



Concluding reflections

Human security protects human development during political, societal and economic downturns

This Report began by defining human security as “the liberation of human beings from those intense, extensive, prolonged, and comprehensive threats to which their lives and freedom are vulnerable”. The first chapter proposed that this definition, and the concept from which it flows, have particular relevance to Arab countries at this juncture, and can help to prioritize components of their development strategies and plans. Human security protects human development during political, societal and economic downturns such as those the region has experienced in recent years and which continue to curtail its prospects. Human security is distinct from state security yet the one is not necessarily at odds with the other. Indeed, state security is necessary for individual human security. Contradictions are however incurred when the state pursues absolute notions of national security at the expense of citizens’ basic rights and freedoms or when its practices flout the rule of law. At that point, the state ceases to be a principal means of ensuring human security, and becomes part of the problem.

Putting people’s security first

Some of the actors have been part of the problem, but could be part of the solution through shifts in course

Threats to human security are multidimensional and interdependent, with compound effects. They originate in a diverse array of sources, ranging from the natural world, to authoritarian states, to the ambitions of regional and international powers. They can be associated with local actors, such as state security forces or insurgents, as well as regional and international actors such as human trafficking networks or occupying military forces. And they can be aggravated by universal phenomena, such as globalisation, which has increased the cross-border transmission of risk factors affecting human security.

Some of the actors identified in this Report have been part of the problem, but could be part of the solution through shifts

in course. Others, including the emerging Arab civil society, as well as regional and international bodies, could do still more to contribute to solutions through continued and constructive engagement with the task of building human security. The preceding chapters have suggested various policy orientations that different actors could adopt within their respective spheres of action, outlining specific steps that can be taken to reduce threats across all dimensions of human security.

The Report’s analysis has illustrated that the concept of human security provides a framework for re-centring the Arab social contract and development policy on those vital yet neglected priorities that most affect the wellbeing of Arab citizens.

None of the Arab countries can claim to be free from fear or free from want

While the state of human security is not uniform throughout the Arab countries, none can claim to be free from fear or free from want and many are affected by spillovers from insecurity in neighbouring countries. The Report has therefore underscored the central importance of:

- *Protecting the environment:* The preservation and enhancement of the land, water and air that sustain the Arab peoples' very existence under rising national, regional and global environmental, population and demographic pressures;
- *Strengthening the rule of law:* The guarantees of essential rights, freedoms and opportunities without discrimination that only a well-governed, accountable and responsive state ruled by just laws can provide; and the mitigation of identity conflicts rooted in competition for power and wealth that becomes possible when such a state wins the trust of all citizens;
- *Safeguarding the rights of the vulnerable:* The recognition by the state and society of the abuse and injustice that vulnerable groups, especially women,

Box 9-1

RAMI G. KHOURI – The year that was

The core weaknesses, distortions and dysfunctionalities of the Arab world all seemed to worsen during the past year. Here are the major trends that I believe define our region these days, and will persist for some years to come.

A strange combination of self-assertion and reliance on foreign actors is the major characteristic of the Arab world, reflecting the massive polarization of our societies into two opposing camps.

On the one hand, many in our region continue to look abroad for protection or salvation, in the form of countries, ethnic groups or political movements that rely on foreign patronage for their survival more than they do on their own people. We remain deeply mired in a colonial-era mentality in many respects. The massive attention paid to awaiting the new Middle East policies of the Obama administration in the United States is the most dramatic manifestation of this trend.

On the other hand, the single most important change in the Arab world in the past two decades has been the attempt by several hundred million people to break away from this “vassals-of-the-West” mentality, and to assert their own identity and interests. The various Islamist movements in the region have been the main vehicles for such self-assertion, but these movements have not been able to translate their proven credibility into coherent state-building momentum.

Islamists remain primarily defensive and reactionary movements—very effective at confronting Western powers, Israel, and some domestic forces, but lacking any proven capacity to address mass needs in sectors such as job creation, environmental protection and political modernization.

Formerly integrated and cohesive societies throughout the Middle East continue to fracture into four main components: state-run bureaucracies with a heavy security element; the private sector with a heavy, globalized consumer dimension; assertive traditional identities (mainly Islamism and tribalism); and assorted criminalized groups, including youth gangs, militias, illegal migrants, drugs networks, and structured theft networks that live off government resources. These four different sectors of society coexist relatively comfortably

with one another, each occupying its own space in society and relying on its own resources.

The big loser in this trend has been the cohesion and integrity of the modern Arab state, which has broadly failed to develop a viable sense of citizenship among its nationals.

Political liberalization and democratization are dormant for the time being. These remain buried beneath the stultifying weight of corruption-riddled Arab security states, emotion- and fear-driven mass movements, and the debilitating impact of Israeli, American, and other foreign interventions.

Like nationalism, genuine politics and the peaceful electoral contesting of power in the Arab world are victims of our own excesses. As economic stress throughout the Middle East increases in the wake of the current global downturn, prospects for political democratization will further recede on the regional priority list.

As a consequence of these trends, major political issues of importance to the people of this region are increasingly inconsequential to most people and powers around the world.

The worst ramifications of the Middle East’s dysfunctions—terrorism, illegal migration, ethnic strife, corruption, police states, and assorted atrocities perpetuated by both state and private actors—are only occasional irritants for the rest of the world, not pressing strategic threats. We have marginalized ourselves as serious players on the global political stage and now assume the role of nagging annoyances and miscreants.

The oldest and most powerful driver of discontent, disequilibrium, and radicalism in our region—the Arab-Israeli conflict—remains totally stalemated, more an object of insincere and unconvincing “peace process” rhetoric than any genuine sense of diplomatic urgency. It is also now more difficult to resolve than ever, given complicating new factors.

This is a depressing list of broad trends in the Arab world—but also a volatile one that the people and states of the region cannot withstand for many more years. The good news is that these trends are all the consequences of man-made decisions and policies that can all be corrected by more constructive and equitable policies in the future.

Source: Khouri 2009.

children, and refugees encounter each day across the region, and the resolve to improve their legal, economic, social and personal conditions;

- *Reorienting the economy:* The will to address the weak structural underpinnings of the Arab oil economy, reduce income poverty and move towards knowledge-based, equitable and diversified economies that will create the jobs and protect the livelihoods on which coming generations will depend in the post-oil era. The global financial and economic crisis that set in during the finalization of this Report only increases the urgency of this need;
- *Ending hunger:* Ending persisting hunger and malnutrition, which continue to erode human capabilities, cut short millions of lives and set back human development in all sub-regions, but especially the poorest. As the recent food crisis made clear, the economics of food security in the global economy may call for a new realism in defining food security in the region, which needs to focus less on attaining absolute food sovereignty and more on achieving sufficiency in essential commodities for all members of society.
- *Boosting health:* The promotion of health for all as a human right, a prerequisite for human security and an instrumental enabler across the gamut of human functioning. The significant progress that Arab countries have made in this field is being undercut by policy and institutional failures that produce disparities in access, affordability and quality, and by the growing health threats from serious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.
- *Resolving and preventing conflicts:* Long-standing conflicts in the region, including those related to interventions by international and regional powers, have proven to be destructive to human security and human development. Such conflicts have inflicted enormous damage through the use of force against populations and the disregard for civilian lives. These hostilities have caused untold human suffering and

chaos, stained the image of the powers implicated in them and undermined the fragile progress of political reform in the region by bolstering extremist forces and driving moderate voices out of the public arena. Progress in human security requires an end to these conflicts and the initiation of post-conflict recovery.

The environment: protecting tomorrow today

Population and demographic pressures increase demand for critical resources such as energy, water, and arable land, all of which are under mounting stress in the Arab region. Acute natural resource scarcity, in turn, can contribute to economic stagnation, increased migration, and competition among social groups and countries. The latter can spill over into social conflicts, especially when exploited for ideological ends. Unless patterns of development address the issue of sustainability, the region's future growth and human security could be undermined.

A marked youth bulge such as that found in the region presents an additional and special challenge. Youth represents the future of any people, the largest investment any nation can make in its own development, and a central issue for policy makers. Young people consume resources and require substantial investments, notably in education, before they become economically productive. And if youth remain unemployed for long periods, this unproductive stage of life can become fraught with frustration and personal insecurity, while also taxing family savings, the economy and the resource base. All Arab countries urgently require comprehensive population and development policies, aimed at capturing the demographic dynamism of its young population, a 'window of opportunity' that has so far eluded the region. The steady decline in fertility rates across the region must be maintained through social policies aimed at overcoming rigid gender roles and barriers to women's advancement, as well as development policies targeting productive job creation, and education policies for building human capital geared to contemporary job markets.

The marked youth bulge presents an additional and special challenge

Arab countries urgently require comprehensive population and development policies

The challenge of water scarcity needs to be met by applying Integrated Water Resources Management principles

Arab countries have not shown a level of environmental stewardship that is consistent with protecting environmental security. Indeed, only three Arab countries score among the top 100 countries on the Environmental Sustainability Index, a composite measure that ranks countries by their plans for managing environmental and natural resources and population and development. Significantly greater efforts are required to formulate and implement national sustainable development strategies and to monitor the state of the environment within and across countries. Arab governments have several means available to them to encourage the participation of key social forces and the private sector in environmental protection efforts. Such means include the taxation system, incentives to use environmentally friendly technology, campaigns to adopt non-polluting renewable energy sources, policies that encourage sustainable uses of energy sources, the encouragement of mass transport over private automobiles, and the implementation of strong measures to combat desertification and deforestation.

Water scarcity is one of the most acute environmental challenges facing the Arab region, which is the most water-scarce of all regions in the world. This challenge needs to be met by applying Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) principles to development policies, institutional frameworks and the regulation of water supply and demand. These principles call for the integrated management of land and water resources and other related natural resources in a coordinated approach that aims to maximize socio-economic welfare in an equitable manner without sacrificing the sustainability of ecological systems.¹

Environmental issues are global in nature and initiatives to address them need to be global as well. The Arab countries have taken part in the global concern for environmental security and ratified most international environmental conventions. While the larger share of responsibility for some critical aspects of climate change lies with the highly industrialized countries, the Arab countries can make their contribution by implementing their commitments under these conventions and by developing strong national and regional authorities, early warning systems and action plans to address water scarcity,

desertification, air pollution and land degradation on a regional scale. It would be advisable for Arab countries to introduce various climate change adaptation and mitigation measures through the formulation of “disaster risk reduction strategies and risk management practices” as a critical element for adaptation.² Chapter Two of this report provided several programmatic recommendations in these areas.

In this context, the major recommendations of the October 2008 Annual Conference of the Arab Forum for Environment and Development, which convened to examine the findings of the report, ‘*Arab Environment: Future Challenges*’, are timely and relevant.³ In addition to recommending specific national environmental plans and programmes, the Conference called for serious action on the following cross-sectoral challenges:

- a) *Environmental institutions*: environmental institutions must be strengthened financially and empowered with executive authority to plan, coordinate, and enforce legislative programmes for environmental protection as well as provide the long-term planning necessary to cope with global changes, such as changing economic growth patterns and the use of crops for the production of fuels and its effects on food availability, national oil incomes and development plans in general.
- b) *Integration of environmental considerations into development planning*: the incorporation of market mechanisms, natural resources and ecological accounting principles and the various types of environmental assessment (strategic, cumulative, project) are urgent needs.
- c) *Environmental legislation*: provisions should be included in Arab environmental legislation that commit to harnessing market forces and mechanisms for compliance with environmental law. Other provisions must be incorporated to professionalize environmental occupations and vocations in a manner that permits only those who are qualified to practice. Finally, environmental legislative mandates and laws must be made effective and any impediments to enforcement have to be removed.
- d) *Education*: the revamping of academic curricula aimed at including

Arab countries need to introduce climate change adaptation and mitigation measures

environmental education at all levels, and at raising the level of environmental commitment in students, is a major priority.

- e) *Scientific research*: allotting more funds for environmental research. Moreover, researchers and centers of research networks need to be created at the national and regional levels.
- f) *Communications and media*: environmental training programmes for reporters and media experts should be developed. In addition, committing space and programmes in the print and audio-visual media is needed in order to raise public awareness about environmental degradation, the costs and benefits of environmental protection, and the rational use of natural resources.”

The State: solution or problem?

Considerable hopes are pinned on the civil state—one which is ruled by laws that respect civil and political rights—as the overarching champion and guarantor of human security. However, the Report has emphasized that the expectations of citizens in Arab countries for the protection of their rights and freedoms are seldom fulfilled on the ground, even if the distance between hopes and reality is not the same in all Arab states. Arab leaders recognized clearly the importance of rule of law and political rights in the Declaration on Modernization and Reform, launched at the Tunis Summit in 2004.⁴ Since that time, however, only slight improvements have been achieved. Accordingly, the recommendations of the Arab Human Development Report 2004, *Towards Freedom in the Arab World*, are still relevant today.⁵

All Arab countries need to widen and deepen democratic processes to enable citizens to participate in framing public policy on an equal footing. A political system controlled by elites, however decked out with democratic trappings, will not produce outcomes conducive to human security for all citizens, irrespective of class, creed, gender, and ethnic/tribal affiliation. It is therefore imperative to restructure the social contract and modes of political interaction on the basis of

equal rights and opportunities in order to forge cohesive bonds of citizenship among individuals in society. These bonds must be regulated by the state as the institution that stands above societal groupings, transcending the tribe and its elders, the ethnic group and its leaders, and the sect and its preachers. This is the state for all its citizens, the protector of their personal and human security, and the guarantor of their individual and human rights.

Such a state would unambiguously affirm its commitment to the international understanding of human rights. It would not merely ratify international conventions, but also would reflect their provisions in national legislation, and remove regulatory and legal obstacles to their meaningful implementation. This state would also embody a clear separation of powers: the concentration of all authority in the executive would give way to public oversight and checks and balances provided by an independent judiciary and a genuinely representative and empowered legislature.

Considerable hopes are pinned on the civil state as the overarching champion and guarantor of human security

Box 9-2

Arab leaders commit to advance political reform in their countries

We, the Leaders of the Arab States, meeting at the Summit Conference of the Arab League Council in its 16th ordinary session held in Tunis, assert our firm determination:

- To materialize our common will to develop the system of joint Arab action, through the Tunis Summit resolution to amend the Arab League Charter and to modernize its work methods and its specialized institutions, based on the various Arab initiatives and ideas included in the proposals put forward by the Secretary General as well as on a consensual and coherent vision and on a gradual and balanced approach.
- To reaffirm our states' commitment to the humanitarian principles and the noble values of human rights in their comprehensive and interdependent dimensions, to the provisions of the various international conventions and charters, and to the Arab Human Rights Charter adopted by the Tunis Summit, as well as to the reinforcement of the freedom of expression, thought and belief and to the guarantee of the independence of the judiciary.
- Endeavour, based on the Declaration on the process of reform and modernization in the Arab world, to pursue reform and modernization in our countries, and to keep pace with the rapid world changes, by consolidating the democratic practice, by enlarging participation in political and public life, by fostering the role of all components of the civil society, including NGOs, in conceiving of the guidelines of the society of tomorrow, by widening women's participation in the political, economic, social, cultural and educational fields and reinforcing their rights and status in society, and by pursuing the promotion of the family and the protection of Arab youth.

Source: LAS 2004.

It is imperative to restructure the social contract and modes of political interaction on the basis of equal rights

The concentration of all authority in the executive should give way to public oversight

The security sector would be reformed along principles of professionalism and public service. And this state would also prize its independence in fashioning its policies, mediating external and internal social pressures and winning the approval and support of its own people. It would, in short, be a legitimate state, distinct from the various interests in its political space, and distinguished by its citizens' voluntary acceptance of the principles by which they are governed. In order to bring about such a state, progress will be needed in the following areas:

Citizenship: Citizenship in the Arab region must be made more equal and meaningful. Human beings are born into different circumstances, with varied access to options to expand their capabilities, but all are entitled to the same basic rights. The right of citizenship should be identical for all persons living in a given country, regardless of ethnic origin, religious belief, gender, health, culture, wealth or any other personal attribute. Part-and-parcel of such equality is also the recognition and acceptance of diversity, in all its components, which derives from the same basic human right. The implementation of these basic rights requires both the recognition of citizenship for all and measures to address the entire range of resources, services, protections and opportunities available to these citizens, and how these are distributed. Many studies have shown that discrimination and socioeconomic inequality are detrimental to human security and human development. Equality, by contrast, is an essential means of mobilizing and enhancing human capabilities and performance in all dimensions of development.

Independent judiciaries: Judicial independence is critical to improve human security in the Arab countries. First, protection of human rights depends on a robust, fair, and independent judiciary willing to hold all political and social actors accountable under legal and constitutional protections. Second, judicial independence facilitates political stability and fairness. Finally, judicial independence is vital for the development of healthy, sound, and inclusive economies. Judicial independence is not achieved through static institutions only; it also needs

continuous attention and development. If the pledges of Arab constitutions and international instruments are to be taken seriously, legislative bodies in the Arab countries must be willing and empowered to deal with the judiciaries directly and as a co-equal branch of government, rather than only through the mediation of the executive branch. Executive authorities throughout the region must make a similar commitment to treating the judiciary as a co-equal branch.

Empowered legislative branches: Despite the wide range of constitutional powers granted to the legislative bodies in the Arab countries, parliaments generally play a subordinate role. And where parliaments are able to establish a degree of independence from the executive, they are generally unable to use it as effectively to control the legislative process. Two areas should be considered in order to address the legal incapacitation of parliamentary bodies in Arab countries. First, the electoral process, which is often designed in such a way as to limit the possibilities for parliamentary independence—for elections, too, remain in the grip of the executive in Arab countries. Elections are generally overseen by the Ministry of Interior, which often leads to some mistrust because of the Ministry's traditional emphasis on issues of internal security. And election rules beyond the balloting itself are often tailored to favour specific results. Impartiality both in general electoral procedures and in balloting itself is important. But perhaps still more significant than the procedures themselves is the general political climate in which elections take place: pluralism has been the exception rather than the rule in the Arab region, so that voters in parliamentary elections often face a constricted set of choices. The process of regularly modifying electoral laws must end. The second aspect of parliamentary bodies in Arab countries that requires changing is their lack of ways and means to hold executive authorities truly accountable.

Reform of the security sector: In many cases, the State itself can be the source of violence, yet remains central to the ability to control violence. This is the case in many Arab countries. The dominant internal security thinking in the Arab

countries remains heavily influenced by the traditional approach to security, with the disadvantage that security is conceived in a very narrow sense and hence does not address major imbalances. As an instrument for regime stability, the security sector in the Arab countries is subject to tight political control of the government, which compromises the former's integrity and ability to guarantee the safety and security of all those living within the state's boundaries. Arab societies are also increasingly facing threats that are transnational and collective in nature, including arms and drug trafficking, international crime and the allocation of scarce natural resources such as water among countries. Such threats require a rethinking of overall security policy, as well as of roles and missions, procurement, training, and resource allocation. Security needs to be approached from the perspective of protecting individuals and communities of individuals from violence. Security decisions in the Arab countries have to be analyzed and weighed in relation to their impact on development and social cohesion.

The core objectives of security sector reform are the development of affordable security bodies capable of providing security, and effective oversight mechanisms consistent with democratic norms. The security sector must be subject to a system of checks and balances at state level. Civil management and oversight of these forces, as well as the disengagement of security agencies from politics and from other non-security roles, are required for the transparent and accountable management of the security sector. In post-conflict Arab countries, the reform of this sector has to tackle a third objective, namely to address the legacies of past conflicts including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, judicial reform in the form of transitional justice, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and anti-personnel landmines.⁶

Civil Society: Successful institutional reforms are characterized by demand for change across the board, not merely change instituted at the top. The role of civil society organizations in promoting institutional reform has been often addressed in Arab reform strategies, such as in the Tunis Declaration and the Alexandria

Declaration.⁷ However, non-state participation in reform goes beyond civil society organizations. It also embraces the private sector. Arab countries are facing a new reality where business sectors are being increasingly represented at several levels of the legislative and executive arenas and have become influential in the formulation of public policies, especially those relating to economic and social affairs. Experiences with democratization outside the Arab region have often been associated with the growing political weight of the business sector and its partnership with ruling elites in the management of society and politics. Although these alliances have sometimes simply involved the co-opting of business elites as junior partners of the state, in many cases they have pushed state authorities to consider public governance, rule of law, accountability, and transparency, as founding principles. The rise of the Arab private sector and its growing political influence will very likely stimulate the democratic transformation of social and political environments.⁸

Towards increased security for vulnerable groups

Violence against women is not a phenomenon particular to the Arab countries, although some forms of it, namely honour crimes and female genital mutilation (FGM), are more acute in some Arab countries than they are in other countries of the world. However it is the institutional and cultural vulnerability of women that does constitute an Arab specificity. More particularly, the family in the Arab region continues to be the first social institution that reproduces patriarchal relationships, values and pressures through gender discrimination. Arab states should provide women the means to ensure and guarantee their human rights and security. In line with the calls in previous *Arab Human Development Reports* for comprehensive, rights-based societal reforms, the rise of Arab women requires the total respect for the rights of citizenship of all Arab women, the protection of women's rights in the area of personal affairs and family relations, as well as guarantees of total respect for women's personal rights and freedoms—and in particular their lifelong

The core objective of security sector reform is the development of effective oversight mechanisms

Successful institutional reforms are characterized by demand for change across the board

The achievement of women's rights requires extensive legal and institutional changes

protection from physical and mental abuse. The achievement of these rights requires extensive legal and institutional changes aimed at bringing national legislations in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

In addition to the legal framework, the social environment is a crucial factor in discrimination against women. Violence against women in the Arab countries should not only be dealt with in its legal dimension but should also be addressed in society at large through public education. As pointed out in previous reports,⁹ the lack of clarity in cultural and social concepts about roles, functions and rights constitutes an obstacle to the rise of women. Education and the media have an obligation to work on changing misleading images through a societal programme for the rise of women. The cultural roots of discrimination against women extend to several levels, all of which require action simultaneously:

- *Family upbringing* discriminates between the male and female in matters of freedoms, responsibilities and rights. This environment shakes women's self-confidence and undermines their self-image. These processes of discrimination must be better understood, and brought to a halt.
- *In education*, efforts to promote equal treatment between the sexes would benefit from the introduction of modern pedagogy, methodologies and technologies as aids in revamping curricula, teaching and assessment methods.
- *In the media*, the problem is not only that programmes intended to strengthen the status of women and build respect for their role in society are sometimes deficient. It is also that a significant portion of media programming erodes serious efforts to promote the rise of women. The problem is compounded by the spread of illiteracy, which has made the broadcast media a primary source of popular culture. The strengthening of methods for monitoring and analyzing women's image in the Arab media is an important priority. The media should also play an active role in educating the public about CEDAW.

More generally, there is a crisis in the Arab countries in terms of vulnerable groups' alienation, and governments'

neglect of their basic rights as human beings. In many Arab countries, vulnerable groups are subjected not only to institutional discrimination but also to the prejudices of the population at large. Such vulnerability is not confined to women; it extends to other marginalized groups such as minorities, the elderly, youth, children, disabled persons, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. The neglect and marginalization of these vulnerable groups is a blemish on the human rights records of Arab countries, which must be removed without prevarication or delay.

In many Arab countries, refugees and IDPs suffer from institutional and societal discrimination and are treated as second-class residents. In accordance with human rights principles and in order to ensure the human rights of all asylum seekers on their territories, Arab states are strongly urged to:

- Ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. At the time of the preparation of this Report, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria had still not ratified this important treaty.
- Tackle root causes of war and conflict and support peace-building initiatives involving grass-roots actors, NGOs and governments in the region.
- Focus on integrated projects to incorporate both long and short-term residents of refugee settlements, which would help to alleviate some of the pressures on the resources and infrastructures of Arab cities that are being strained by arriving refugees.
- Implement the rehabilitation of refugee camps and their design as an urban space, not only with reference to their political and social status, but also to becoming an integrated part of the city. Urban master plans based on rehabilitation should take into account the physical, socio-economic, and cultural fabric of the concerned spaces. A bottom-up participatory approach should be used to outline the differentiated needs of the refugee population: women, men, children, people of different income levels, etc.
- Ensure that labour, social welfare, and justice ministries, as well as national human rights bodies, are fully engaged in monitoring and promoting the human rights of asylum seekers.

The neglect and marginalization of vulnerable groups stains human rights records in the region

- Ensure that individuals are not returned to countries where their life or liberty would be put at risk, in accordance with the binding principle of *non-refoulement*.

Re-defining economic security

Arabs will have to look seriously at a future beyond the current pattern of the region's economy, and the type of society it sustains. Procrastination can only heighten the economic insecurities of the region.

A basic feature of the social contract in the Arab countries is that the citizen accepts limitations on public representation and state accountability in return for state-provided benefits. Such a contract is only possible when states have sources of revenue other than direct taxes, such as oil, to finance public expenditure. Although the extent to which this rentier model applies varies across Arab countries, it is known to have influenced patterns of development negatively throughout the region. These impacts include underinvestment in other productive sectors, which leaves state income hostage to finite oil reserves and fluctuating world prices; a trend in some cases towards consumption that has not created productive jobs; and the undervaluation of knowledge in societies where advancement often comes from access to wealth, rather than through scholarship and intellectual pursuits. This type of social contract does not make for secure, self-reliant and competitive economies in the long run, and needs to be surpassed.

One silver lining in the expected decline in oil income and Official Development Assistance in coming years is that perhaps it will induce greater reliance on national sources of revenue and consequently strengthen the mutual accountability of state and citizen.

The economic experience of the Arab region, as of other regions around the world, including OECD countries, has called into question the advisability of relying on market forces alone to regulate economic affairs. Addressing the economic security challenges in the region therefore will require an alternate Arab development model standing on three pillars—diversified economic growth,

employment generation and poverty reduction—resting on a foundation of regional integration. Embodying the lessons of recent global economic failures, its policy instruments would be heterodox: they would reflect a pragmatic middle position between laissez-faire market policies and heavy-handed state interventionism. Specifically, this *Report* made clear the need for priority action in the following three areas:

Economic diversification: The revival and diversification of the productive base of Arab economies is critical to addressing the forms of economic insecurity analyzed in this report. Re-orienting the region's current concentration on oil-led growth would largely take the shape of a steady increase in the share and productivity of the industrial sector, a sharp rise in agricultural productivity and a greater refocusing of the service sector. This, in turn, requires a revised macroeconomic framework that allows for higher public investment in infrastructure, which is key for the facilitation of export-led manufacturing growth. The revised framework would feature prominently a stronger financial sector and a robust and accessible credit environment that enables private firms to finance investment and growth.

One way to provide stable, long-term finance to strategic sectors is through the creation of development banks, whether public institutions as in Brazil, Korea, and Japan or privately-owned as in Germany. Countries late to industrialization have achieved significant successes by utilizing such development banks as the financial arm of their industrial policy strategy.

These two policy objectives, the improvement of infrastructure and the provision of stable and reliable credit are essential pillars for national and regional industrial strategies aimed at diversifying sources of growth. With respect to agricultural policy, attention is needed to policy issues including securing access to productive land and credit, targeted price support benefits, changing gender roles, and effective water resources management.

Globalization is a contemporary reality for Arab countries no less than it is for other nations around the world. Its forces must be harnessed and managed. Fast-

The rentier model is known to have influenced patterns of development negatively

Addressing economic security challenges will require an alternative Arab development model

Any pro-poor macroeconomic strategy needs to incorporate a renewed commitment to employment

moving technological change constantly raises the technological bar, requiring developing countries to increase their productivity and competitiveness in the global economy in order to find a fruitful role in the unfolding of globalization. Indeed, the most dynamic sectors in the integrated world economy are high-technology goods and services. In contrast, recent history shows that reliance on commodities and unskilled labour can lead to “immiserising growth”, which leaves developing economies highly insecure. Accordingly, a key stage of the Arab region’s path to

economic security entails the expansion of local technological capacities, the development and mobilization of knowledge-based assets and a shift towards higher value-added goods and services. In this respect, the original recommendations of the *Arab Human Development Report 2003, Building a Knowledge Society*, are as relevant today as they were in 2003.

Employment generation: Any Arab pro-poor macroeconomic strategy would also need to incorporate a renewed commitment to employment and public investment

Box 9-3

GEORGES CORM* – The Arabs in the post-oil era

Among factors destabilising Arab societies, since the 1970s, has been the tyranny of oil over the course of Arab economies, petro- or not. Earnings from the oil sector do not only affect exporting countries; a portion of this income has diffused into all Arab economies through guest worker remittances to non-oil exporting countries, and through investments. Thus annual growth rates in the Arab world have become firmly linked to the ups and downs of oil prices, with the pace of growth hostage to global price fluctuations.

Oil, and the *rentier* economy that goes with it, has accustomed the Arab world to consuming a large number of imported commodities and services that do not increase its productivity, or level of exports outside the oil sector, to a degree that would finance these large imports. The focus for investment during the oil era has been on expanding energy production and exportation to enlarge revenues. Investment activity resulting from fiscal surpluses has been distributed among giant family financial consortiums on the one hand and the humble savings of the large number of Arab guest workers in the Gulf on the other. In both cases, investments have been chiefly directed to the property, housing, tourism, and foreign exchange sectors. Surpluses have not been deployed effectively to build local productive capacity so as to meet the challenges of globalisation and the post-oil era.

It is therefore essential to begin thinking seriously about modifying Arab development tracks to make the Arab economies productive in the fields that globalisation relies on, as once under-developed countries such as Ireland, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Malta have done. This requires coordinated planning to limit the Arab brain drain, because the workings of globalisation demand that all states develop their knowledge and innovation capacities. These capacities are, in the first degree, human qualifications. It is essential as well to improve organisation and to promote technological creativity in new fields such as electronics, information technology, medical and biological research, and food technology. Further, it is vital to develop competencies in the fields of pollution control and the production of alternative energy.

Arab countries have made great efforts in the educational

arena. However, they have not ensured sufficient suitable job opportunities for the hordes of qualified Arabs who enter the labour market every year and are forced to migrate in the search of that respected and active professional life missing in their own countries. This situation is part of a vicious circle which produces a concentration of investments in the property, business, and foreign exchange sectors and in certain light industries that are not technologically intensive (with the exception of the petrochemical industry that is integral to the oil sector).

In addition to oil rents, Arab economies depend on *rentier* income from property, from foreign goods import agencies, and from financial and exchange operations; they have yet to enter the age of revenues derived from the technological capacity to produce modern goods and services based more on knowledge than on manual labour. Taxation systems and investment incentive packages must be adjusted so as to encourage diversification. This is what will encourage Arab economic trailblazers to engage in investment projects that require high-level human competencies and practical and technological know-how, and that generate profits from technological innovation.

There are many highly-qualified Arab professionals developing new methods and techniques to produce modern goods in demand worldwide, yet they cannot find anyone in their home countries to finance the protection of their innovations through international patents, or to develop and adapt them for use in modern industries and services. In this sphere, we can follow the example of other countries that were poorer than the Arab countries yet succeeded in completely changing the course of low-performing and fettered development by turning to knowledge and technology, by engaging with globalisation, and by taking advantage of it.

The Arab world, in its oil and other centres, has yet to modernize itself in line with the requirements of globalisation. Building skyscrapers and state-of-the-art airports and owning luxury cars are the external shell of economic modernity, not its beating heart, which lies in science, knowledge, and technological innovation.

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as a core vehicle for rejuvenating growth. The current 'reform' agenda in the Arab region discards a state-led development model in favour of a market-driven one, emphasizing improvements in the investment climate and private capital. Such a model, however, is not a solution to the region's large and increasing unemployment since the essence of the problem, as the Report argues, lies in the nature of oil-led growth.

The region's oil-driven development model has led to volatile and job-less growth. In the Arab countries, this pattern has produced lower income inequality than found in other world regions, but has nonetheless left entrenched pockets of income poverty. Productive growth has to be linked to poverty reduction, which entails generating widespread employment at decent wages. Apart from its economic implications, unemployment is the most sensitive political and social challenge the region will face in the foreseeable future. The challenge is not only to create employment, but also to provide decent and productive jobs to all the working-age population. To that end, macroeconomic policies can have as much impact as targeted anti-poverty programmes. But the question is: what makes growth more pro-poor? The general answer given is that three conditions should be created: a concentration of growth in economic sectors that can directly benefit the poor; an enabling environment that promotes their employment, and real incomes; and the enhancement of their basic human capabilities.

This requires that macroeconomic policies be embedded in a broader development strategy that allows for investment not only in infrastructure, but also in specific employment generating activities such as public works, as well as human capabilities through investments in education and health.

Poverty reduction: Even concerted efforts for economic diversification and employment generation will inevitably still leave some men, women and children in dire circumstances of impoverishment. In order to bring these people out of the cycle of poverty, specific and targeted policies and programmes must be developed to bolster incomes and increase access to services within the context of national development strategies.

One important component that has not been fully utilized in Arab countries is the use of public works. These projects should try to target poor areas and should strive to create assets that are of value to poor communities. Where the non-poor groups are likely to be significant beneficiaries of such created assets, co-financing should be mandatory and should be ploughed back into the budgets of public works projects.

Also important is the provision and functioning of social safety nets, which are essential for mitigating the impact of economic downturns on vulnerable groups, yet which remain uneven across the country groups of the region. All Arab countries have an interlocking web of traditional social safety nets, and these have been complemented by formal, or state-run, social safety nets in a variety of ways across countries. The high income Arab countries have erected fairly wide and deep formal social safety nets that provide special support for widows, the divorced, the sick, the elderly, unmarried and unemployed young women, families of prisoners, and students. Middle income countries have pursued similar paths, but have fallen short when it comes to coverage, equality, level, and cost-effectiveness of programs. And low income countries have only recently begun to adopt formal social safety nets, which tend to suffer from the same shortcomings as those in the middle income countries, and to a greater degree.

In order to finance greater pro-poor and employment generating public investment, reliance primarily on domestic resource mobilization is recommended. Depending on Official Development Assistance or inflows of private capital to jump-start growth is considered ill advised. Some resources can be mobilized by tilting public expenditures more towards productive investment—in human capital as well as in physical and natural capital. Public policies can also create an environment more conducive to broad-based private investment, through either more favourable macroeconomic policies or more equitable redistribution of assets. With greater opportunities for investment, people save more and/or work more to expand their asset base. The potential for domestic resource mobilization in the region is high given its low tax rates.

Productive growth has to be linked to poverty reduction

Also important is the provision and functioning of social safety nets

Reducing food and health insecurity

Food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition still afflict too many Arabs. While some states are well ahead of others in meeting the hunger-reduction target of Goal One of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) the region as a whole is off track. This largely reflects the continuing prevalence of hunger in the least developed countries (LDCs) of the region.

This Report has interpreted food security not in terms of absolute sovereignty in food production, a goal impractical in light of regional water scarcities, but rather in terms of sufficiency for all members of society in essential commodities. That is, the Report has focused not on the state level, but rather on the human level. In this context, the region's low self sufficiency rate in staple foods is one of its most serious development gaps. Around the world, as well as in the region, unregulated market policies have led to an increasing concentration of prime land and water resources in fewer and fewer large commercial farms. This trend has forced small farmers to eke out an existence on increasingly marginal land. Prime land that once produced food for those who farmed it is increasingly devoted to crops that turn a high profit, catering to the consumption patterns of the rich or to the export market. At the same time, unequal power relations, particularly in rural areas, have given influential groups control over prime land and water at substantially lower cost than the social value of these resources.

Altogether, these policies have contributed to a situation in which the market has produced sub-optimal quantities of the basic foodstuffs that make up the bulk of the diet and food expenditure of the poor. In this context, food security could be bolstered in the Arab region through policy interventions in line with the following principles:

Promote access to land: Arab countries may need to introduce progressive land taxation by levying higher land tax-rates on productive lands as the size of land-ownership increases. This could induce large landowners to sell part of their land and use the proceeds to finance irrigation expansion. Land access, distribution

and tenure need to be addressed within the context of a set of pro-poor policy interventions. In this respect, the legal and institutional framework to guarantee women's command over resources is critical. Given women's large role in agriculture, it is essential to ensure that property rights systems are not biased against them. A change in statutory laws to strengthen women's entitlements and increase the enforceability of their claims over natural and physical assets will both create new incentives for production and remove a major cause of insecurity among rural women.

Extend credit and finance for rural development: Government intervention may also be necessary to ensure that credit and jobs are available to support pro-poor rural development. This means directed and concessional credits for rural and agricultural activities. Regulations requiring commercial banks to diversify their lending and extend their operations to rural areas, as adopted in India and Vietnam, would help to expand small-scale agricultural production and small agri-business. Financing for non-farm labour-intensive activities in rural areas through public works projects would create income stabilizers against sudden climatic shocks.

Invest in water: Large investments are required to improve water availability, yield, and distribution for all uses. According to some estimates, the total capital needed to increase the region's desalination capacity alone over the next three decades comes to around \$73 billion or an annual average of \$2.6 billion. In addition, without investment in irrigation, it will be difficult to increase food production, reduce the financial burden of agricultural imports, and increase food security. These investments should be combined with major reforms in water governance to guarantee equitable and sustainable access to water resources in rural areas.

Emphasize research and development: Knowledge is vital for agriculture and food production but it is an under-provided asset. Research is needed on problems of communities in risk-prone areas, including on the protection of local varieties

This Report interprets food security in terms of sufficiency for all members of society in essential commodities

The region's low self sufficiency rate in staple food is one of its most serious development gaps

from diseases and pests; greater variety in nutrients; the creation of niche markets; and plants that can grow in warmer and drier climates. Currently, the region's total research-and-development (R&D) budget in agriculture and food production is insignificant; the combined R&D budget in this sector for all Arab countries over the last 20 years equals a fraction of the annual R&D budget of a single multinational agro-food company.

Health is a central human goal and a vital enabler of human capabilities, which affects many other aspects of human security. It is therefore of concern that, while Arab countries have secured some appreciable gains in the general status of public health, they still lag behind the industrialized countries. True, increases in life expectancy and reductions in child mortality have been impressive, but other major health indicators in the region have stagnated for several years. There are evident disparities in public health care between countries and within them. Health systems often mismanage their data, making it difficult to form an accurate picture of public health. Moreover, certain practices rooted in culture continue to harm the health of many, chiefly women, and require attitudinal changes in society at large. Malnutrition and stunting rates among children need to be brought down and poor diets that account for both under-nutrition and obesity in all countries must be enriched by ensuring that balanced nutrients are affordable and available to families. This challenge implicates food as well as health policies, and calls for targeted food pricing mechanisms and the expansion of primary health centres and public health education.

Debate is needed about the priorities, scope, and tools for improving health. Arab countries have the material and human resources needed for change, as well as the public will. What is needed is a vision for the future that considers all complex issues, admits to no easy solutions, and proposes gradual and realizable steps. In order for this vision to be developed and realized, several key principles need to be considered:

Focus on people and prevention: In most Arab countries, the public health system needs to be made more proactive,

preventive and people-centered.¹⁰ The typical biomedical model found in the region, which is centered on hospital care, curative services and the treatment of diseases rather than people, is too narrow to meet real needs. The system as a whole must engage with non-health sectors in promoting and financing public health through appropriate inter-sectoral mechanisms.

Access for all: Other required changes include steps to reduce the cost of health care for ordinary citizens, whose out-of-pocket expenses on health are increasing. This may entail reprioritizing public spending, especially in the low and middle income countries where government expenditure on health is relatively low. The high-income countries, on the other hand, which spend heavily on health, need to transform these investments into gains by overcoming inefficiencies in their health systems and by increasing the focus on preventive care. Most Arab countries could also do more to legislate and maintain social health insurance schemes and to create incentives for private employers to provide adequate health benefits.

Increasing public knowledge and involvement: Public involvement is crucial in setting the right agenda and enacting it. Occupied with more immediate concerns and threats to human security (food, liberty and liberation), the average citizen of an Arab country rarely thinks of health as a priority. Increasing public knowledge of health issues and increasing awareness of the related rights and duties is essential. An enlightened and empowered

The food security challenge implicates food as well as health policies

Debate is needed about the priorities, scope, and tools for improving health

Box 9-4

Priorities for public health

- Reducing inequalities by putting emphasis on the most disadvantaged groups
- Population based prevention and essential care with proven cost effectiveness
- Strengthening primary health care and integrating fragmented health services
- Strengthening public health institutions
- Supporting community based and community-designed health improvement initiatives

Source: Jabbour 2007.

Health infrastructure should incorporate protection, prevention and early warning as core functions

The international community has a primary responsibility to assist regional organisations in overcoming these acute threats to human security

population and responsive governments can, with international support, develop a local agenda for health action.

A platform with broad representation, especially of citizens, is needed and must be given powers to implement consensus recommendations. For example, Arab countries could launch programmes for healthy cities, neighbourhoods, or villages based on public participation. Such programmes, in which the usual top down approach is replaced by partnerships between governments and citizens, offer instructive guides that can be replicated in other fields of development.

Regional and international coordination and cooperation: Regional coordination of both policies and programmes can promote health and development. Cooperation has contributed to improved health status in the rich Gulf countries, but continued poor health indicators in neighbouring countries are unacceptable and indicate the need for more cooperation. The resources and experiences of the people and non-governmental organizations should also be pooled, not just those of governments. International cooperation agencies also have a key role to play in this regard, in connecting national governments to knowledge and resources to bolster national health plans.

Responding to emerging health threats: Emerging health threats, including HIV/AIDS and chronic communicable diseases, demand to be taken seriously. Yet policy attention to such threats is deficient or absent in a culture of denial where high-risk groups remain neglected and under-served. Medical science has developed effective methods of antiretroviral treatment for those living with HIV/AIDS which, although available free of charge in most Arab countries, will not be effectively utilized without attitudinal shifts in society. Nor is prevention possible without new social and personal behaviours among those affected. Dispelling the climate of secrecy and stigma enveloping HIV/AIDS through compassionate public education programmes is thus an urgent priority that calls for leadership by example from eminent persons, religious leaders and other public figures. As for major communicable diseases, health infrastructure at the

national and local level should incorporate protection, prevention and early warning as core functions.

Mitigating external threats and resolving conflicts

The Arab region continues to be labeled as volatile and still suffers occupation by outside forces and internal and cross-border conflicts that deprive people of their inalienable rights and impede human development in affected areas. The Report presented the institutional, structural and material violence inflicted on Arab countries by occupation and foreign military intervention, reviewing the different cases of Iraq, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Somalia.

The international community has a primary responsibility to assist regional organisations, notably the League of Arab States and the African Union, in overcoming the acute threats to human security posed in such cases. The UN's first and foremost responsibility is to safeguard international peace and security, and it must not forfeit the major role it has to play in that respect in the region. It can make a significant contribution in Iraq in helping the country to make the transition to recovery and reconstruction in tandem with the US exit strategy. The UN also has an evident, if underutilized, capacity to help in negotiating an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict over the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In Somalia, the international community can facilitate the Arab-African joint forces under the UN umbrella as recommended by the National Reconciliation Conference led by Somali elders.

Whatever agenda is agreed on, action to prevent suffering and death caused by conflict must come first. The catastrophic situations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Sudan, and Somalia and the looming humanitarian crisis and collapse of infrastructure in Iraq, which follows two decades of senseless wars and sanctions, are priorities that cannot wait for attention. Although international aid is important, local and regional initiatives are indispensable as well in addressing emergencies and can contribute to developing the needed infrastructure.

The continuing destabilization of the region by such threats underlines that human security is closely connected with conventional security at the national, regional, and global levels. Foreign occupation, armed conflict, identity struggles and recourse to violence all undercut the safety and wellbeing of affected peoples in the region. The geopolitical environment often exploits the Arab countries' stress points, and they continue to depend on international powers to help resolve regional conflicts. Yet this reliance is itself a source of deep discontent among Arab populations, turning popular opinion against the powers that are perceived as threats to human security because of the occupation of Arab states' lands and the destruction of citizens' lives.

Diminishing popular resentment of foreign powers will take much more than a counter-campaign to win "hearts and minds". These reactions are the legacy of a historical relationship of power, in which Arab countries have often found themselves vulnerable to outside interference and double standards in matters of political and human rights. This experience remains painful in the collective memory and overcoming it will require demonstrated respect for Arab political, civil and religious rights, rather than mere palliative statements. Such demonstrated sincerity, the signs of which have recently appeared, will materially improve the climate for the effective participation of regional actors in negotiated settlements of conflicts that have long eroded human security in the region.

Conflicts in the Arab countries may not be fully resolved soon. Nevertheless, the level of conflicts and their repercussions can be reduced. The most significant challenge in the Middle East is the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the dispute between Israelis and Palestinians. It is a centre of gravity around which the political life of the region has revolved, and it remains of vast practical and symbolic significance. It was not until the early 1990s that the Palestinian problem was taken up. For decades, the conflict had been subsumed under other confrontations at both the global level, during the Cold War, and at the regional level. Without a more comprehensive approach to resolving this conflict and its linkages to other political

and economic issues, it is likely to remain a thorny issue.

Under international law, an occupation that turns into a long-term regime is illegal and unjustified. Occupation can only be admissible as an interim measure that maintains law and order in a territory following an armed conflict and pending a peace settlement. What, then, are the legal consequences of a regime of occupation that has continued for over 41 years? Certainly, none of the obligations of the occupying power as enjoined by international law are reduced as a result of such a prolonged imposition. Rather the reverse, which raises further questions. Can such a long-imposed occupation ever constitute a lawful regime in the OPT? What are the legal consequences for the occupied people and the occupying power?

From a human development perspective, only the end of Israel's occupation of the territories it occupied in 1967 and the restoration of the Palestinian rights, foremost among which is the right to self determination, will bring about that lasting peace the absence of which so far has

The most significant challenge is the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the dispute between Israelis and Palestinians

Box 9-5

United Nations Secretary General on the vital need for Palestinian statehood and for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace

"The Middle East region is more complex, more fragile and more dangerous than it has been for a very long time. Deep mistrust continues to constrain Palestinians and Israelis from conducting a meaningful peace process... There are a number of growing causes of instability and uncertainty in this region. But for most in the Arab world, the wound that is still fresh, even after 40 years, is the continued occupation of Arab territory and the denial of legitimate Palestinian claims to statehood

The basis for a solution is clear: an end to the occupation that began in 1967, the creation of an independent and viable Palestinian State, alongside a secure and fully recognized State of Israel, and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region, as called for in the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council."

Source: UN (United Nations) – News and Media Division 2007.

"If anything, the crisis in Gaza underscored the depth of the political failures of the past, and the urgent need to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace for all peoples in the Middle East. Just as we need a unified Palestinian government committed to the peace process, we need an Israeli government that will uphold its commitments. Just as we need the Palestinians to address security issues—as the Palestinian Authority is doing so commendably in the West Bank—we need the Israelis to implement a genuine settlement freeze."

Source: Ban Ki-Moon 2009.

In Somalia, the international community appears to be preoccupied with the symptoms, not the core, of the crisis

contributed to frustrating human development in the region.¹¹

Somalia's seventeen-year-old crisis has become one of the world's worst humanitarian catastrophes. The country remains a challenge for the international community. Since 1991, Somalia has been the archetypal failed state. The deteriorating security situation there continues with an alarmingly high rate of civilian casualties, in particular women and children, who are bearing the brunt of the conflict. Several attempts to create a transitional set-up have failed, and the conflict has also aggravated grievances between different national groups. The scenario is constantly changing, making it difficult to give fully detailed and timely picture of political developments in the country.

The international community appears to be preoccupied with a symptom – the piracy phenomenon – instead of with the core of the crisis, the need for a political settlement. Hopefully, a more constructive

approach will become possible now that Ethiopia has withdrawn its forces (as of January 2009) and a new government has taken office (as of February 2009), opening up a new window of opportunity to re-launch a credible political process.

In the last few decades Iraq saw its once burgeoning wealth and gleaming infrastructure crumble. The country's destructive legacies have seriously hindered the security of the Iraqi people, including the war with Iran (1980-1988), the Gulf war (1991), the sanctions regime (1990-2003) and brutal acts of violence under the former regime of Saddam Hussein as well as the US-led occupation of the country that began in 2003.

The cycle of violence that started in 2003 has had devastating humanitarian consequences on Iraqi society and has practically brought development in the country to a halt. The tensions and conflicts in Iraq stemming from military operations by armed groups, individual and organized crime, massive corruption and the violence inflicted by an array of actors have damaged Iraq's social fabric and infrastructure faster than it can be repaired. In addition, and perhaps even more critically, the combined effect of all these factors is the refugee crisis, which has displaced some four million Iraqis, including some two million who have fled the country entirely.

Many analysts and policy makers agree that an opening now exists for post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq, as a result of a number of factors occurring at the same time, these include: the relative improvement of security in Baghdad, the planned withdrawal of US troops, and the results of the local elections in January 2009, which have introduced some hope that the political system could contribute to a stabilization of the country as a whole. National elections at the end of 2009 will be even more important. They are a potential bellwether for nationwide political trends, including the role of religion, the endurance of ethnic and sectarian identities, and the deepening conflict over decentralization.

However, even with these relatively positive developments, the country's future remains uncertain. The national elections at the end of 2009 will be important in themselves, but they will also set the stage

Box 9-6

Arab Peace Initiative at the Arab Summit in Beirut, 2002

The Council of the League of Arab States:

1. Requests Israel to reconsider its policies and declare that a just peace is its strategic option as well.
2. Further calls upon Israel to affirm:
 - a. Full Israeli withdrawal from all the territories occupied since 1967, including the Syrian Golan Heights to the lines of June 4, 1967 as well as the remaining occupied Lebanese territories in the south of Lebanon.
 - b. Achievement of a just solution to the Palestinian Refugee problem to be agreed upon in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194.
 - c. The acceptance of the establishment of a Sovereign Independent Palestinian State on the Palestinian territories occupied since the 4th of June 1967 in the West Bank and Gaza strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital.
3. Consequently, the Arab Countries affirm they will:
 - a. Consider the Arab-Israeli conflict ended, and enter into a peace agreement with Israel, and provide security for all the states of the region.
 - b. Establish normal relations with Israel in the context of this comprehensive peace.
4. Assure the rejection of all forms of Palestinian repatriation which conflict with the special circumstances of the Arab host countries.
5. Call upon the Government of Israel and all Israelis to accept this initiative in order to safeguard the prospects for peace and stop the further shedding of blood, enabling the Arab countries and Israel to live in peace and good neighbourliness and provide future generations with security, stability, and prosperity.

Source: LAS 2002.

for Iraq's most pressing challenge: creating a new national compact that ensures stability beyond a U.S. withdrawal. In the absence of the overarching external power that has hitherto dominated the political process, the country's major political actors will be forced to decide how the workings of government should be organized and shared among them, how matters relating to disputed territories should be resolved, and how state revenues from oil and other sources should be allocated. These goals

are all achievable in Iraq, but a successful outcome will depend on the consolidation of a political framework for national reconciliation and reconstruction. It will also be affected by factors beyond the control of Iraqi society, such as the manner in which the withdrawal of US troops is organized and the influence of regional powers.

In all societies emerging from conflict, reconciliation efforts are the glue that holds the post-conflict reconstruction process together. Reconciliation must

An opening now exists for post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq

Box 9-7

MOHAMED EL BARADEI* – The quest for peace in the Middle East

The Arab-Israeli conflict, at its most basic level, comes down to two passionate peoples claiming the same piece of land. These claims are rooted in religious belief and differing views of history. The sense of entitlement is fervent on both sides. For the Jewish people, reclaiming their 'Promised Land' symbolizes a positive end to centuries of pogroms that culminated in the Holocaust. The Palestinians, on the other hand, cannot conceive why the 'Jewish Question' had to be settled at their expense, and why, after living there for one or two millennia, their land had to be divided into two states.

The state of insecurity

Israel lives with a constant sense of insecurity, in a neighbourhood in which it is largely boycotted and isolated. In less than 60 years, there have been four wars, two intifadas, and many smaller conflicts involving the loss of innocent lives. Only two countries—Egypt and Jordan—formally recognize and have peace agreements with Israel. The peace that has existed for most of that time has more or less been a 'Cold Peace'—a 'formal' peace only minimally supported by interaction between people. And the wisdom of that peace is often called into question by critical voices in the two countries, as well as in the Arab world at large, in the face of the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories. Meanwhile, many of the Palestinian refugees have for decades lived in squalor—unable to own land, for example, or to obtain proper travel documents—conditions that have added to their humiliation.

Today, the Arabs continue to show little readiness to accept Israel as long as there is no resolution to the Palestinian issue. Israel, on the other hand, continues to consolidate its occupation in the face of its perceived existential threat and the absence of peace in the region.

If the recent history of the Middle East teaches us nothing else, it should teach us that these conflicts cannot be solved through military force. Every type of violence has been tried, from occupation by force and outright military confrontation, to oppression, terrorism and targeted assassination—without a single instance that brought either party closer to peace or security. Each act of violence in the region only begets more violence and added insecurity.

The solution will not lie in reconstructing history. And it will not lie in redressing all past injustice. If we are to solve

the central conflict of the Middle East, we must begin by looking forward, not backward, by being ready to reconcile and recognize mutual rights, and above all by finding in our hearts the ability to forgive.

One thing is clear: the status quo is not acceptable. The threat of other regional states acquiring nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction will continue to be a grave international concern. The rise of extremist groups originating in the Middle East—and the ease with which they recruit in the region—will continue to be high on the list of international insecurities. The dependency of many countries on Middle East oil and natural gas will continue to add a dimension of global economic risk to any conflict. And when events in the region give rise to perceived religious and cultural divisions between the Muslim world and the West, the repercussions will continue to be felt everywhere.

Reasons to hope

In spite of this rather gloomy state of affairs, I believe there is a glimmer of hope. Lost in the middle of all this conflict and violence are two major psychological breakthroughs.

The first is the readiness of the Arab countries, expressed at the level of the Arab Summits, to have full normal relations with Israel, provided that Israel would withdraw to the June 1967 borders, ensure a just solution for Palestinian refugees and recognize the establishment of a Palestinian State. This is a far cry from the Arab Summit decision of 1967 in Khartoum, which formulated its policy towards Israel as "no peace, no recognition and no negotiation".

The second is the recognition by Israel of the right of the Palestinians to have their own independent state. This is also a far cry from Israel's previous position, which for many years questioned the right of the Palestinians to independence or even their separate identity.

Achieving security in the Middle East will naturally require more than a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian issue. Building stability in Iraq and Lebanon, normalizing relations with Iran, and addressing pressing issues of development, governance and modernity throughout the region are only a few of the substantial challenges that must be dealt with.

* Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Source: El-Baradei 2006.

The establishment of effective regional mechanisms for dealing with crises is necessary

be pursued not only at a national level but also on local levels. It must be both political and social at the same time, encompassing a process to resolve issues of collective memory and history, through an organized movement involving people and institutions of civil society. By consolidating a consensual national historiography, national reconciliation can prevent the use of partisan reinterpretations of past events to mobilize sects and groups for political purposes. Such healing initiatives should be encouraged in Somalia and Iraq, as well as in Sudan.

Distressingly, Arab regional organizations have been remarkably weak, showing themselves to be incapable of playing a decisive role in crisis management and conflict resolution. This incapacity is itself partially a product of the fragmentation and tensions that characterize the region. The League of Arab States, which is premised on Arab cultural unity, functions as an arena to establish or exhibit consensus among the Arab states; however, specific conflict management and dispute resolution efforts have been handled by individual actors outside the scope of the League. The establishment of effective regional mechanisms for dealing with crises is as much one of the challenges before Arab countries, as it is a necessary response to the manifold hot spots in the region. So long as that regional capacity, which states would be expected to develop in their own common interest, remains missing, the region's crises will continue to invite external intervention, whether unilateral or within a multilateral framework.

End note

Effective co-operation is needed to rebuild Arab solidarity within the larger international system

With the enormous challenges facing Arab countries today, it is easy to lose sight of the possibility of change. Nevertheless, Arab countries must find a way to improve their lot. Debate is needed about the priorities, scope, and tools for improving and enhancing development. The objective of this report is to help identify priorities based on the challenges facing the peoples in Arab countries.

The concept of human security constitutes a valid contribution to a world citizenry free from fear and free from want. Approaching human development through

the lens of human security has three advantages: it empowers people to make choices; it does not rely on military force and is not imposed on peoples; and it is not achieved for one party or nation at the expense of the human security of others.

For international actors, approaching development in the Arab countries from the perspective of human security, in its true sense, could underpin an important policy shift: it could lead those actors to respond to regional issues not from the narrow perspective of their own strategic concerns, an approach which has largely failed to ensure stable ties with Arab countries, but with the interests, rights and security of the peoples who live in those countries in mind. This new approach would offer an altogether more sustainable basis for productive partnership with the Arab region.

The authors of this Report believe that ending the foreign occupation of Arab lands, forging bonds of equal citizenship among all members of society, and establishing government by rule of law in Arab countries are prerequisites for addressing political, social and personal insecurity in the region. They also accord the greatest importance to Arab cooperation in all dimensions of human security. Such co-operation would rest on a realistic, incremental vision that takes into account the interests of each individual Arab country and that builds upon the interests these countries have in common, starting with the welfare of their peoples.

Projects emanating from this vision could contribute greatly to alleviating environmental stresses, unemployment and poverty, the lack of social protection networks, and food and health security crises. Effective co-operation is also needed to rebuild Arab solidarity within the larger international system where unity of purpose and greater integration could tip the scales in favour of the region's interests. The responsibility for devising realistic projects in these domains falls upon the supervisory institutions for collective Arab action, notably the League of Arab States, the Council for Arab Economic Unity, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, the Arab Office for Drug Affairs, the Arab Labour Organization, the Arab Organization for Human Rights, and other such entities.

At the country level, this report urges a move away from development strategies that stress economic growth as their prime goal and towards pro-poor strategies that address economic growth, employment generation and poverty reduction as inter-related priorities. Such strategies would be consistent with a march toward achieving Millennium Development Goals, and would take as their primary intellectual source of inspiration the concept of human development in its richest definition, which includes the value of freedom.

Will the Arab states, on which many hopes remain pinned, rise to these aspirations? Will their emerging civil societies develop the capacity to play their part?

In most Arab countries, the public has become restive in the grip of authority fashioned in a bygone age, and the state's hold on power grows more fragile each year. At the same time, public confidence in the nascent institutions of civil society has not yet solidified into complete trust. Rather, the tendency of many Arabs is to place their trust in institutions rooted in primordial loyalties, notably kinship, clanism, and religion. As formidable as these additional challenges to the state and civil society are, overcoming them successfully is an essential condition for strengthening human security in the Arab countries.

Endnotes

- ¹ For details on the main challenges confronting the implementation of IWRM principles in Arab countries and on respective recommendations for addressing them, see: Arab Water Council 2008.
- ² For additional details see “The Arab Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change.” LAS 2007.
- ³ AFED 2008a.
- ⁴ LAS 2004.
- ⁵ “The Arab Human Development Report 2004: Towards Freedom in the Arab World”, dealt with the issue of state performance on human rights and elaborated policy recommendations aiming at enhancing human freedom. The main recommendations essentially revolved around: Enhancing the legal and institutional foundations that underpin freedom, Adherence to international human rights law, Binding the ruling authority to the rule of law, Guaranteeing freedoms and rights at the heart of the constitution, Strengthening civil and political rights in law, Guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary, Abolishing the state of emergency, and Guaranteeing personal freedoms. UNDP 2005.
- ⁶ Sayigh. 2007.
- ⁷ Bibliotheca Alexandrina 2004.
- ⁸ Hamzaoui 2009 (in Arabic).
- ⁹ UNDP 2006a.
- ¹⁰ Jabbour 2007.
- ¹¹ In relation to the Palestinian right to self-determination, the International Court of Justice, in its Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, issued in The Hague on 9 July 2004, stated the following:
“The International Court of Justice finds that the construction of the (separation) wall severely impedes the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination and is therefore a breach of Israel’s obligation to respect that right.
The Court also notes that the principle of self-determination of peoples has been enshrined in the United Nations Charter and reaffirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 2625 (XXV), pursuant to which “Every State has the duty to refrain from any forcible action which deprives peoples referred to [in that resolution] . . . of their right to self-determination.” Article 1 common to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights reaffirms the right of all peoples to self-determination, and lays upon the States parties the obligation to promote the realization of that right and to respect it, in conformity with the provisions of the United Nations Charter.
The Court would recall that, in 1971, it emphasized that current developments in “international law in regard to non-self-governing territories, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, made the principle of self-determination applicable to all [such territories]”. The Court went on to state that “These developments leave little doubt that the ultimate objective of the sacred trust” referred to in Article 22, paragraph 1, of the Covenant of the League of Nations “was the self-determination . . . of the peoples concerned”. The Court has referred to this principle on a number of occasions in its jurisprudence. The Court indeed made it clear that the right of peoples to self-determination is today a right erga omnes.”



