

Definitions and Dimensions of Human Security

Almost everyone feels insecure at times. A single stressful incident, if not overly traumatic, does not usually cause severe insecurity. However, some people are better equipped to deal with stressful situations than others.

Those possessing the skills and knowledge needed to cope with feelings of insecurity are able to deter long-term fear or panic in the case of a threat to their security. They are able to avoid, or protect themselves, from most situations of insecurity; but if they can't, then they are able to mitigate or cope with these threats and eventually regain a feeling of security. This form of resilience is referred to in this **Report** as *securitability*, a word devised by the **Report's** authors. Individuals with a high degree of *securitability* read feelings of insecurity as warning signs that they must take action to protect themselves – alone or with others, rather than fall into apathy and despair.

Individuals with a low degree of *securitability*, however, are more prone to experiencing chronic insecurity, which may lead to extremely negative and irreversible consequences. The lack of *securitability factors* in their personal characteristics, combined with either a series of continued, unpleasant events or a sudden trauma, may push them over what is termed in this **Report** as a *security threshold*.

Due to their role as early warning signals, not all feelings of insecurity are to be considered as undesirable, provided that they are dealt with quickly and that they spur the individual into action. This **Report** does not look at peoples' inclinations to seek excitement from insecure situations (such as bungee jumping or mercenary fighting in wars), because these are risks that people choose to take of their own free will.

Human security definitions

Numerous definitions of *human security* have been offered as people throughout the world continue to seek one common, unifying understanding of it. The *UNDP Human Development Report 1994* defined human security as "freedom from fear and freedom from want." Fear and want prevent people from

choosing an appropriate way of life for themselves, which is why human security is a pre-requisite for *human development* (see definition below).

Human security is a people-centred concept. It centres upon individuals and population groups, rather than on countries. National security and military security are not the same as human security, with which they sometimes may come into conflict.

The general concepts of security and insecurity are universal and applicable to both rich and poor, women and men, children and the elderly.

Human development and human security

Human development is an alternative development concept introduced by the United Nations Development Programme in 1990. The concept of human development contests the conventional understanding of development as merely economic growth and material wealth. Human development is thus defined as the expansion of capabilities and opportunities for human beings to lead full lives. In addition to income, it focuses on education, health, freedom of choice, participation and other aspects deemed relevant in specific local contexts. Human development is generally measured by the Human Development Index (HDI), which includes indicators on income, literacy levels, and life expectancy. These indicators are often reviewed to reflect country-relevant situations. (See Appendix for the *Review of Latvia's Main Human Development Indicators*.)

The human development paradigm includes various analytical aspects, such as human poverty and human security. Human poverty is a state of deprivation with regard to the capabilities and opportunities essential for human development. Poverty may manifest itself as the lack of the capability to live beyond a certain age, the lack of the opportunity to participate in government decisions affecting one's life at a local or national level, and, of course, the lack of a sufficient level of income. Human poverty is general-

ly measured by the Human Poverty Index (HPI), which is based on the number of people living below poverty thresholds set in each dimension of human development – the percentage of people not expected to surpass the age of 60, the percentage of functionally illiterate adults, the percentage of people with disposable incomes of less than 50% of the median, the proportion of long-term unemployed (12 months and more). Human poverty indicators and poverty threshold levels may be adjusted to reflect country-relevant situations.

In the early 1990s, the United Nations Development Programme published the first global reports on human development in which human security was a basic theme. The *UNDP Human Development Report 1993* stated that “the concept of security must change – from an exclusive stress on national security to a much greater stress on people’s security, from security through armaments to security through human development, from territorial security to food, employment and environmental security” (UNDP, 1993).

Box 1.1

Terms used in this Report

Community – a group of people united by geographical location, some aspect of social identity and/or common motives.

Human development – the expansion of people’s capabilities and opportunities to lead full lives. Its three essential elements are: long and healthy lives (health); the opportunity to continually acquire knowledge (education); and access to the resources needed for maintaining a decent standard of living (material well-being).

Human security – the state of being free of fear and free of want.

Levels of security – security at the individual, family, community, national and international level.

Networks – contacts and relations among people.

Networking – a process whereby people approach each other for mutual help and/or support.

Risk – a possible negative occurrence.

Security (*drošība*) – the state of being free of threats to one’s well-being.

Security constellations – configurations of security providers at different *levels of security* with coordinated strategies to deal with commonly defined human security issues.

Security providers – individuals, organizations and institutions that offer people security and a sense of security.

Security strategies (personal) – an individual’s consciously developed plans to prevent insecurity and feelings of insecurity, and to minimize the effects of insecurity and cope with it if it cannot be avoided.

Security threshold (*a non-technical term*) – the crossing into an undesirable state of being in which one loses one’s ability to take action as a result of a set of negative factors. Without an improvement in the situation or an increase in *securitability* factors, an individual beyond the security threshold is unable to regain a sense of security.

Seuritability – the ability to avoid insecure situations and to retain a sense of security when such situations do occur, as well as the ability reestablish one’s security and sense of security when these have been compromised.

Seuritability factors – the internal traits of individuals (thoughts and emotions, knowledge and skills) and the action they take, along with external structural conditions (medical services, access to the labour market, etc.) upon which human security depends.

Sense of security (*drošums or drošības sajūta*) – a person’s internal state of feeling secure resulting from the cumulative effect of objective and subjective factors.

Social capital – advantages (such as material, psychological, health) gained by those individuals, families and groups with the best mutual contacts. This term is still being developed.

Threat – an imminent negative occurrence.

The *UNDP Human Development Report 1994 – New Dimensions of Human Security* presented the first comprehensive analysis of the concept of human security (UNDP, 1994). That Report stressed that human security consists of two attributes: 1) freedom from chronic threats to security, e.g. hunger, disease, and oppression; as well as 2) protection from sudden and painful changes in everyday life, at the workplace, at home or in the neighbourhood. The Report identified seven important realms of security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security.

The *UNDP Human Development Report 1994* proposed the development of an index for objectively measuring human security in a similar manner to the Human Development Index (HDI) and Human Poverty Index (HPI). To date, as this Report on Human Development is under preparation, no Human Security Index has been developed that could be placed alongside the two other indices. This is because different countries and cultures interpret risks differently and attribute varying degrees of significance to them, and because researchers cannot agree on methods for measuring subjective aspects of human security in a way that can be compared. However, researchers around the world are continuing to work toward the development of a Human Security Index.

The international context of human security

Individuals, their families, their communities and the political structures that they develop – such as local and national governments – have sought throughout the centuries to safeguard human security. Human security became an issue of concern on the international level when the International Committee of the Red Cross was founded in Geneva in 1863. It is mentioned in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other agreements.

Since the last decade of the 20th century the international community has been paying increasing attention to humanitarian crises in such countries as Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, East Timor and Kosovo and intervening in order to protect human security. Millions of people have become victims of these crises due to the failure or inability of national governments to protect the human security of those within their jurisdiction.

The 1990s also brought increased attention to other dangers that threaten people across national borders, such as HIV/AIDS and other diseases, arms sales, terrorism, the trafficking of human beings, the spread of drugs, environmental degradation, the illegal flow of capital, etc.

At the 2000 Millennium Summit of the United Nations, Secretary-General Kofi Annan invited the world to stand up for fundamental human freedoms, including the right to live free of fear and free of want, thus emphasizing the need not only for human development, but also for one of its most important aspects – human security.

The UN Human Security Commission was then set up to define the scope of human security. It developed the concept in two directions or projects:

The Conflict Project investigated situations in which individuals and communities are confronted with extraordinary situations, such as when they are persecuted and forced to leave their homes. It examined the special needs of refugees and victims of conflict, and involved planning strategies for enhancing human development in the most extreme situations of violence.

The Human Development Project studied insecurity in connection with poverty, health, education, gender inequality and other issues, including globalization. The role of community organizations, State and international institutions in reducing insecurity was examined along with the acuteness and prevalence of various threats to security.

In its endeavours to arrive at a definition of human security, the Commission agreed that human security entails:

- A clear focus on individual human lives in contrast to the notion of “national security” in the military context;
- An understanding and acknowledgement of the role of civil society, including private corporations and NGOs, and that of social networks in making human lives more secure;
- An emphasis on curtailing the downside risks to human life, rather than on the expansion of human freedom, which is a broader goal of human development;
- An emphasis on the participation and empowerment of individuals and communities in achieving human security;
- An understanding of new manifestations of problems and threats (such as organized crime,

cross-border trafficking in women and children, the proliferation of narcotics) at the global level.

Other international organizations and national governments are also involved in deepening an understanding of and finding solutions to threats to human security (see Box 1.2). Research on human security is taking place in many of the world's leading universities.

However, a number of political scientists see the proposed definitions of human security as being too different and diverse. The absence of criteria for setting priorities is also problematic (Paris, 2001). Harvard researchers, for example, advocate that only violence (of both criminal and military origin) should be made the subject of annual comparative reports of human security at the global level (Mack, 2002).

In June 2003, the Commission on Human Security published the most comprehensive report on human security to date – *Human Security Now*. The report

provides a detailed analysis of human security, as well as policy recommendations for improving human security on a global scale. It also announces the establishment of a permanent advisory council on human security at the UN.

Human security in Latvia

In 2002 Latvia was classified for the first time as a country with a high level of human development, according to the criteria of the Human Development Index. This might lead one to think that Latvia has no major human security issues. There have not been large numbers of deaths due to violence or natural disasters. The population is not suffering from famine, regular terrorist attacks or widespread disease. Major economic, political and social changes since independence have provided individuals with opportunities to act on their own behalf. Nevertheless, each reader of this **Report** in Latvia can likely

Box 1.2

International actors involved with human security

Common Security Forum – founded in 1992 at the University of Cambridge. It involves politicians and scholars from 56 countries for the purpose of discussing and expanding the notion of human security.

Commission on Human Security – established in 2001 under the auspices of the United Nations. It promotes public understanding, engagement and support of human security; is developing the concept of human security as an operational tool for policy formulation and implementation; and has proposed a programme of action to address critical and pervasive threats to human security.

Human Security Network – an association of 12 nations* dedicated to supporting national endeavours for improving human security. Topics of discussion at annual meetings include such international human security issues as conventions on corruption, landmines, torture, children's rights, interfaith dialogue, terrorism, NGO co-operation on the environment, human rights, etc. The most urgent threats to human security are considered at each meeting.

A number of countries treat human security as a priority in foreign affairs:

- **Japan** – sees human security as a fundamental pillar of foreign affairs, defining it as “freedom from prevailing threats to survival, daily life, and dignity.” It has established the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security that supports human security improvement projects worldwide.
- **Canada** – supports international projects in line with the following definition of human security: “freedom from threats to human rights, security or life.”
- **Norway** – supports “the right to live in freedom from fear” by concentrating on a narrow scope of projects: preventative operations in peacekeeping and limiting the spread of small arms.

* Austria, Canada, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland and Thailand

name friends or relatives who feel that they cannot sufficiently influence the course of their own lives and the development of society at large.

At the inception of this **Report**, there was no systematic body of information about human security in Latvia: on the main issues of concern to the country's inhabitants, on the principal risk groups, or on the methods used by people to achieve a sense of security. To gain preliminary answers to these questions, the UNDP Latvia commissioned the **UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002** of 1000 permanent residents of Latvia over the age of 18. The core issues raised and the methodology of this **Survey** are described in detail in the Methodology section at the end of this **Report**. The **Survey's** results are available in SPSS format at <http://www.undp.riga.lv>.

The **Survey** identifies the main issues of concern to respondents in their personal lives and establishes what the respondents perceive as general sources of insecurity. It also offers an insight into the circumstances, relations, institutions, actions and strategies that provide a sense of security. Through confidential written questions, the **Survey** identifies those factors that are most likely to cause the respondents extreme anxiety. Most importantly, it establishes a profile of individuals who risk experiencing the highest degrees of insecurity and anxiety.

The **Survey** was followed up by a series of interviews and case studies, together with an analysis of other studies, from which the **Report's** authors derived a set of five *securitability factors*. These fac-

tors are considered to be most relevant in the Latvian context, as they provide an analytical tool for individuals, public organizations and governments (local and national) to take action to increase people's ability to feel and be secure (see section on *securitability* below).

Levels of security

Although the individual is the focus of human security considerations, human security may also be examined at the level of the individual's family and closest relationships, community, country, and international arena. This **Report** has analyzed individual security relationships at these main levels of security.

The individual is in interaction with each of these levels. Children come into the world with their genetic predispositions. They receive their first signals about security from their family members, then from others. As a result of an accumulation of positive life experiences, children gradually become more secure and come to feel less threatened by new environments or situational changes.

Human life can be conceived of as proceeding outward from the centre of a series of concentric circles (see Box 1.3). Security in any particular sphere will translate into a greater sense of security and ability to act at subsequent levels. However, insecurity at any one level may have negative ramifications on people's sense of security at other levels.

Box 1.3

Levels of human security

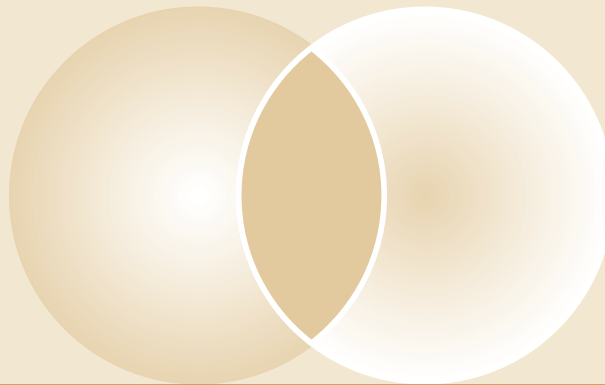


UNDP Latvia, 2003

Dimensions of human security

Dimension I

Objective threats to human security



Dimension II

Perception (sense) of security

UNDP Latvia, 2003

Security and sense of security

Human security involves two interconnected dimensions – an objective state of security and a subjective sense of security. *Security* is the actual state of being free from threat, while *sense of security* can be defined as the inner state of feeling secure. A *sense of security* is the cumulative effect of a set of subjective and objective factors. While in English human security can describe the two dimensions simultaneously, in Latvian security (*drošība*) and sense of security (*drošums* or *drošības sajūta*) are two distinct concepts.

This **Report** analyzes the sense of security that people feel in tandem with their objective security situation. The authors of this **Report** have focussed their attention on the interface between the two dimensions of human security (see darkest field, Box 1.4 below). This **Report** is not broad enough to consider all realms in which human security is at risk. It is committed to helping individuals raise their capacity to increase their own level of security, while focusing on those perceptions of insecurity that can actually be changed because they are founded on real, objective threats.

The **Survey** respondents' sense of security was evaluated, analyzed and determined through questionnaires, interviews and tests, while objective aspects of human security were measured through available statistics. Some of the **Report's** findings for both dimensions are listed in Chapter 2. It is important to note that an individual's sense of security is not always altered when real situational changes

occur, since human perceptions are influenced by many factors (see Chapter 3).

Issues of concern within the seven realms of human security

The core of human security can be defined as each and every person's fundamental right to life, physical security, and freedom from premature and preventable death. Everything else related to human security is heavily influenced by perception. For example, some people who are poor accept their economic situation as a given and actively find ways of coping without feeling overly insecure or anxious. For others, low income may induce pronounced feelings of anxiety, helplessness and insecurity.

In recognition of the fact that all facets of life are subject to insecurity, the authors of this **Report** have concentrated on the seven realms identified in the *UNDP Human Development Report 1994*. These realms are organized according to the issues perceived as most significant by the respondents of the **Survey**. They have been adapted to reflect issues of current concern in Latvia (see Box 2.1, Chapter 2). The **Report's** evaluation of the situation in Latvia according to the seven realms of human security may eventually be useful for international comparison.

The emphasis on particular human security issues depends on where one is located. In Africa, for example, economic security has been a prime human secu-

rity topic (Symposium in Africa, May 2001). Studies in Turkmenistan, which is experiencing a transition period from central planning to a market economy, also cite poverty, disparities in income, unemployment and corruption as factors that negatively affect human security (Round Table Discussion in Central Asia, 2001). Many recent international studies of human security have focused on areas of global concern, such as small arms traffic, prostitution, war, poverty, etc.

Securitability

People stand to improve their circumstances greatly by improving their *securitability*. *Securitability* implies that there are both objective and subjective issues at play in achieving a sense of security. Each person is influenced by a series of situations (events and conditions) in their lives. Depending on whether an individual has a high or low degree of *securitability*, he or she can perceive a given situation as either an opportunity, a warning signal to avoid or prevent a risk, or a risk itself (see Box 1.5).

The degree of *securitability* that one has affects how one will react to situations. Individuals possessing a high degree of *securitability* are able to act on their own or together with like-minded people at the family, community and national levels to increase their security. Their sense of security may occasionally suffer, but only temporarily. Even if they are not aware of it, they use risk-management skills to deal with the situation at hand. They make use of the lessons they have learned and develop their own personal security strategies to regain both their subjective sense of security and objective state of security.

This **Report** pays particular attention to those groups of people with a low degree of *securitability*, who find it more difficult to cope with difficult situations. Traumatic events such as the loss of a close person or incidents of violence can dramatically decrease a person's sense of security, as can such conditions as chronic poverty, ill health, alcohol abuse, etc. Under such conditions, even an event or condition that is seemingly insignificant to others can push a person beyond his or her *security threshold*.

Box 1.5

The effect of *securitability* on perception of situations and the resulting consequences



UNDP Latvia, 2003

Box 1.6

Securitability factors (SF)

SF1 – Individual characteristics

- Life satisfaction
- Confidence in one's ability to effect change/Initiative
- Self-esteem
- Health
- Religious faith
- Sense of belonging to a group or community

SF2 – Positive, close relations

SF3 – Economic security (predictable, sufficient income)

SF4 – Ability to network (informal and formal)

SF5 – Ability to trust in and cooperate with government and international organizations

UNDP, 2003

Just as human security cannot be evaluated according to an objective index, so the security threshold cannot be easily defined, yet it exists for each and every person. Living beneath this threshold results in feelings of paralysis and places limitations on one's ability to act in one's own interests. Chapter 3 focuses on those groups of people in Latvia who are most at risk of falling below the security threshold, as well as the consequences that may result from doing so. These consequences include anxiety, depression and other afflictions, which may even lead in extreme cases to suicide.

Securitability factors

Securitability factors are elements that determine how secure or insecure a person feels. These factors are different for each and every person. Data obtained from the **UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002**, as well as findings from other studies, interviews and case studies have led the authors to define five core *securitability factors*. These *securitability factors* have the largest potential for improving the ability of Latvia's inhabitants to feel secure, or to return to a sense of security following exposure to a threatening situation. Not all of them are key for every individual in Latvia, but they are nearly universal and extremely significant for the population as a whole (see Box 1.6). The strengthening of these *securitability factors* to the widest possible extent would greatly increase many people's security and the sense of security.

The authors of this **Report** believe that action toward improving human security in Latvia can best be taken through the prism of the five *securitability factors* listed below.

Individual characteristics – SF1

Studies show that people depend most on themselves and on their family members to achieve a sense of security (see Box 1.7). Chapter 4 analyzes the individual characteristics and positive close relationships that allow a person to be and feel secure, as the two are inextricable. This is true regardless of gender, geographic area, ethnicity and other parameters. The Chapter also examines the slow transition through life from reliance on others to a greater reliance on one's self.

Positive, close relationships – SF2

Family life is changing in Latvia, as described in Chapter 2 in the section on Community Security, with potential ramifications for human security. However, the single most important cause of extreme insecurity for people in Latvia is emotional, physical and sexual abuse, especially in the family. People who have experienced abuse tend to exhibit a higher sense of insecurity in many different realms. Threatening family situations leave people vulnerable and with weakened individual characteristics such as self-esteem, the ability to effect change, the ability to interact with others, etc. The issue of abuse is addressed in Chapters 3 and 4.

Economic security – SF3

Economic security, which is expressed in income predictability and sufficiency, is the second most significant *securitability factor*. It is frequently mentioned by many people in open-ended questions and

interviews. Those with lower incomes and who perceive themselves as poor are often intensely concerned with other interrelated issues such as health care, which may entail considerable expenses. Economic security for the vulnerable is becoming ever more relevant as economic polarization continues to increase in the country. Economic security is addressed in all of the chapters of this **Report**. Both informal and formal networking can help disadvantaged people to become more economically secure (Chapter 5). The government's role in promoting economic security is crucial (Chapter 6) for the economically disadvantaged.

Ability to network (informal and formal) – SF4

Informal social networks such as the family, friends and colleagues are an important source of security for many people in Latvia. There is great potential for formal networks such as NGOs to help many of the country's inhabitants increase their level of security. The ability to network is crucial to the success of NGOs and other formal organizations and must be fostered. These issues are discussed in detail in Chapter 5. Several case studies of successful NGO activity in Latvia are highlighted to demonstrate how an increase in community activity can benefit a great many people and increase their level of *securitability*.

Ability to trust in and cooperate with government and international organizations – SF5

People must believe that their government truly intends to fulfill its role in protecting human security and that it has the capacity to do so. This capacity is reflected in its ability to achieve well-formulated goals and to fulfill its mandate both domestically and internationally. Government institutions must be perceived to be free of corruption and their officials as governing for the benefit of the people.

According to the **Survey**, municipal institutions are seen as a greater source of security than central government institutions. Many people have direct contact with municipal organizations in their everyday life and rely on them for support services. The government is at the bottom of the list of institutions trusted by the public.

As can be seen in Box 1.8, people feel that they can rely more on specific government institutions such as the police, or on the country's justice and social welfare systems, than on the government as a whole or the Saeima (parliament). The reasons for this are noted in the section on political security in Chapter 2. Potential methods for improving the role of the government as a *securitability factor* are described in Chapter 6.

International organizations are not usually perceived as supporting individuals in their quest for security. This is due in part to a steady stream of negative media information about various, persistent global problems, the failure of many in Latvia to connect local issues with global processes, and the relatively recent reintegration of Latvia into the world family of nations. Few people are aware of the ramifications of government activities when it acts on their behalf in international institutions.

Having experienced only 13 years of independence and having yet to feel the full benefits of regionalization (i.e. Latvia's integration into the EU and NATO), many are simply not aware of the international resources available to address their perceived risks at a global level. The ability to turn to international organizations for increasing one's *securitability* is included as a facet of SF5 (see Chapter 6) in anticipation of the conditions and events that Latvia's future is expected to bring – including an increase in the number of personal, cross-border contacts, a pronounced need to be globally competitive in order to feel economically secure, etc.

The five *securitability factors* mentioned above are not all equally important to all people in Latvia. **Survey** respondents were asked in different ways to cite what contributes to their sense of security (see Boxes 1.7 and 1.8 for two examples). The compilation of information from the survey, interviews and other studies shows that currently people in Latvia rely most on their closest relationships, on having sufficient financial resources and on themselves for feeling secure.

The sources of security at people's disposal vary in importance according to the individual. Religious faith was one of the most often mentioned *securitability factors* by Russian-speaking women in the **Survey**. For Russian-speaking men commercial security services were significant. Latvian-speaking respondents indicated their sense of belonging to the Latvian ethnic group as a meaningful aspect of their lives.

The most significant sources of security for the Survey's respondents are covered within the five *securitability factors* mentioned in this Chapter. For certain respondents both the USA and Russia were associated with a sense of insecurity. Significant attitudinal differences were noted on the part of citizens and non-citizens with respect to Russia. Citizens were more likely to perceive Russia as a threat, while non-citizens were more likely to see Russia as a source of security.

Security strategies

People with a high degree of *securitability* possess a wide repertoire of security-enhancing strategies that are grounded in their knowledge and skills. Among these skills is the ability to assess one's internal and external resources, and to evaluate the significance of perceived risks. Internal resources are those *securitability factors* that can be activated without outside assistance. External resources are those that must be accessed through cooperation with others.

Security strategies allow individuals to better deal with sources of insecurity and overcome feelings of insecurity. People require skills such as the following to develop security strategies:

- the ability to perceive warning signals;
- the ability to access information about a problematic issue;
- the ability to systematize this information;
- the ability to develop scenarios for action;
- the ability to take action;
- the ability to interact constructively with other people.

Security strategies are not fully discussed in this **Report**, since the **Survey's** questions and other data sources were able to provide only an initial assessment of the human security situation in Latvia at the beginning of the 21st century. Understanding how individuals develop their security strategies could help policy makers to establish how the country's most vulnerable people can best be helped.

Box 1.7

Comparison of selected security providers. Average value*

“Who could you turn to for support in a difficult situation?”

	All	Men	Women	Urban	Rural	Riga	Vidzeme	Kurzeme	Zemgale	Latgale
Myself	1.88	1.82	1.94	1.89	1.87	1.76	1.88	2.44	1.85	1.66
Relatives	2.24	2.35	2.13	2.17	2.39	2.26	2.11	2.79	1.76	2.37
Friends	2.90	2.85	2.95	2.81	3.12	2.78	2.74	3.30	2.82	3.13
Colleagues	4.52	4.35	4.66	4.49	4.59	4.54	4.42	4.66	4.53	4.47
State and municipal institutions	4.73	4.86	4.61	4.81	4.54	5.03	4.67	3.97	5.02	4.54
NGOs	5.26	5.32	5.20	5.28	5.19	5.12	5.44	4.74	5.51	5.48
International organizations	6.38	6.36	6.39	6.46	6.19	6.50	6.53	5.88	6.43	6.27

* Values: 1 – most support 7 – least support

UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002

Box 1.8

Selected factors contributing to people's sense of security, by average value

	Average value		Average value
Family	3.24	Social welfare system	2.39
Friends	3.04	Faith in destiny	2.38
Own actions	3.02	Municipality	2.37
Faith in God	2.70	Newspapers, radio, television	2.30
Commercial security services	2.61	Social organizations (NGOs etc.)	2.29
Ethnic identity and belonging	2.60	State (government) employment support system	2.28
Informal networks (classmates, colleagues, etc.)	2.58	Justice system	2.26
Church	2.53	UN	2.23
Police and law-enforcement system	2.53	NATO	2.17
Scientific discoveries / new technologies	2.50	Latvian government	2.14
Neighbours	2.50	EU	2.12
Latvian armed forces	2.47	USA	1.90
Health care institutions	2.46	Russia	1.83

1 – decreases my sense of security 2 – does not affect my sense of security
3 – increases my sense of security 4 – strongly increases my sense of security

UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002

Security constellations

Securability does not only depend on individual security strategies. The overall *securability* of the country as a whole will depend on the ability of individuals, social networks and the government to develop security strategies together and act upon them in security constellations. *Security constellations* are defined as configurations of security providers at different levels with coordinated strategies to deal with specific human security issues. The stars in these constellations are the

various actors. Their interface reflects the contours of these constellations. The optimal result is enhanced security, which cannot be attained to the most favourable degree if the security providers work alone or without coordination. For example, any serious attempt to combat drug use in schools is unlikely to be successful without the combined efforts of parents, teachers, the community, and State institutions.

The **Survey's** respondents were presented with a list of existing and potential threats, and asked to

Box 1.9

Respondents' self-assessment of their ability to influence selected security risks, and percentage of respondents expressing a fear of each risk (as *slightly afraid* or *afraid*)

“Can you yourself or together with others reduce this risk?”

	Yes, I can (%)	I fear this risk (%)		Yes, I can (%)	I fear this risk (%)
Environmental pollution in Latvia	51	87	Foreigners buying up land in Latvia	9	67
Threats to the survival of my language and culture	42	59	Foreign producers forcing local producers out of the Latvian market	8	70
Food poisoning	40	78	The spread of HIV/AIDS world-wide	7	82
Hazardous waste dumps in Latvia	29	87	The partial loss of Latvia's sovereignty	7	48
Clear-cutting of forests in Latvia	23	86	The occupation of Latvia	7	41
Population decline	22	59	Latvian producers losing their market share in other countries	6	64
Ethnic conflict in Latvia	21	44	Organized crime in Latvia	6	88
The spread of HIV/AIDS in Latvia	18	88	The influx of refugees in Latvia	6	58
High amount of preservatives in food	17	81	Armed conflict in Latvia	5	47
Limitations on democracy and free speech in Latvia	17	50	Global warming	5	66
The abandonment of farmland in Latvia	17	76	Terrorism in Latvia	5	51
Environmental pollution worldwide	16	79	Rapid price increases	4	84
An environmental disaster in Latvia	16	73	International terrorism in Latvia	4	50
Exodus from Latvia's rural areas	14	67	Nuclear threats	2	58
The spread of narcotics	14	91	The devaluation of the lat	2	65
Internal unrest	11	47			

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indicate which ones could be best addressed through individual or collective action, and which ones could not. This measurement of perceptions does not nec-

essarily imply an actual willingness to work toward decreasing the threats cited. Box 1.9 shows the results in combination with the perceived risk of each threat.

It illustrates the correlation between people's sense of security and their assessment of their ability to reduce risks to their security.

About half of the **Survey's** respondents (51%) felt that alone or together with others they could reduce environmental pollution. Somewhat less (42%) felt that they could deal with threats to the survival of their language and culture, as well as the threat of food poisoning (40%). The next most often cited threats that seemed amenable to action were also connected to the environment – hazardous waste dumps (29%) and the clear-cutting of forests in Latvia (23%). In general, Latvians felt that they had a greater ability to reduce and deal with threats to their security than did non-Latvians.

Not surprisingly, respondents felt least able to avert threats related to currency devaluation (2%), nuclear disasters (2%), international terrorism in Latvia (4%), rapid price increases (4%), terrorism in Latvia (5%), global warming (5%), and military conflict (5%).

However, in what the **Survey's** authors perceive as a disturbing finding, respondents placed low ratings on their ability to deal with those issues that they had rated as most threatening, such as the spread of drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, etc.

Sociologist Z. Bauman has stated that collective powerlessness will grow as long as there are no simple and clear mechanisms to transform private problems into public issues and *vice versa*. Before such mechanisms are developed and become widespread, people's private fears cannot become issues of public discourse (Bauman, 1999).

Summary

Human security is developing rapidly across the world as a concept. It is a precondition for human development, since living free from fear and want allows a person to expand his or her choices on how to live. In Latvia human security has been analyzed through the **UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security 2002**, along with other studies and interviews. The first part of this Report identifies human security concerns, while the second looks at possible solutions for increasing people's security and *securitability* through concentric circles, beginning from the individual and going through the community, national and international/global levels. Both security as an objective state of being and a sense of security are essential dimensions of human security.

The *securitability factors* mentioned in this **Report** must be enhanced for those with high levels of insecurity. Since the recovery of Latvia's independence, individuals have been compelled to rely more on themselves, to develop their own security strategies and to plan their own lives. In the constantly changing environment of post-Soviet Latvia, some people have become unable to deal with the new political, social and economic changes.

Well-developed *securitability factors* strengthen other *securitability factors*. However, those most vulnerable to certain risks (unemployment, poverty, crime, drug addiction) are least able to strengthen their *securitability* on their own. The economically disadvantaged, for example, perceive many risks to their human security, while the internal and external resources of the more prosperous allow them to insulate themselves against most threats to their security.

Human security is a basic need, and it is disturbing that many people in Latvia lack the skills and knowledge to develop an appropriate strategy for improving their lives. Individuals from the risk groups mentioned in Chapter 3 feel vulnerable and threatened by various external forces. Some see their social environment as a source of risks and threats to their security, rather than as one that invites the exchange of ideas and the formulation of joint goals. Many have limited social networks, and the security-enhancing potential of the NGO sector is largely untapped. Highly insecure individuals often live alone or isolated within their family units and try to avert potential threats to their security on their own.

The more insecure people feel, the more obstacles they encounter that adversely affect their actions and limit their ability to function. Insecurity not only promotes a passive approach to life but also reduces people's self-esteem. In short, strong *securitability factors* help to create the circumstances and environment required for leading a fulfilled and dignified life.

Issues about which people feel insecure may change from year to year. Although the 2002/2003 **Report** is focusing on five current issues of concern for people in Latvia, readers are invited to look at other human security problems that they can improve in light of the recommendations presented here.