

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The **Latvia Human Development Report 2002/2003** centres around the theme of human security in Latvia.

The preceding Chapters of this **Report** have illustrated that the *securitability factors* of a great many individuals need to be strengthened in order to increase the capability of the people of Latvia to deal with perceived threats and potential risks that impinge on their human security. The **Report** has identified five *securitability factors*: four of which refer to “actors” – (extending from individuals to their closest relations, to larger networks and finally to the government and international organizations) – as well as one that is overarching: the need for economic security. The five *securitability factors* (SF) have been identified as follows:

### **Securitability factor 1: 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

### **Securitability factor 2: Positive close relations**

**Securitability factor 3: Economic security** (predictable, sufficient income)

**Securitability factor 4: Ability to network** (informal and formal)

**Securitability factor 5: Ability to trust in and cooperate with government and international organizations**

People with a high degree of *securitability* are able to develop effective **security strategies**, which help them to evaluate perceived threats to their security, assess the extent of their available resources for dealing with these threats, and take appropriate action. To do so, they need **security skills**, which they acquire through the process of learning.

Among the most important are:

- 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.

Individual action alone is not always sufficient or effective in addressing security issues. Cooperation in **security constellations** with others at the community, State and international levels often leads to action that can better improve security. This entails coordinated activities, in which each actor is aware of his or her role and relies on the others to do their part.

*Securitability factors*, strategies and skills must be nurtured in everyone, but especially among **those most at risk** of suffering from the consequences of extreme anxiety and insecurity. These include individuals with a combination of the following attributes:

- have irregular or no employment;
- live below the subsistence level;
- are in poor health;
- have suffered a grievous loss;
- live in the low-income region of Latgale;
- suffer or have suffered from abuse;
- are women;
- are distrustful of others;
- are generally dissatisfied with life.

**Children** are a special group whose needs must be addressed, since the strengthening of their *securitability* would have a compounding effect on strengthening the *securitability* of future generations.

## Areas of concern

The findings of the **UNDP Latvia Survey on Human Security** suggest that there have been at least five major **areas of concern** regarding human security in Latvia in 2002/2003.

These relate to the:

- overarching issue of economic security, notably predictable and sufficient income;
- access and affordability of quality health care;
- proliferation of narcotics;
- spread of HIV/AIDS;
- consequences of organized crime.

The **Survey's** results are to a certain degree situational. They may mirror concerns voiced by political parties at the time of the **Survey**, which took place immediately prior to the parliamentary elections of October 2002. The results do not reflect changes in the intensity of concern about issues that have gained prominence since the **Survey** was held, such as the global spread of SARS, recent wars and terrorist attacks. However, the **Survey's** results do coincide with other analyses. The authors therefore are convinced that its findings reflect current human security perceptions in Latvia quite comprehensively. Most importantly, the **Survey's** results confirm that human security is indeed an issue.

Strategies to diminish human insecurity in the areas of concern identified above should aim to:

- Promote economic security and reduce income disparities;
- Increase the competitiveness of the people of Latvia in this age of globalization by orienting the education system to foster a knowledge economy, entrepreneurship, and income-generating activities;
- Provide accessible, affordable and quality health care in a system in which the rules are transparent and understandable, while encouraging a healthy lifestyle;
- Implement coordinated and comprehensive actions to reduce and control drug proliferation;
- Continue informing the public on HIV/AIDS prevention and harm reduction;
- Considering Latvia's geographical position at the crossroads of Eastern and Western Europe and the potential changes in the region following accession to the EU and NATO – implement a government strategy in cooperation with regional and international organizations and NGOs to address organized crime and its manifestations, which include prostitution rings and the enslavement of human beings, the proliferation and abuse of drugs, the trafficking of arms, and various forms of smuggling and theft.

## Enhancing people's *securitability factors*

This **Report** is unconventional in that it does not provide detailed recommendations in traditional policy areas, such as employment, social and environmental policy. Instead, its recommendations aim to enhance the *securitability factors* identified in the **Survey**, interviews and other studies, so as to give individuals, groups and the government the tools to prevent, mitigate or cope with real and perceived risks, including those identified as being most urgent in 2002/2003.

The following is a preliminary list of suggestions that have been gleaned from some of the **Report's** findings. These have been designed to stimulate public debate and generate new ideas for initiatives by government policy makers, community groups and individuals.

The suggestion list is organised around the *securitability factors* developed in this **Report**. They have been arranged here in order from the broadest (SF 5) to the most specific (SF 1). Given the all-encompassing nature of human security, many of the ideas suggested under specific *securitability factors* overlap and reinforce each other.

### The ability to trust in and cooperate with government and international organizations. *Securitability factor 5*

#### *Promoting human security in the realms mandated to the government*

The government is encouraged to:

- Continue implementing policies that ensure democracy, political development, social cohesion and economic security in the country;
- Sustain and support institutions and initiatives that help individuals with low levels of human security (together with local governments). This includes the access of the lowest-income groups to food and of low-income groups to various forms of social security;
- Continue to promote a stable macro-economic environment, advance those sectors of the economy that contribute to steady growth and job creation, and ensure conditions for the continued dynamism of the economy;
- Facilitate the evolution of the knowledge economy by supporting research and

- development, education, and innovative entrepreneurship;
- Stimulate human resource development that promotes the skills people need to be competitive domestically, as well as on an international (regional) and global level;
  - Continue its pro-active role in domestic and international initiatives in such areas as the environment (i.e. deforestation, environmental pollution, global warming, nuclear threats) and other issues in which individuals acting alone or together with others cannot achieve the same results.

### Informing the public

The government should:

- Provide easily accessible and understandable information about its political objectives and policies in all areas of human security, about its social security benefits, and about its efforts to address human security issues;
- Provide objective and comprehensive information about both opportunities and perceived risks arising from regional integration and globalization, including concerns voiced about the implications of EU accession;
- Provide its citizens with more comprehensive information about the opportunities offered by international organizations. It should also position itself more visibly as a manager of such global public goods as a sustainable environment, and inform the public about the measures it is taking to combat such global concerns as the spread of disease and international crime.

### Encouraging participative government

The capacity of the government to respond to security threats experienced by individuals is influenced by the degree and quality of citizens' participation in decision-making processes.

The government needs to:

- Enhance trust and confidence in it by encouraging public debate about political issues, promoting the transparency of decision-making and ensuring that corruption is curtailed;
- Ensure the genuine political engagement of the public through more systematic and effective

consultations – by enabling NGOs and individuals to provide *ex ante* and *ex post* feedback to policymakers, parliamentarians and other politicians. The practice of effective consultations that has been initiated in several State institutions must be expanded at the government and local government levels;

- Enhance cooperation between government agencies and the public through outreach. For example, law enforcement institutions would gain the confidence of the public through information campaigns that address peoples' concerns with concrete evidence of their performance.

### The ability to network (informal and formal). *Securability factor 4*

Several things could be done to promote the formation of well-functioning social networks in Latvia:

#### *Pinpointing network development factors*

Local municipalities and the national government could commission studies about the role of networks in solving human security issues at the individual, community and national level. Such studies would generate ideas on fostering the development of networks. To this end, additional information on existing social networks, their activities and success factors would be helpful.

#### *Fostering the creation of networks*

Local governments can create genuine opportunities for people to participate in the development, implementation and evaluation of municipal projects. Successful dialogue between community members and local government officials would give municipalities the opportunity to make the best use of their community resources. Simultaneously, residents would gain the ability to improve their human security.

#### *Encouraging public support of local networks*

Public support (both moral and material) is essential for networks to be effective. This support

can be provided by entrepreneurs, local governments, NGOs and individuals, for example:

- *Local governments* could exhibit a more positive attitude towards network activities through the public acknowledgement of individuals and groups who have contributed to human security; through systematic information about network activities (i.e. in cooperation with the mass media); or even through administrative assistance. Support to community centres would facilitate networking by giving people access to information about NGOs, for example.
- *NGOs* could support the development of social networks by offering information and advice to individuals and groups. This might be on fundraising and project writing skills, or on the enhancement of networking skills through seminars, training programmes and coaching sessions.
- *Entrepreneurs* could provide material and technical support to networks. The government could support such philanthropic activities by offering meaningful tax breaks for those donating to NGOs. Businesses could engage more actively in socially responsible entrepreneurship to encourage human security.

### Economic security – predictable, sufficient income and steady employment. *Securitability factor 3*

Economic security is an overarching *securitability factor* that spans all the other factors. Some areas for action include:

#### *At the government level*

- The government should:
- Continue to promote investment-driven, non-inflationary macro-economic growth and financial stability;
  - Pursue fiscal policy that increases tax compliance and supports an equitable tax burden, while making public expenditure more effective and ensuring that it reaches the intended beneficiaries;
  - Develop pro-active labour market policies;
  - Promote Latvia's competitiveness among the "knowledge economies" through research, development and education strategies;
  - Continue to provide income support to

vulnerable groups such as the long-term unemployed, pensioners, the long-term ill and large low-income families.

This set of policies could help to reverse the growing income disparities identified as a major contributor to insecurity.

#### *At the community level*

- Municipalities and local organizations such as credit unions, trade unions, and patients' rights organisations can promote formal networks to increase people's economic security;
- Municipalities and local organizations can also stimulate informal networks that provide economic and social assistance to individuals. Examples include child-care sharing or assistance to the elderly by family members and neighbours.

#### *At the individual level*

Individuals need to:

- Invest in a broad-based education and life-long learning that would contribute not only to their careers, but also to Latvia's knowledge economy;
- Develop personal initiative and be pro-active;
- Acquire the necessary skills to be competitive and to see potential opportunity in risks.

### Positive close relationships. *Securitability factor 2*

#### *Fostering positive, close relationships*

- The government, formal networks, families and individuals – each in their own way – need to encourage positive intra- and inter-family relationships (including parent-child relationships), positive relationships among adults, and positive teacher-child relationships.
- Governmental family support policies could be more pro-actively implemented and information regarding relevant programmes should be made more accessible to the public.
- Governmental and non-governmental organizations should facilitate and support such training programmes as positive parenting.
- Governmental and non-governmental

organizations should facilitate and support training programmes for teachers to foster positive teacher-child and peer relationships.

## Individual characteristics. *Securitability factor 1*

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

### *Fostering positive physical, mental and spiritual health*

The government, NGOs and individuals should encourage a positive and healthy lifestyle. This includes healthy eating habits, physical exercise and spiritual development. It also includes the early recognition of physical or psychological health problems, as well as their appropriate treatment and remediation.

- Professional groups – psychologists, psychotherapists, social workers, and others – need to provide increased opportunities for children and adults to recognize and appropriately express their thoughts and emotions, and to share their positive and negative experiences with others.
- Individuals could explore opportunities for addressing their spiritual values and needs, and engage in creative or spiritual endeavours.
- The government needs to provide improved access and increased financing to physical and mental health care services.
- The government and NGOs should provide more accessible and better targeted information concerning the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, raise public awareness about issues of dependency and co-dependency, and provide increased opportunities for the rehabilitation of substance abusers.

### *Enhancing positive self-esteem*

In order to enhance their overall human security, individuals need to recognize and appreciate their

own positive aspects, talents and abilities. Positive self-esteem enables people to take greater responsibility for their lives. It entails the ability to recognize personal problems, seek solutions, and enlist the help of others when necessary.

Governmental and non-governmental organizations should facilitate and support:

- Parent training programmes for the recognition and fostering of children's positive traits, talents and abilities.
- Teacher training programmes for the recognition and fostering of students' positive traits, talents and abilities.

Professional groups – psychologists, psychotherapists, social workers, and others should:

- Provide increased opportunities for adults to participate in individual and group activities that foster the development of positive self-esteem.

## Human Security – priorities for action

In order for the above-mentioned *securitability factors* to take hold in Latvia, the following **priorities** must be implemented:

1. Since individuals and the government each have limited resources on their own, individuals must be encouraged to network in order to upgrade their security and sense of security. People must be made aware of the benefits of networking. They must have the skills that make networks work and they must have support from the government in initiating such networking. Care must be taken to ensure that networking upholds human security, rather than infringes upon it.

2. Child abuse must be addressed immediately and the cycle of physical and emotional abuse in families must be stopped.

3. Individuals and families need stable and predictable incomes, ideally from formal-sector employment, and alternatively through unemployment, welfare, disability, health and other insurance schemes. Government and municipal-level proactive employment policies and schemes, as well as training and retraining opportunities for the unemployed are also needed.

4. Individuals with a passive attitude need to be encouraged through participative measures to address their own areas of insecurity. They must be given access to the appropriate skills and knowledge through traditional and continuing education. People must understand that with increasing globalization, the pace of change will increase. Skill and knowledge enhancement is an ongoing process.

5. The government is the key actor in promoting human security and in encouraging the strengthening of people's *securitability factors*. It must be seen to be working on behalf of those with a high sense of insecurity. This means that it must demonstrate its capacity to function well and show that the trust invested in it is well-earned. The government must explain its actions and establish further avenues of cooperation with the country's inhabitants. Otherwise, it is unlikely that passive persons with high degrees of insecurity will spontaneously network or undertake other activities. Individual or family efforts to address acute human security threats will be destined to fail if they are not supported by proactive government policies.

6. The people of Latvia must be better informed about the government's activities on their behalf in international institutions. This would ensure greater public support for the government's policy positions within these organizations, which at present remain unclear to many people.

As Latvia's level of human development increases, and as the government adjusts its policies to strengthen human security and individuals' *securitability factors*, the proportion of active and secure people in Latvia will increase. As their own basic needs become satisfied, individuals will come to realize their important role in ever widening circles, be it in their neighbourhood or in a wider community, in interest groups or at the national, European and global levels. Eventually, the people of Latvia will come to recognize the extent to which they can contribute to the human security of a shared, global community.