Security Architecture, reinforcing the AU's support to the RECs and member states in implementing Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, through a comprehensive and integrated strategy. This approach would contribute to more resilient societies, where people are safe from chronic threats such as abject poverty, hunger, disease, violence, and repression, and protected from sudden and hurtful disruptions in their daily lives.

References

- Alkire, S. (2003). "A Conceptual Framework for Human Security". CRISE (Department of International Development, University of Oxford).
- AU. (2015). "Africa Health Strategy 2016–2030". Available at https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/24098-au_ahs_strategy_clean.pdf.
- AU. (2020). "AU and UN Join Efforts towards Developing an African Human Security Index". Available at <https://au.int/fr/node/38208>.
- AU. (2022). "Linking Agenda 2063 and the SDGs". Available at <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/sdgs>.
- Croxtan, D. (1999). "The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 and the Origins of Sovereignty". *The International History Review*, 21(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.1999.9640869>
- Frey, K. (2008). "Development, Good Governance, and Local Democracy". *Brazilian Political Science Review* 2, No. 2: 39–73. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1981-3845200800020002>
- Harshé, R. (2022). "The Russo-Ukraine War: The African States Response to Russian Imperialism". Observer Research Foundation. Available at <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/african-states-response-to-russian-imperialism/>.
- Hussein, K., Gnisci, D. & Wanjiru, J. (2004). „Security and Human Security: An Overview of Concepts and Initiatives What Implications for West Africa?”. *Issues Paper*, Cedex-Paris. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- ILO. (2020). "Building Effective Resilience for Human Security in Caribbean Countries". 22 December. Available at https://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/social-finance/news/WCMS_765016/lang-en/index.htm.
- IOM. (2008). "Addressing the Impact on Human Security of Environment and Migration Issues". 7 February. Available at <https://www.iom.int/news/addressing-impact-human-security-environment-and-migration-issues>.

- Jolly, R. & Ray, B.D. (2006). "Human Development Report Office National Human Development". *Report Series NHDR Occasional 5*. United Nations Development Programme. Available at <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents//human-security.human-security>.
- Lautensach, A. & Lautensach, S. (eds). (2020). *Human Security in World Affairs: Problems and Opportunities (2nd edition)*. Victoria, BC: BCcampus & University of Northern British Columbia.
- Lipset, S.M., & Bence, G. (1994). "Anticipations of the Failure of Communism". *Theory and Society*, 23(2), 169–210. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00993814>
- Makinda, S. & Okumu, F. (2022). "The African Union as a Human Security Arrangement". Available at <https://www.elgaronline.com/display/book/9781800376977/book-part-9781800376977-33.xml>.
- Olufemi, A. & Bello, S.A. (2017). "Human Security in Africa: Beyond Armoury and the Rhetoric of Law". *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues* 21 (2), 50–67.
- Pichon, E. (2022). "The African Union's first climate strategy and EU-Africa Climate Cooperation". Available at [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2022\)738201](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2022)738201).
- Purkitt, E.H. (ed). (2009). *African Environmental and Human Security in the 21st Century*. Cambria.
- SAHO. (2017). "The End of the Cold War and a New Global World Order 1989 to Present". *South African History Online*. Available at <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/grade-12-topic-4-end-cold-war-and-new-global-world-order-1989-present>.
- UNFCCC. (2020). "Climate Change Is an Increasing Threat to Africa". Available at <https://unfccc.int/news/climate-change-is-an-increasing-threat-to-africa>.
- United Nations Trust for Human Security. (2018). "What is Human Security?". Available at <https://www.un.org/humansecurity/what-is-human-security/>.
- United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. (2010). "Application of the Human Security Concept". United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security – Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations.

- United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. (2019). "African Human Security Index: Development and Promotion of the African Security Index". Available at <https://www.un.org/humansecurity/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/19-005-AHSI-programme-summary-FINAL.pdf>.
- Walt, S.M. (1991). "The Renaissance of Security Studies". *International Studies Quarterly*, 35(2), 211-239. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600471>