Global Governance for Human Security

Both the concept of human security and the institutions of global governance are going to change dramatically in the 21st century. It is essential to provide a conceptual framework for such a change.

Let me address three related issues in this connection:

i) what is the new concept of human security?

ii) what policy implications does it have for the global framework of development cooperation between rich and poor nations?

iii) what changes does it require in the existing institutions of global governance, particularly in the United Nations?

A new concept of security

I firmly believe that the concept of security is undergoing a fundamental transformation. Security of people is now becoming the dominant concern. Security is increasingly interpreted as:

- security of people, not just of territory;
- security of individuals, not just of nations;
- security through development, not through arms;
- security of all the people everywhere - in their homes, in their jobs, in their streets, in their communities and in their environment.

It is time to recognize that most conflicts are now within nations, not between nations. Of the 82 conflicts in the last decade, 79 were within nations and 90% of the casualties were civilians, not soldiers. When most conflicts are between people, not between states, and when these conflicts are often over diminishing income and employment opportunities, not over territorial disputes, why is the United Nations still landing peace keeping forces in those countries? Isn't it better to land development today than troops tomorrow?

Unfortunately, we are still fighting the battles of tomorrow with the concepts of yesterday. But I have not the slightest doubt that many perceptions about human security are likely to change fairly quickly.
To begin with, human security will be regarded as universal, global and indivisible. The same speed that has brought many modern products and services to our doorsteps has brought much human misery to our backyards. Global human security is closely linked today. Every drug that quietly kills, every disease that silently travels, every act of terrorism that destroys life senselessly - imagine for a moment that they all carried a national label of origin, much as traded goods do, we will then realize with a sudden shock that human security concerns are more global today than even global trade. No nation can protect the security of its people without some global understanding and agreements.

Another perception will change. It will be recognized that poverty cannot be stopped at national borders. Poor people can be stopped, but not the tragic consequences of their poverty. These consequences travel without a passport – and in many unpleasant forms. Drugs, AIDS, pollution and terrorism stop at no national frontiers today. They can strike with devastating speed in any corner of the world.

One more perception will change. It will be recognized that it is easier, more humane and less costly to deal with the new issues of human security upstream rather than face their tragic consequences downstream. Did it make much sense to incur a staggering cost of $240 billion in the past decade due to HIV/AIDS when even a small fraction of that amount invested in primary health care and family planning education in the developing world could have prevented such a fast spread of this deadly disease? And was it a great tribute to international diplomacy to spend $2 billion in a single year on UN soldiers to deliver humanitarian assistance in Somalia a few years ago when such an amount invested a decade earlier in increasing food production might have averted the final tragedy, not for one year but maybe permanently?

It is sometimes argued that military expenditure is vital for national security, that what is the use of development if a country loses its very independence to external aggression. No one will deny genuine needs of national security. The trouble arises when there is a serious imbalance between national and human security. We have recently witnessed the economic and social disintegration of the former USSR, despite possessing enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world ten times over, it could not feed its people or provide them with productive jobs and decent social services. And we have seen that, in 1980, military to social spending ratio was the highest in Iraq (8 times), Somalia (5 times) and Nicaragua (3.5 times), and yet all these three countries could not protect their national security or national sovereignty or their people. On the other hand, Costa Rica spent nothing on its military, having abolished its army in 1948, and spent one-third of its national income on education, nutrition and health: it is the only prosperous democracy in a troubled Central America.

We need a new concept of security today – reflected in the lives of the people, not in the weapons of their country. We must move away from arms security to human security and use the emerging peace dividend to finance the lengthening social agenda of humankind.
Let us face it. The cold war is not over yet. The job is only half-done. We have only phased out the cold war in East-West relations, not in the third world. No leader from the third world participated in the disarmament talks in Geneva, even though 22 million people in poor lands have died in more than 120 conflicts since the second world war. The main casualties of the cold war were in the third world, yet 80% of humanity was forgotten when peace was finally made between the East and the West. There is no UN forum or Third World forum today discussing issues of peace and disarmament in the developing world.

Isn't it time to ask the leaders of the Third World:

- why do they insist on spending 2 or 3 times as much on arms as on the education and health of their people?
- why do they have 18 times more soldiers than doctors?
- how can they afford air-conditioned jeeps for the military generals when they lack even windowless school rooms for their children?

And isn't it time to ask the leaders of the rich nations to stop the continuing arithmetic of death and destruction in the Third World and to fix a concrete time table — say, the next three years — to:

- close all foreign military bases in developing countries?
- convert all existing military aid into economic aid?
- accept a new code of conduct for arms transfers, particularly to trouble spots and to authoritarian regimes?
- eliminate subsidies to arms exporters and retrain their workers for jobs in civilian industries?
- accept greater transparency in revealing information about arms trade and military debts?

The next major challenge is to reduce the huge arms spending of over $170 billion a year in poor nations and to invest the money instead in the welfare of their people.

Nowhere is this challenge more acute today as in South Asia. The new concept of human security can be best illustrated by analyzing the potential conflict between arms and people in the context of South Asia today.

While people starve in South Asia, modern arms accumulate. When military spending is falling all over the world, it continues to rise in South Asia. There is a disturbing imbalance by now between the imperatives of human security and territorial security.
A recent Report on \textit{Human Development in South Asia 1997} has pointed out quite graphically that South Asia (with a population of 1.2 billion people) has emerged by now as the poorest, the most illiterate, the most malnourished, and the least gender-sensitive region in the world. It is home to more than half of the world’s illiterates and over 40% of the world’s absolute poor. South Asia started side by side with East Asia in 1960 but East Asia’s per capita income is now 27 times higher than South Asia’s. What is more, South Asia has now fallen behind even Sub-Saharan Africa in per capita income, adult literacy, child nutrition and many other social and human development indicators. In South Asia, 830 million people lack elementary sanitation, 340 million people have no access to safe drinking water, 400 million people are illiterates, two-thirds of them women, and over 500 million people survive in absolute poverty. But South Asia’s poverty has not inhibited the affluence of its armies. The military spending is currently running at $ 14 billion a year in nominal prices — or at around $ 50 billion a year when converted into Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) dollars to obtain a better international comparison.

There are three rather disturbing trends in military spending of South Asia which must be noticed. First, military spending in South Asia is largely independent of its poverty. India ranks 142 in the world in terms of real per capita income (PPP dollars), but it ranks first in total arms imports. Pakistan’s rank is 119 in real per capita income and tenth in arms imports. Both countries spent twice as much on arms procurement during the 1988-92 period as did Saudi Arabia even though Saudi Arabia is 25 times richer. Second, South Asia is sailing against the prevailing global winds. While global military spending went down by 37% during 1987-94 period, military spending in South Asia went up by 12%. While the total number of soldiers have been reduced by 16% globally during the same period, they have increased by 8% in South Asia. While the military holdings of combat aircraft, artillery, ships and tanks went down by 14% in the world, it went up 43% in South Asia. South Asia is the only region in the world where military expenditures have continued to rise even after the end of the cold war. Third, there is a major risk involved when two desperately poor nations, like India and Pakistan, have nuclear arms and are locked into a bitter confrontation for the last 50 years. There is a further risk of a social explosion when modern jet fighters are parked on their runways even as poor people are parked on their city pavements.

The human cost of military confrontation between India and Pakistan is becoming quite prohibitive by now. For instance, around $ 11 billion was recently spent by Pakistan for acquiring three Agosta 90B submarines from France which could have financed for a year primary school education for all the 17 million children now out of school and safe drinking water for all the 67 million people lacking this facility at present and family planning services to an additional 9 million couples. India’s contemplated purchase of $ 4.5 billion worth of modern military equipment can finance instead primary education for all the 45 million children denied such education, safe drinking water for all the 226 million people with no access to such facility and family planning services for an additional 22 million couples.

The pay off from reduced political tensions and military spending can be quite dramatic in South Asia, particularly in India and Pakistan. If South Asia were to reduce its
military spending by about 5% a year, on par with what has already happened in the rest of the world in the last ten years, it can reap a peace dividend of around $125 billion in the next 15 years. This would be enough to provide universal basic education and primary health care, safe drinking water to all, adequate nutrition to the malnourished, family planning services to all willing couples, and credit facilities to the poor and the deprived for obtaining sustainable livelihoods. In other words, a 5% annual cut in military spending can finance the entire agenda of South Asia for basic social services and credit to the poor as well as position these nations for accelerated advance in the 21st century.

The current dilemma of South Asia between arms and people illustrates quite vividly the choices which each society needs to make today. If human security is not assured, national security becomes a mere illusion.

Human security is a powerful, revolutionary idea which forces a new morality on all of us through a perception of common threats to our very survival.

Human security is a concept emerging not from the learned writings of scholars but from the daily concerns of people. It is reflected every day in the shrunken faces of innocent children, in the anguish of the homeless, in the constant fear of the jobless, in the silent screams of the persecuted, in the quiet despair of the victims of drugs, AIDS, terrorism and spreading pollution.

Human security demands a new pattern of human development – development that is woven around the aspirations of the people, women and men alike. And it requires a new pattern of development cooperation and global governance.

A new framework of development cooperation

The concept of human security demands a new partnership between the North and the South. This partnership should be based on justice, not on charity; on an equitable sharing of global market opportunities, not on aid; on two-way compacts, not on one-way transfers; on mutual cooperation, not on unilateral conditionality or confrontation.

Foreign aid has often dominated North-South relations since the Second World War, even though this aid was often marginal and mis-directed. Consider one sobering comparison: rich nations channel an average of 15% of their GNP to their own 100 million poor – those below a poverty line of around $5,000 a year. But they earmark only 0.3% of their GNP for poor nations, which contain 1.3 billion poor people with incomes of less than $300 a year. What a telling contrast between national and international social safety nets? And yet a public perception persists in the rich nations that their aid money could be better employed at home. The rich nations may not recognize that even if all their aid stopped today, their domestic social safety nets would only increase from 15% of GNP to 15.3% – perhaps not the most handsome bargain in history.
Globally, however, it is not just the marginal role of aid that matters. Its distribution also leaves much to be desired. Aid today carries all the scars of the cold war era. It was often given to strategic allies rather than to poor nations. Consider aid’s link to the oft-repeated objective of eliminating global poverty. Only one-third of ODA is earmarked for the ten countries containing two-thirds of the world’s absolute poor. Twice as much ODA per capita goes to the wealthiest 40% in the developing world as to the poorest 40%. Egypt receives $280 a year per poor person, India receives only $7. And less than 7% of bilateral ODA is directed towards human priority concerns—primary health care, basic education, safe drinking water, nutrition programmes and family planning services.

Consider yet another dimension of aid: most was directed towards strategic allies in the cold war, to authoritarian regimes, to high military spenders. Even today, two and a half times as much per capita ODA goes to high military spenders as to low military spenders, with strategic allies getting preference over poor nations. For example, El Salvador receives 16 times as much ODA per poor person from the United States as does Bangladesh, even though Bangladesh is five times poorer.

There is also little discernible link between technical assistance and the sacred mantra of national capacity building. After 40 years of technical assistance, 95% of these funds (more than $15 billion a year now) still go to foreign consultants, despite the outstanding national expertise available within the developing countries. Africa receives around $6 billion a year in technical assistance, yet its human development indicators are among the lowest in the world. It has received more bad advice per capita than any other continent. No other form of assistance deserves as much radical surgery as technical assistance does today.

A determined attempt must be made to improve the quality of assistance and to design a new framework of development cooperation to fit the post-cold war realities and the new imperatives of human security. The following proposals are offered as a contribution towards this objective.

First, let us find a new motivation for development cooperation, based on fighting the growing threat of global poverty rather than the receding threat of the cold war. Security may no longer be threatened by the prospect of a nuclear holocaust, but it is certainly threatened by the travel of global poverty across international frontiers in the form of drugs, AIDS, pollution, illegal migration and terrorism. While the chances of a global nuclear suicide were always small, the chances of every family being affected by these new threats are very great. Can the rich nations convince their people of this looming threat to their own human security?

Second, let us demonstrate to sceptical publics that the essential human development agenda can be financed even by reallocating priorities in existing budgets. Consider a new 20:20 vision. The developing countries would commit an average of 20% of their budgets to human priority concerns rather than the present 10%—by reducing military expenditures, by privatizing inefficient public enterprises and by eliminating low-
priority development expenditure. The rich nations would raise their human priority allocations from the present 7% of ODA to around 20%.

This new global human compact, which was endorsed in principle by the World Social Summit in Copenhagen in March 1995, can be financed entirely by recasting existing allocation priorities. It requires no new resources, but it does require considerable courage and skill. And it would yield $30 billion to $40 billion in additional allocations for the urgent human development agenda in the poor nations, three-quarters through their own decisions and one-quarter from the international community. The human pay-off of such a compact could be enormous. Within ten years, all children could be in school, primary health care and clean drinking water could be available to all the people, family planning services could be provided to all willing couples, and severe child malnutrition could be eliminated.

Third, let us redress the growing imbalance between short-term emergency assistance and long-term development support. While the United Nations spent less than $4 billion on peacekeeping operations during the first 48 years of its existence, it spent more than $4 billion on such missions in 1994 alone. And for every dollar of humanitarian assistance, about ten times as much goes for soldiers — as in Somalia. It is time to review this strange and disturbing imbalance. And it is time to recognize that if there are diminished funds for socio-economic development, there are likely to be many more emergencies in the future.

The imbalance has at least two policy implications. One is that the donors must be convinced that allocations for UN peacekeeping operations should come out of their defence budgets, not out of their limited ODA budgets. After all, peacekeeping operations are an extension of their security requirements, not a gift to the poor nations. The other is that the development role of the United Nations must be strengthened. This means that the United Nations must be given a clear mandate for sustainable human development, be provided more assured sources of development financing and have a forum for global economic decisions at the highest level in a Human Security Council, as discussed below.

Fourth, let us search for a more innovative model of development cooperation based on human security, not on outmoded ideas of charity. That model would embrace three new mechanisms:

- A new mechanism to facilitate payments by one country to another for services rendered — services that are mutually beneficial and by their nature cannot be mediated by markets. Examples include environmental services, the control of narcotic drugs and the control of contagious diseases (such as AIDS).

- A new mechanism to facilitate compensation for damages when one country inflicts an economic injury on another. Compensation can be thought of as fines payable by countries that depart from internationally agreed rules of good conduct. Some examples of conduct leading to economic injury: encouraging brain drain from poor nations, restricting the migration of low-skilled labour in
search of international economic opportunities and restricting exports from poor countries. Compensations for such injuries would in a sense be voluntary, because they could be avoided by refraining from engaging in objectionable behaviour.

- A new mechanism of automatic resources mobilization for global objectives that embrace common human survival. To be seen essentially as a shared price for shared human existence, financing should be mobilized particularly for environmental protection, where huge sums may need to be raised through tradable permits for carbon emissions, through an international carbon tax or through other such measures that make attending to matters of common human survival automatic, not subject to national legislative approval.

Fifth, let us broaden development cooperation to include trade, investment, technology and labour flows. Comprehensive accounts should be prepared to ensure that what is given with one hand is not taken away with the other and that the focus of efforts continues to be on opening up global market opportunities. Recall the startling conclusion of Human Development Report 1992: developing countries are denied $500 billion of global market opportunities every year while receiving a mere $50 billion in aid. A broadened framework of development cooperation is perhaps the most urgently needed policy initiative today - to move the North-South dialogue from aid and charity to a more mature partnership.

Sixth, let us link the aid policy dialogue to the new issues of reduced military spending, better national governance and greater emphasis on sustainable human development. Persuasion is better than coercion. Constructive alliances for change with domestic policy-makers are better than outside intervention. An enlightened policy dialogue is better than an inflexible conditionality. And a two-way compact is better than one-way pressure.

More important, however, is to change the substance of the policy dialogue. Aid has been unpopular at both ends because the policy dialogue is entirely between governments - not people - with no discernible objectives defined or served. It certainly is difficult to sell the message of aid to suspicious publics if its link with global objectives is not clearly spelled out and regularly monitored. Much greater transparency must be introduced in the data on aid. It is impossible today to monitor aid on the basis of its link with laudable global objectives.

These issues are controversial, but an honest dialogue must begin around them. The post-cold war era requires an entirely new framework of development cooperation to satisfy the emerging imperatives of global human security.
A new architecture for global governance

At the same time, compulsions of human security demand a new framework of global governance. In the search for a human world order, global markets or automatic mechanisms cannot achieve justice for all nations or all people. Global institutions are needed to set rules, to monitor “global goods” and “global bads”, to redress widening disparities. Paradoxically, these global institutions are weakening just as global interdependence is increasing. All global institutions desperately need both strengthening and reform.

All sorts of scenarios can be drawn up for the global economic and financial institutions of the 21st century but one thing is certain. As distances shrink and the world becomes a global village, we are likely to witness an evolution at the global level similar to the evolution that we have already seen at the national level in the past century. That is why we should start giving serious thought to possible structures for a worldwide bank, a global taxation system, a world trading organization, an international investment trust and even a world treasury. Some of us may not live to see all these global developments, but our grandchildren surely will. So let us at least begin with the rough architecture.

In this brief article, it is not possible to sketch out all the components of a new architecture for global governance. Let me just focus on a few reforms in the United Nations system to make it more responsive to the new compulsions of global human security.

It is interesting to recall that both pillars of national security and human security were clearly foreseen at the birth of the United Nations 50 years ago. No less an authority than the US Secretary of State, in a report in 1945, to the US President on the establishment of the United Nations, stated his firm conviction that:

*The battle of peace has to be fought on two fronts. The first is the security front where victory spells freedom from fear. The second is the economic and social front where victory means freedom from want. Only victory on both fronts can assure the world of an enduring peace. . . . . . No provisions that can be written into the Charter will enable the Security Council to make the world secure from war if men and women have no security in their homes and their jobs.*

It is refreshing to review this perspective in the light of the actual development over the past five decades. The onset of the cold war, immediately after the birth of the United Nations, got the United Nations constantly embroiled in conflicts between nations. Almost all of these conflicts were on the soil of the Third World, where the two superpowers fought the cold war by proxy. Nuclear weapons had made conflict on the soil of the industrial nations too risky.

The United Nations developed and perfected many of its peacekeeping techniques during this period. Whenever conflict broke out between nations, the first order of business
was to arrange a ceasefire, separate the combatants, even organize zones of peace, and initiate dispute settlement mechanism. Security Council powers were often invoked (under chapter VII) to impose embargoes against the aggressor nation, particularly on arms shipments and on some forms of trade. Conventions and treaties covered all phases of war between nations: prohibiting biological warfare, censuring bombardment of civilians, ensuring humane treatment of prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention.

Most of the real action in the past 50 years was in the Security Council, even though the council was paralyzed at times by the rivalries among the superpowers. The rest of the UN system merely limped along, with inadequate resources and weak performance in socio-economic fields. The first pillar of security – national security – consumed most of the attention in UN corridors. The second pillar – human security – was largely ignored. Two factors contributed to this neglect: the UN missions were often staffed by foreign offices, and the United Nations was a mechanism for governments, not people. Most of the economic action moved to the Bretton Woods institutions – which enjoyed greater confidence from the donors.

The end of the cold war caught the United Nations off guard – unable and unwilling to adjust to the new realities. It has not yet recognized that most conflicts are now within nations, not between them. Nor has it accepted that these people-centered conflicts require a new concept of people-centered security. But the Secretary-General of the United Nations made an eloquent reference to the issue of human security in a speech in 1994 to the Preparatory Committee of the World Summit for Social Development:

_The Summit is a time to respond to the new imperatives of human security all over the globe ...... Human security can no longer be considered as an exclusively national concern. It is a global imperative .......... The United Nations can no longer fight the battles of tomorrow with the weapons of yesterday._

The recent interventions by the United Nations in trouble spots around the world – Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia – betray this lack of adjustment to the new realities. Soldiers in blue berets are being sent to countries that cry out for socio-economic reforms. External intervention is being organized, hastily and thoughtlessly, in situations that can be handled only through domestic action, however long it may take and whatever the cost. After all, who are the combatants in Somalia or Rwanda? Whom are the embargoes meant to punish? Whom are the UN soldiers dispatched to separate? When people fight within a nation, it is a radically different situation than when nations fight. Yet the United Nations is applying to these new situations the same methods of peacekeeping that it applied to conflicts between nations. Neither its concepts nor its operations have changed.

It is time for the United Nations to adjust to the new imperatives of global human security. That requires at least the following steps:

- An early warning system to forecast “potential Somalias”. 
• A reinterpretation of chapter VII to define circumstances and modalities through which the United Nations can intervene in internal crises.

• A permanent peace corps to give assistance to countries in tackling their socioeconomic problems upstream.

• A significant enlargement of the development role of the UN system.

• An apex body, such as a Human Security Council, to consider the nature of global human security crises and make prompt decisions to resolve them.

• A directly elected General Assembly of the UN by the people, or at least, a two-chamber General Assembly.

Let me focus on the last two proposals only.

The threats to global human security not only come from internal conflicts within nations — whether civil wars, ethnic conflicts, explosions of poverty and unemployment. They also emerge from what can best be described as “shared global crises.” All nations have an increasing stake in the resolution of these crises. The case for a new Human Security Council rests on the premise that all nations — North and South — have a major interest in attending to these crises.

There are many threats to global human security. The principal ones emerge from narcotics trade, travel of diseases (like AIDS), global pollution and international terrorism. These are emerging global threats that kill no less certainly than do the occasional wars — and perhaps far more regularly and on a much larger scale. They pose a persistent threat to human security, in both rich nations and poor. They demand the establishment of a Human Security Council to defend the new frontiers of global human security.

In at least three areas, a Human Security Council could fill critical gaps in the system of global economic governance.

First, the Human Security Council could provide leadership in tackling the shared global economic crises. This role of the council will be of particular interest to rich nations, because they are a shrinking minority in a fast-expanding global population and can no longer protect their people exclusively through their own efforts. They need the cooperation of the majority of the world’s people. The developing countries’ incentive to cooperate will be increased global attention to their poverty problem — attention that a Human Security Council could bring, since many of these global crises cannot be resolved without attacking the root causes of deepening poverty in the developing world.

Often, these issues are dealt with by different UN specialized agencies in isolation, without an adequate mandate or enough resources or necessary followup. The council would be a logical replacement of today’s ad hoc and ineffective arrangements. It could
provide continuous attention to these issues, professional analysis of issues taken together, strategic policy options to the global community, adequate financial resources and followup actions and monitoring systems.

Second, a Human Security Council could help establish an early warning system and the modalities for global assistance in internal conflicts. The present Security Council, wholly inappropriate for this task, should confine its role to peacekeeping operations for conflicts between nations. For conflicts within nations, an entirely different system should be evolved through the Human Security Council.

Preventive diplomacy requires an advance warning system about what is to be prevented and when. There is an urgent need for the United Nations to consult the best expertise in the world and to evolve a comprehensive early warning system. Human Development Report 1994 mentions five quantitative indicators for an early warning system for human security: income and job security, food security, human rights violations, ethnic and other conflicts and the ratio of military to social spending. This is a useful start, but a lot more professional work is required. The Human Security Council secretariat will need to monitor the situation in potential trouble spots around the globe and alert the council members about where and when international action is warranted. The United Nations now reaches Somalias and Rwandas when it is already too late and when its intervention often compromises its own credibility.

New guidelines must be prepared on where the United Nations should intervene, with what objectives, and for how long. UN intervention can be helpful mainly in preventive development, before situations deteriorate. What the United Nations needs to send countries is real development rather than soldiers, and it needs to do this far enough upstream to prevent the eruption of an internal explosion. The international community must recognize that it cannot police internal conflicts – it can hope only to prevent them.

Some developing countries worry that human security might be interpreted as providing a new excuse for UN intervention in domestic crises. This anxiety stems from a misunderstanding, for it is the present system that is needlessly interventionist – with a handful of powerful nations in the Security Council deciding where to intervene and how, and with soldiers sent to police socio-economic conflicts between people or between ethnic groups. It would be far less interventionist to send development, rather than soldiers, to poor lands. And it would be best to design some agreed rules of the game – in place of the present ad hoc system – and to make decisions in a Human Security Council that could represent developing countries far more adequately than the present Security Council.

Third, the proposed Human Security Council would be responsible for strengthening the UN development system. Several structural reforms are in order, each requiring tremendous political courage and continuous dialogue.

- The existing dispersed, under-financed and uncoordinated UN development funds and agencies should be integrated into a single UN Development
Authority. Such an authority would command sufficient resources, disbursing grants of more than $5 billion a year (more than the IDA) and having major impact on the development of poor nations.

- An adequate resource base must be developed for multilateral initiatives, preferably through international taxes or fees. Many proposals are on the global agenda – a Tobin tax on speculative movements of international foreign exchange, a tax on fossil fuels, tradable permits for global emissions, a tax on arms shipments – each requiring continuous dialogue at the highest political level.

- The UN development programmes should be brought together under a single human development umbrella – with a common development message and consolidated country missions and development strategies. Today’s proliferation of field offices, development reports and turf battles must come to some merciful end, in the interest of both recipients and donors.

- The UN development system must be based more on professionalism and less on political influence, both in the selection of staff and in the analysis of country development issues.

Some argue that it may not be possible to change the UN Charter and establish a new Human Security Council on these lines. But it would be a fallacy to seek marginal remedies through a restructured ECOSOC or through changes in the role and composition of the existing Security Council. If political will is weak, none of these marginal devices will work in any case. And if political will is strong, why not pick up one of the greatest challenges in redesigning global governance for human security?

The other related issue is the representation of the people of the world in the affairs of the United Nations. It is interesting to recall that the UN was created in the name of the people and its preamble starts with the stirring words: “We, the people ..........” Yet, in actual practice, it has become only an inter-state agency, with the voice of the people only faintly represented through invitations to NGOs for periodic UN Conferences and Summits.

In order to look after the new frontiers of human security, representation in the UN must be given to people, not to governments. One interesting idea is to establish a two-chamber General Assembly, one chamber nominated by the governments (as at present) and the other elected directly by the people. This will ensure that the voice of the people is heard on all important global issues – constantly, not intermittently.

There is a great deal being said about UN reforms these days: the Secretary General of the UN has presented a comprehensive blueprint to the General Assembly on 16 July 1997. A great deal of these reforms, however, concern downsizing of UN bureaucracy and increase in its operational efficiency. Unfortunately, not enough attention has been given to
the new imperatives of global human security for a fundamental restructuring of the role of the United Nations in the 21st century. That continues to be the real challenge which all of us must face with boldness and innovation in the coming years.