

**REPORT
ON YOUTH FORUMS 2008
ARAB HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2008
CAIRO – AMMAN
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I. BACKGROUND

In response to calls for listening to the Arab youths' opinions regarding development conditions in the Arab countries, and desiring that the report should be more representative of the different sectors, three forums were held to identify the views of the Arab youth in particular. The first forum was held in Cairo, Egypt on 7-8 December 2007 as part of the Arab Human Development Report 2008. Participants came from Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and Egypt. The second forum was held in Amman, Jordan on 11-12 January 2008 with the participation of youths from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Palestine. The third forum was held in Cairo, Egypt on 8-9 February 2008 with participants from Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The three forums were organized by the UNDP regional office. In these gatherings, participants were asked to answer questions about the concept of human security, the most significant relevant threats, how their governments should encounter these threats, whether the exerted efforts were sufficient to eliminate them, and how these threats should be coped with.

II. HUMAN SECURITY CONCEPT

Concerning the concept of human security, there were points of agreement and others of disagreement.

1) Points of agreement

Emphasis has been laid on the significance of the human security concept, especially in the Arab region as an important factor to achieve political stability as well as economic and social development. Political stability is a main requirement for development. Political stability cannot exist if human security is not achieved. Human security has many dimensions and should be addressed from different perspectives. Human security does not seek merely to cope up with food insufficiency, violence and threats related to environmental degradation. Rather, human security deals with the individual within a group. Thus, the individual is the main element of all development aspects. Emphasis has also been laid on the need to take into account the conditions in each country.

Most of the participants from the Arab Mashreq (Arab eastern) and Maghreb (Arab western) countries agreed that the concept of human security was a comprehensive and multilateral concept, as it covered political, economic, environmental and physical aspects. However, human security differs depending on the context where it is addressed. The participants' inputs reflected a great deal of awareness of the complexity and imbrications of the

concept. The different levels and dimensions of human security were linked to each other and so were the subjective and objective dimensions of the concept. In fact, the concept entails duality, as it proceeds from both subjective and objective factors depending on our understanding of its context.

a) The subjective dimension

Discussions focused on the meaning of the sense of security and stability. How an individual feels that he/she does not have fears, feels secure from risks and impediments that impair the basic human needs, feels secure in respect of himself/herself, his/her property, and the persons around him/her, and the preconceptions affecting others. Thus, human security was considered a static, and not a dynamic, state of mind. However, some participants argued that human security had a dynamic nature. Threats to human security are blamed on the contexts and the change of conditions.

Discussions also focused on whether human security was an inner feeling only or stems from the surrounding environment where an individual lives. Is security a personal or communal feeling?

Some participants were of the view that security was a psychological feeling. We may be fairly secure but we don't have a feeling of security. There are many people who actually feel that they are in danger though there are no practical reasons for this feeling. In contrast, a person may feel that he is not in danger while there are threats to his security.

b) External objective dimension

1. The human security concept was defined on the basis of the "rights" concept. Thus, human security was linked to the availability of minimal rights; or rules guaranteeing these rights and freedoms. Although it is difficult to define what these rights are, some participants defined them generally as social, political, civil and economic rights. The issue of equality in enjoying these rights was also raised. But, defining human security by linking it to the concept of rights provoked argument on whether that definition would add new knowledge to, or makes any difference from, the concept of human rights.
2. Another definition sought to take a set of "standard values" as a basis and a core of the human security concept. For example, the concept was linked to living secure; non-encroachment upon human freedom, dignity, physical security, and safety; trust among individuals, communities or states; respect of the others' will, and ensuring social justice.
3. Some participants defined the concept negatively. Thus, human security was defined as: absence of violence, terrorism, and preconceptions; protection against aggression; and absence of anxiety. Others defined it positively as: life in dignity, stable life,

religious freedom, and freedom of ownership. All participants emphasized that the society should guarantee the security of its individuals and identify who can guarantee this security and who should have the legitimate right to enjoy it.

Some interpositions tried to reconcile both the subjective and objective dimensions of human security. Thus, human security was seen as an inner feeling influenced by objective external factors. Further, the objective dimension was linked to physical safety, and the subjective dimension was linked to the moral level, thus, stressing that the physical and moral security were not separate from each other. A question was also raised on whether human security should be defined negatively (absence of fear, sickness, death or lack of rules guaranteeing rights and freedoms, for example) or positively (the existence of certain rights, freedoms and values).

c) Other dimensions

The participants also expressed their views about peace, disputes, gender equality and democracy. According to Libyan participants, human security should not be linked only to the absence of wars, but also to harmony among individuals and the existence of a harmonious society in cultural and religious terms. These facts qualify a community for human security. Thus, for some participants, the human security concept was more comprehensive. New facts and broader vision were added to it.

2) Points at issue

The points of disagreement on the concept of human security included the level of this concept and whether it should concern the individual, the state or the external environment. Some participants were of the view that the human security was a personal concept that included the right of the individual to exercise religious freedom, to have a house and food, and to have these requirements met in a democratic atmosphere.

Others were of the opinion that the human security concept should include the ability of the individual to give and take without being exposed to pressures from the society or the ruling authority. The individual should be able to make contributions to his/her community depending on his/her capabilities, and to respond to what is required from him/her without coming under pressures from customs, traditions and the state.

Others argued that human security should be the concern of the state. The state should respect the citizens' rights. For example, it should provide them with education and work opportunities and guarantee for them political security.

On the other hand, some participants saw human security as an international concept not limited to the Arab countries alone, but related to the individual as a human being. For human security to be achieved, human freedom should be guaranteed within the framework of responsibility.

Generally speaking, while some were of the opinion that the subjective dimension was the most important dimension with regard to human security, others argued that the external dimensions were the essential determinant of human security. A group of the participants were of the view that it was necessary to combine subjective (or moral) dimensions with the objective (or physical) dimensions. For example, the relationship between human dignity and the individual's understanding of his own rights and freedoms; the need to have a proper legal background while living in stable economic conditions; the impact of internal and psychological security on the social, cultural and intellectual security; the fact that the internal feeling of security is influenced by the availability of basic needs; the dichotomy of security into physical security and intellectual security. Security was also linked to other values such as freedom, dignity and peace (the fact that security affects all aspects of life; education, health and economy). Basically, the human security concept is centered on an individual's ability to live in an environment free of dangers and threats and his right to live in a society that can guarantee to him dignity, good life and freedom.

III. PRIORITIES

The prevailing opinion among all participants in the three forums was that it was difficult to define priorities for the threat and that all dimensions constitute sources of threat to the human security in the Arab world. All dimensions, they said, were also overlapping and interconnected. The participants' opinions on the areas of priorities are outlined below according to the geographical division.

1. The Nile Basin countries

According to the participants from the Nile Basin countries (Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, and Somalia), the following are the issues that should be given priority in respect of human security:

Political security, in both its internal and external dimensions, comes first (foreign interventions by the neighboring states or the big powers whether in the form of occupation such as the USA which tries to interfere by way or another or of displacement of refugees). Examples of internal threats to human security are the state's torture of its citizens, the absence of democracy and transparency, lack of the freedom of speech, non-acceptance of the other, conflicts among groups, and tribal or ethnic conflicts.

Economic security is the second on the list of priorities. Examples of threats to economic security are the absence of the means of living, mistrust in the state and the ensuing drop in investments, adopting the policies of international organizations without adapting them to the local situation, and unfair distribution of resources as in Somalia and Sudan.

Personal security is the third priority. Manifestations of threats to personal security are assault against properties, rape, organized crime and spread of

firearms. The fourth priority is the social security, especially threats to culture and Arab identity, and unacceptable cultural practices such as circumcision. Finally, the environmental, food and health dimensions, in addition to problems like desertification, forest degradation and water scarcity did not receive sufficient attention from the participants and, therefore, were barely mentioned.

2. Arab Mashreq countries

The Arab Mashreq countries consist of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Iraq. Participants from these countries arranged threat priorities as follows: Poverty was placed top on the list of priorities. Poverty is widely spread in spite of the presence of many natural resources. As this problem is getting worse, the biggest threat to the citizens in these countries is how to lead their daily life and how to live and die in dignity. Therefore, the first priority to them is social security followed by health security and environmental security. Personal, psychological and spiritual security is the last on the list. Personal security leads to self-security and communal security and hence the security of the society and political security.

Personal security includes security against the threat of crime and assault, which leads to internal security and communal security with man becoming able to respect and be tolerant with the other. This tolerance achieves the security of the society and prevents revolutions and coups. With regard to Jordan, the focus was laid on the scarcity of water resources and who has the right of access to these resources. Environmental balance is upset. Although participants from Lebanon were in agreement in general on the above-mentioned order of arrangement of priorities, priority was given to the communal problem, political provocation, and denominational affiliation. The same is true of Syria. Here, the main problem and threat are confrontation with the state.

For participants from Palestine and Iraq, priority should be given to the following: intellectual dimension followed by personal security, economic security, social security, food security, health security and then security in the confrontation with the state. However, examining individual comments made by participants, we can come up with the following remarks:

- For the participants from Palestine, it is important that the basic human needs be met and that man should be treated humanely.
- Israel is a threat to human security and a priority that should be dealt with. The human security dimensions in Palestine change all the time with regard to priorities dictated by the political conditions surrounding the conflict with Israel. In the beginning, it was important for the Palestinian to join a political faction. The personal security, threatened by the Israeli practices, comes second on the list of priorities. After the year 2006, food security came first due to the international blockage and boycott. Each phase in the conflict brings with it a new priority.

- Some argued that security in the confrontation with the state is a priority as confronting the savage and oppressive state may help realize the other security dimensions.
- In Iraq, personal security, which is linked to social security, relatively has some weight.

3. Gulf States and Yemen

Social security in the Arab Gulf states received long discussions. But there were some points at issue. While the participants from Yemen were concerned about food security, participants from the Gulf states were concerned about social and personal security which includes intellectual security and acceptance of the other.

The second priority was given to health, environment and food security. Environmental threat here comes first. In the Gulf, there is a vast desert where water is scarce. Therefore, they resort to desalination and other methods. The second priority is health security, then the economic security followed by confrontation with the state. The participants divided the threats into subgroups:

- 1- Health, environment and food.
- 2- Personal and social security.
- 3- Economic security.
- 4- Security in the confrontation with the state.

4. Arab Maghreb states

The social security and the problems related to identity were placed first on the list of priorities. There were also points at issue in this group of states. The threats cited by the participants are: non-tolerance with emigrants, preconceptions, and dominance of the majority's interests over those of the minorities. The minorities are unable to express their interests. Other threats are illegal emigration and its impact on social integration; the expanded gap among social classes; identity as a cultural and social problem. The social, political, and personal dimensions follow. At the bottom of the list come the health, food and environment dimensions.

All groups agreed that it was difficult to define the priorities. They also agreed that environment, health and food dimensions came at the end of the priorities list because they were not imminent threats or because they were seen in the past as luxury. But this attitude started to change and there was awareness of their danger. Moreover, all groups agreed that economic, political and personal dimensions occupy top places on the list of priorities, where there was disagreement on the priorities among geographic regions and between an Arab country and the other due the different political systems and conditions. Therefore, it was difficult to pinpoint a top priority agreed upon by all participants.

IV. THREAT INDICATORS

1. Political dimension

The political dimension was marked by fervent discussions more than any dimension at all the forums. When discussing this dimension, participants pointed out to many threats. These include excluding the civil society from decision taking, the absence of political freedoms, politicizing Islam, corruption, governance, terrorism, peaceful rotation of power, plurality, facilitating the conditions for appointment in key posts in the state so that the youths can assume such posts, respecting the particularities of the minorities, eliminating bureaucracy, and government corruption. Democracy cannot be imported from outside, but it should be shaped according to the Arab culture. According to the participants, democracy, as applied in the Arab world, is not real; rather, it is a false game.

Participants from the Arab Mashreq countries pointed out to the weakness of the opposition powers. According to them, opposition plays a showy role. This was agreed upon by some of the participants from the Arab Maghreb countries. Participants from the Mashreq countries and some others from the Arab Gulf countries, Sudan and Egypt asserted that totalitarianism of political regimes, their oppression and restriction of the freedom of expression and speech, in addition to the absence of institutionalism, transparency and accountability were the main threats. They agreed with the Maghreb countries on the gravity and spread of corruption. Confusing the political dimension with the social aspect, as it will be explained later, Lebanese participants agreed with those from the Arab Maghreb countries on the role of foreign interferences in deepening domestic political differences. Moreover, participants from Sudan and Egypt pointed out to the problems of precautionary detention of persons without leveling any charges against them, as well as torture, especially, of students and people belonging to opposition movements.

2. Economic dimension

According to participants from the Arab Maghreb, a major economic problem was the broadening gap between the Arab countries and the outside world, foreign ambitions in the region, and subordination to other countries. All participants, especially from Egypt, Jordan and Syria, referred to the spread of poverty. Although participants from the Arab Maghreb and Mashreq countries referred to the sufferance of their countries from globalization, participants from the Gulf states asserted that while globalization has disadvantages it has also advantages from which the Arabs can benefit.

Among the problems on which participants focused their attention was the inequality in wealth distribution and the absence of social justice and equality among citizens. Participants from the Maghreb countries together with Somalia and Sudan asserted that class struggle was common in their countries. This, as pointed out by participants from the Mashreq countries and some of those from the Gulf, the Maghreb countries and Yemen was due to

maladministration of economic resources, disguised unemployment as in the case of the Gulf states and Palestine, and the spread of corruption, favoritism and nepotism as emphasized by participants from Egypt and Syria. Participants from Palestine pointed out to another aspect of economic threats; namely, oppression by the occupation authorities against the citizens, preventing them from exercising their economic activities, and confiscating their lands.

Another controversial economic threat is the so-call "culture of shame", referring to certain jobs which a Jordanian or a national in the Gulf States would not practice because they are deemed humiliating. In addition, there is no strategic planning for identifying both required and not required jobs as asserted by participants from Lebanon, Djibouti, Sudan and some participants from the Arab Maghreb countries.

Participants from Lebanon added a dimension which was not focused upon before; namely, the efficient human element vis-à-vis available job opportunities. Yemenis, the Sudanese and Egyptians added also the problem of the monopoly of some basic commodities and intentionally raising their prices. Egyptians, meanwhile, pointed out to the threats and the negative social effects of the inefficiency of structural adaptation and economic reform policies such as privatization and their defective application. Inputs of some participants from the Arab Maghreb and Sudan drew attention to the weakness of the Arab integration activities which is partly blamed on the spread of cheap foreign labor.

3. Social dimension

A key threat that was raised when discussing the social dimension in the three forums was intolerance. Participants pointed out to sectarian conflicts like in Lebanon, doctrinal rifts like in Iraq, tribal strife like in Somalia, and ethnic conflicts like in Sudan. Reference was also made to signs of religious antagonism between Muslims and Christians in Egyptian.

To some participants, the social dimension also includes manifestations of cultural and intellectual threats as reflected in the loss of Arab identity associated with the weak education and the impact of the media role. On the other hand, there is intellectual inertia, apathy and inaction. These are in themselves threats to human security as agreed upon by some participants from the Arab Maghreb and Egypt.

They also agreed on the gravity of the threats of gender inequality and illegal emigration. The modes of emigration have changed. Africans from the southern Sahara constitute the majority of emigrants to Morocco, but they are unable to immigrate to Europe. Unsuccessful attempts of Egyptian youths to immigrate to Italy have increased recently. On the other hand, participants from the Arab Maghreb and Lebanon agreed on the seriousness of denominational conflicts which threaten the security of the citizen for trivial reasons; for example, being born in certain district or having certain affiliation.

Some participants added foreign interferences which provoke confessional feuds and widen the chasm of sectarian strife like in Lebanon and Iraq.

4. Personal dimension

Participants from the Arab Maghreb asserted that Morocco was a major exporter of *hashish* (cannabis). The problem of the spread of drug abuse is a serious problem in Morocco. Lebanon also has the problem of "ecstasy" abuse and Yemen suffers from "Kat" abuse. Among the threats to which many participants pointed out was violence against women whether in words or physically inside or outside home, sexual harassment, looking down at women under the influence of pastoral traditions, and improper health practices. Participants from Algeria, Syria, Yemen, Djibouti, Sudan, and Egypt also mentioned these problems. But no mention was made of these problems in Lebanon while Somalia was top on record.

Many participants asserted that many of the Arab countries suffered from the problem of abduction of children from streets for using them to distribute drugs as in Lebanon, Bahrain and Yemen; sell their human organs as in the Arab Maghreb countries; force them to work and abuse them as in Yemen; recruit them in warring militias and government armies as in Sudan; or in beggary as in Egypt. Some immigrant laborers were exposed to maltreatment and many violations of their rights as noted by participants from the Gulf States and Syria. Participants from Egypt, Sudan and Mauritania pointed out to thorny threats posed by the police. Though the main function of the police force is, presumably, to protect the citizens from threats, the police, in many cases, constitute threats to the Arab citizen as many police officers commit violations against citizens; both men and women.

There is also the landmine problem. Since 1962 till 2007, Algeria could not obtain from France the maps of the places where the landmines were buried. During that period, many people were exposed to injuries because of these landmines (nearly 4,000 persons from 1962 till now). There are about one million landmines planted along the Algerian-Tunisian borders. Defusing these landmines take about 4 hours each. Also, the Moroccan-Algerian borders were all fraught with landmines, a matter which constitutes risks to the desert inhabitants. There are no official statistics about this issue, but many blasts have been reported. In Libya, landmines also affect the movement of the population. But, there are maps now on the types and places of landmines. Lebanon and Mauritania also suffer from this problem. A Mauritanian participant working in this field said that the Mauritanian soldiers used to plant landmines to cripple the Moroccans' movement, he said. The problem continues to exist. Connected with the landmine issue was the spread of light firearms which participants from Syria, Yemen and Djibouti pointed out.

Another problem cited by participants especially from the Arab Mashreq countries; namely, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan as well as Yemen and Somalia, was the spread of "honor crimes". For example, a big campaign was launched to amend the relevant law articles on these crimes and remove the mitigating excuses reducing the punishment against the perpetrator. Though

these amendments were supported by the royal family, the Jordanian parliament refused to pass them. Vendetta crimes are also widely spread in the same countries. They are mostly manifest in the countries marked by tribal traditions like Jordan and Yemen. However, participants pointed out to the emergence of the role of the *orfi* (informal) courts in solving issues related to vendetta crimes.

5. The health dimension

Both Jordanian and Syrian participants underlined the ineptness of human resources and physicians and insufficient financial resources in the health sector. Only do the rich enjoy health, participants said. The poor go to public hospitals which lack sufficient physical facilities. Diseases, especially those transmitted sexually like AIDS, are not discussed transparently in the Arab region. The government and international data on these diseases are conflicting. However, there is no question about the spread of these diseases. According to participants from the Arab Maghreb countries, especially Morocco, as well as from Yemen, no serious attempts have been made to address this issue. There are no programs for family planning in a number of Arab countries including Yemen. Participants also pointed out that cancer, diabetes, hypertension, and diseases resulting from pollution were alarmingly spread, especially in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. In addition, thalassemia is widely spread in the Arab Mashreq countries, especially in Jordan and Palestine due to the marriage of relatives (endogamy), and the increase of the number of handicapped persons due to the occupation practices and civil wars. In addition, custom- and tradition-related bad health practices, such as circumcision especially in Yemen, Djibouti, Sudan, and Somalia also pose a health problem. According to a Somali participant, a girl, who is not circumcised, hardly gets married.

6. Environmental dimension

According to participants from Morocco and Sudan, the growing desertification is a big problem in their countries. In addition, the problem is aggravated by the insufficient water resources, especially in Jordan, and water misuse in Lebanon, for example. Some participants from the Gulf States pointed out to the natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes. According to them, there is a need to work out strategies to confront these disasters. Another problem is pollution resulting from car exhausts, the spread of solid wastes, and the inefficiency of recycling processes of these wastes. Practices by occupation forces in Iraq, Palestine and Somalia; and the impact of armed conflicts and civil wars in Lebanon and Sudan severely increase environmental degradation in the affected and neighboring countries. These effects include pollution due to the wastes of wars, dangerous wastes, and the spillage of oil into sea waters and coasts. Lebanese participants joined those from Morocco in expressing concern over the risks of landmines, but they pointed out to the environmental part of the problem.

7. Food dimension

Many participants from Tunisia and Sudan stressed that this threat concerns the kind of food more than food quantity, especially in Tunisia. But they differed completely with the participants from Somalia who maintained that Somalia suffered from famine and severe shortage in food resources as in Sudan. Another problem in this context, cited by many participants, was food poisoning resulting from water pollution due to negligent maintenance of water systems.

V. EFFORTS AND ADOPTED POLICIES

The following remarks can be given on the efforts and adopted policies related to human security in general and its different dimensions. First, this issue did not receive much attention compared to other issues, such as the threats, for example. Second, it may have been expected that many of the policies that were raised for discussion didn't receive consensus in respect of their effects and whether they were negative or positive. Even some policies were raised as a paradigm of the sources of threat. Disagreement about this issue was reflected not only among the involved countries, but also in the different views of individual participants. Third, the discussions on policies may be the closest issue to the context of the involved states in the region. In other words, while the concept of human security was discussed from a broad perspective and even the threats and recommendations were, often, discussed within the context of the Arab region, the policies were largely discussed within the context of countries. These three remarks explain the existence of discrepancies in the answers of the participants in the three forums, especially when talking about detailed policies. Nevertheless, the discussions were not completely void of points of agreement and similarity.

1. At the international level

All the three forums (the Mashreq, the Maghreb and the Nile basin) made mention of the linkage between the situation in the Arab countries and the situation at the international or global level and the impact of the latter on the policies adopted by the former. A very conspicuous example of this linkage was the discussion on the policies of "globalization" and those adopted by the involved countries. According to participants from Tunisia and Syria, globalization was used as a way to mitigate the unemployment problem. Others from Morocco, Palestine and Yemen, for example, said that the countries' policies were unable to respond to the negative effects of globalization.

A third view saw globalization as a *fait accompli* which provided opportunities that can be utilized. The test would be the ability of the countries' policies to take benefit from globalization. This approach was expressed by participants from Iraq, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Djibouti. In this context, the evaluation by the participants of the policies coming from abroad was different. The economic reform and structural adaptation policies took their share of this controversy. In some cases they were considered as the

only solution during the crisis periods, such as in Morocco. But there were views that these policies were not properly applied, or had negative effects as were seen by some participants from Morocco and Egypt. In the same context, policies connected with the economic part of globalization, the economic efforts and the relationship with the outside world were discussed. Reference was made to a number of policies. These included policies aiming at raising the efficiency of national companies vs. the foreign companies, as in Tunisia, and policies imposing restrictions on foreign companies to guarantee their contribution to solving the unemployment problems, as in Libya. Reference was also made positively to the efforts made to get rid of subordination to foreign powers by attempting to settle foreign debts, as in Algeria.

Apart from the economic dimension, the policies of foreign donors also raised a bit of sensitivity and disagreement. On one end of the spectrum, participants from Djibouti and Arab Maghreb praised the aids, awareness and development programs launched by the international organizations. On the other end of the spectrum, mention was made of the negative results of these policies, as in Somalia. These results showed that the absence of coordination or overall vision in the international programs were behind these programs' failure to target the most needy groups. Instead, they were blamed for fomenting internal disputes and rivalry. It was also argued that the foreign funding policies providing funds and aids to domestic organizations and programs have turned the civil and voluntary action into a business and a means of livelihood, as were pointed out by participants from Egypt.

Although these dimensions were controversial, the foreign policies of intervention that have political character were generally rejected. Foreign policies of intervention, being direct as were expressed by the Somali and Palestinian participants, or indirect as expressed by participants from Lebanon and Jordan, were considered a human security threat whatever their justifications. However, an Iraqi participant was of the opinion that it was the domestic Arab policies that opened the door to foreign intervention.

Finally, with regard to commitments and international cooperation to which participants from Djibouti referred, two issues were raised by participants from the Arab Maghreb countries. First, the countries' policies in response to illegal immigration pose problems. Though cooperation is conducted with foreign parties to curb this threat, immigrants should be treated humanely. Second, there was disagreement on the countries' foreign policies with regard to the extent of their cooperation in defusing landmines. Mention was made of the international cooperation in the cases of Mauritania and Libya, while Moroccan and Algerian participants pointed out that there was no sufficient cooperation in this field.

2. At the regional level

A remark was explicitly made by the participants from Tunisia in this connection, though it is true of the three forums. According to them, it was difficult to know about the exerted efforts in the Arab countries either because

only humble efforts were exerted or because they were not sufficiently covered by the media. However, there was agreement among participants that these efforts were few or inadequate.

The policies of the Arab countries with regard to Arab economic integration were raised when discussing the efforts and policies of these countries. Of course, there were positive and negative points. According to participants from Somalia, Libya and the Maghreb and Mashreq countries, there was dissatisfaction that the Arab political wills were unable to achieve Arab economic cooperation whether through trade exchange, putting into effect and activating the free trade accords or the freedom of movement among the Arab countries. In contrast, participants from Morocco, the UAE, and Iraq were of the opinion that there were positive points in the policies of some countries which attempted to direct or attract Arab capitals for investment in the Arab countries instead of investing them in foreign countries. Participants from Libya were not happy with the presence of Arab emigrant workforce in big numbers. Moroccan participants were of the pinion that we should not be preoccupied with Arab unity that has not materialized.

3. At the government level

The level of policies and efforts at the government level attracted hectic discussions. There was agreement on several points. For example, according to participants from Mashreq countries and Tunisia, certain policies adopted by governments, though different from each other, misuse resources. For example, natural resources, environment, oil revenues, human resources (the youths who attained high education, women and children), and good education are misused. Not only was there wasting of available resources by mishandling them, but also some resources were used to threaten human security, such as using oil revenues in political suppression (according to participants from Sudan), or politicizing identities and misusing the cultural diversity and richness (as pointed out by participants from Iraq, Lebanon, Somalia and Sudan).

Another point which gained general agreement in the three forums was that the adopted governmental policies missed overall vision and coordination not only among the different developmental policies, but also even between the governmental policies and the other policies and programs. They missed also the objective of sustainable development. Besides, these policies didn't necessarily represent the interests of the society with all its categories. In this context, reference was made to the policies adopted by governments and states to fight threats against human security. These policies, however, failed. Examples of these policies are growing plants substitute to *hashish*, as in Lebanon; denominational distribution of jobs and the political opportunities in Lebanon and Iraq; establishment of organizations to fight corruption which became themselves victims to corruption, as in Yemen; the role of the security forces in some countries which became themselves a threat to security as was mentioned above.

However, there were governmental, particularly political, policies which received commendation from the participants. Examples of these are the political openness in Bahrain; municipal elections in Saudi Arabia; attempts to hold fair elections in Morocco; the military coup in Mauritania which took a number of positive steps including preparation for general and presidential elections; decentralized rule in Libya, and political stability in Egypt.

Reference was also made to some positive attempts within the framework of the social dimension concerning identity and the attitude towards the minorities, a matter which may lead to improvement of their position. For example, the Amazigh culture and language were recognized in Morocco and Algeria. Negroes were engaged in the country's policies in Mauritania. Awareness of the importance of the Shi'a rights was increased in Saudi Arabia. However, generally speaking, the credit for these developments goes to individual efforts.

Reference was also made to some positive policies in the environmental field in Libya and Mauritania in relation to the ban on importing old vehicles which cause pollution to the environment. The efforts and policies followed in the health field in the Arab Maghreb countries, in general, were also hailed.

Other policies were controversial. These included the policies associated with youth employment and the elimination of unemployment. In this context, there were repeated references to the role of the civil society and the different programs, and even the governmental policies themselves in attempting to provide jobs to the youth and encouraging small enterprises. But, on the other hand, the governmental policies were blamed for the lack of serious studies on the labor market and inefficient plans to utilize human resources. This, in turn, has led to a surplus in specializations not needed in the labor market and a shortage in other specializations, a matter which constitute waste of an important resource.

On the political arena, the stability and change issue received its share of controversy. On the one hand, political stability was important and good and was looked at positively by some participants from Egypt and Libya. However, some participants from Egypt, for example, were of the view that waving with political stability by the regimes was a threat to political security in Egypt.

There was disagreement also with regard to the policies adopted in dealing with the different identities in some countries, starting with fears of ignoring these differences and treating them superficially (as was pointed out by participants from Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco) down to fears of marginalization (as in Sudan), or of political exploitation (as in Somalia and Iraq), or of legalizing them, a matter which threatens the national identity (as in Lebanon, Sudan and Iraq).

Reference was also made to some arrangements taken in an attempt to protect human security in its social dimension of identity. Examples of these arrangements are the accords on the Southern Sudan and the national

reconciliation in Algeria. However, these arrangements were subject to argumentation and controversy as usual.

Finally, there was disagreement about the legal frameworks of the political activity and women status. According to participants from Morocco and Yemen, for example, these legal frameworks were seen as a positive development in general. Other participants, however, pointed out that applying and adhering to these frameworks on the ground were culturally and socially limited. Thus, it was more important, quoting the participants, to translate the laws and arrangements into facts on the ground as there were some law provisions that are changed while citizens know nothing about them.

Concerning the issues related to women protection in particular there was controversy among the participants from the Arab Maghreb countries about evaluating the law provisions which were discriminatory against women, such as the quotas and shares. Discussing these policies, however, was marked by a different approach in the Arab Mashreq countries where participants were mostly critical of the laws that discriminate against women.

4. At the non-government level

A matter which drew attention was the role and significance of the individual efforts. Most participants blamed the absence of individual initiative and dependence on others even where the blame should go to the country's policies. However, there were individual cases; namely, Somalia and Palestine, where participants asserted that in human security one should not wait the state to lend a hand or expect assistance from the others. Examples were given of the personal initiatives which the Somali society tried to take in the absence of the state to provide its needs by its own self. Examples of these individual efforts are attempts to build universities and schools. In the case of Palestine, reference was made to the youth self-efforts in the public awareness field. In the same context, it was largely agreed on the role and significance of the civil society's policies. The focus was placed on the civil society whose policies and roles received commendation, especially with regard to increasing public awareness and solidarity campaigns. However, some participants from Egypt and Sudan were of the opinion that the civil society sometimes followed policies not appropriate to the environment and context where it functions. According to them, the role of the civil society can be limited and restricted.

Participants from Djibouti and Morocco praised the micro-finance programs, which they said were particularly useful to women and children.

In another context, the participants disagreed on the role of the private sector. Some participants were of the view that it was an important actor and a partner in the development process. However, many participants criticized the big differences between the private sector and the public sector in the fields of health and education. This happened in all the three forums. They were also critical of the alliance between the governments and businessmen, as

expressed by participants from Egypt. Some policies such as the privatization policies and the absence of job security were also criticized. However, the privatization policies were among the policies that aroused controversy.

Reference was also made to the dual role of culture and traditions in protecting or threatening human security. In some cases, they establish customs and traditions, and even institutions. An example of this is the *orfi* (informal) courts which play a pivotal role in the protection of human security, respect of women, and solving disputes among tribes, etc. However, sometimes, they may be a source of threat. The role of the media was looked at also from a dual perspective, both as a threat to human security and as a tool to promote public awareness.

Recommendations and proposals

It is worth noting that the recommendations of most participants were in agreement or integral. Therefore, the recommendations and proposals made by the participants in the three forums can be divided into general, international, regional, government, state, and sub-state levels. The regional recommendations concern the Arab region. The sub-state recommendations concern the civil society, the private sector, and the different groups and individuals.

Though the recommendations and proposals are integral, still there are some areas of disagreement. These are as follows:

1. The role of religion in politics. This controversy surfaced, prominently, in the two forums which brought together representatives from the Arab eastern and western states.
2. Democratization in the Arab region.
3. Arab unity and integration.
4. Identity issues. Controversy on this issue took two directions. Some were of the opinion that the focus should be placed on the informal level; i.e. the groups and individuals, spreading the culture of tolerance, etc. Others argued that the focus should be placed on the formal human right level through which groups can be given their rights. At the formal level, there were also two extremes; one calling for focusing on equality in rights and duties, and the other calling for giving attention to the particularities and differences.

All the participants in the three forums unanimously agreed on the need to give a say to the Arab youths.

1) Proposals of general character

1. The Arab states differ at the level of their suffering from the threats to human security and even in the reasons for their similar problems. Therefore, the conditions in each state should be taken into consideration.
2. Man should be looked at from a different perspective; in other words, man should be considered a positive actor rather than a burden.

3. We should not start from square n° (1) but, rather, proceed from the point at which the previous policies reached.
4. There is a need for coordination among the development programs and distribution of roles to the different bodies.
5. Development should be sustainable. What counts are not only the short-term solutions but the long-term ones as well.
6. There should be fair distribution of wealth.
7. Lessons should be derived from the successful experiences of some Arab states.
8. For development to yield fruits, it should occur gradually.
9. Freedom should not be looked from an individual perspective; rather, it should be used in an organized and responsible way. A person's freedom should involve encroachment upon the others' freedom. Also, the principle of respect of man's freedom, dignity, and security should be underlined.
10. In respect of democracy, democratization cannot happen by a leap. The particularity of each state should be taken into consideration.
11. There is a need to turn the huge amount of available information into knowledge. This can be done by developing the educational curricula and increasing awareness. If education is easy, increasing awareness is difficult.
12. Certain issues need to be addressed. These include the cultural poverty, lack of adherence to ethics in the Arab region, maintaining and developing critical thinking, and the intellectual invasion of the Arab thought. Here, controversy arises between two extremes; the freedom of thinking and need to restrict thinking.
13. As Arab youths, we should know who we are. We should not be pessimistic because the others are not like us.
14. There was controversy among the participants from the states of the Orient about a recommendation that secularism was the solution. Calls by some participants for adopting secularism were rejected by others. Another parallel controversy arose on the role of religion. Some, from Mauritania, maintained that adherence to and correct understanding of religion leads to tolerance among the peoples. Others, from Algeria, argued that religion can be abused and erroneously used.

2) At the international level

1. There are certain features of globalization that can serve the Arab region should be explored.
2. There is a need for the Arab states to enter the international market of production and to acquire a relative edge in a certain product with which they enter the international market.
3. Efforts should be exerted to increase Arab and non-Arab investment. However, the Arab peoples should not be turned into slaves of the multi-national companies seeking for cheap labor.
4. The quality of the national products should be improved and supported so that they can compete the imported ones.
5. The number of foreign labor should be reduced and opportunities should be given to the Arab worker.

6. The right of resistance was underlined in respect of foreign intervention.
7. Problems should be solved internally so that they should not be used by foreign powers.

3) At the regional level

1. There is a need to activate the economic cooperation among the Arab states to achieve self-sufficiency. There is also a need for Arab states to increase commercial exchange, trade off resources (such as labor and capital), and achieve proximity in economic levels as a basic condition for cooperation.
2. There should be a degree of Arab integration and a sense of belongingness to the Arab nation. The media should also be liberated to correct the erroneous conception about the Arab culture. The Arab identity should be underlined. Some, however, argued that the concept of the Arab nation should be overstepped as it no longer exists.
3. The Arab youths should defend their issues by developing the Arab thought and reacting collectively to defend the political rights. Therefore, it is important to establish an Arab network of youths.
4. There is a need to exchange experiences among the Arab states.

4) At the state and government levels

1. Participate in decision taking so that all groups of the society should be engaged, particularly, the youths, minorities, and woman. There is a need to consult the citizens on the political and economic issues. The youths should be given an opportunity to assume high official posts in the state so that they can rule and practice leadership in their countries.
2. There should be a healthy relationship between the community and the state. The state should be able to respond to the political and social disagreements and show respect to the people. Security can be achieved only by giving the citizens their rights. Therefore, the state should lessen its pressure on the community and grants the people more freedom to express their problems. It is also important to achieve balance inside the state so that there can be an opportunity for achieving democracy.
3. At the institutional level: the laws and institutions should be fit for the contexts and cultures of the peoples. Bureaucracy, corruption, and bribery should be eliminated. Judicial reform should be introduce so that justice should be entrenched; otherwise, the judiciary should be separated from the other institutions.
4. There is a need to develop the military potentials. A community cannot protect the security of its citizens without a regime protecting it. Therefore, the state should be protected so that it can protect the aspects of human security.
5. As to identity, two policies were put forward. The first focused on the particularity and special character of minorities. The second focused on the equality principle and the need to draft a uniform civil code which

gives all citizens equal rights and duties. Participants from Saudi Arabia and Morocco recommended that the states should give opportunity for national dialogues.

6. Environment policies. Resources and alternative energies (such as solar energy, desalination, and waste recycle) should be employed. The existing wealth (such as the water wealth and environment diversity) should be protected.
7. Education should be supported and made free of charge for all the people. Drop-out, and the resulting problems such as child labor, should be prevented. Illiteracy should be eliminated. Certain courses of study are unavailable in the Arab states. If experiences are acquired, a lot of money will be saved.
8. Reliance on oil, as a source of energy or main economic resource, should be reduced.
9. According to participants from the states of Arab Maghreb (or, western Arab states), the labor market should be well studied. Students should be directed to specialize in the fields that will need their specialties and potentialities so that education should be linked to labor. Labor opportunities should be created by generating new income sources; for example, tourism.
10. The health facilities should be well managed. The health staff should be qualified. Analyses on genetic and dangerous diseases should be conducted before marriage.
11. Labor tribunals should be established. There should be governmental agencies, a ministry, and lawyers whose functions are to address the labor-related problems.
12. The state should provide an opportunity for the private sector's contribution.

5) At the sub-state level

1. The focus should be placed on the individuals in disseminating the culture of tolerance and respect of the others, particularly, with regard to the identity issues. But, here, there is disagreement about whether priority should be given to merging the national character into the Arab identity, or to enhancing particularity and differences. Some participants called for establishing associations and parties crossing the borderlines of factions, identities, and affiliations. Others called for reviving the secular parties instead of the factional ones, but this issue was controversial. The youths should be relied on in building confidence, breaking the symbols of factions, and creating new leaderships. There should be serious dialogue among all the factions and groups regardless of their identity. The others' opinions and ideas should be respected because failure to permit disagreements will not make us discover our self deficiencies.
2. There is a need to consolidate the roles of the media, family, mosques, and schools in increasing awareness at all health, environment, social, intellectual, and other levels, particularly, the children and youths. The role of religion should be strengthened in identifying concepts. Terrorism should be differentiated from resistance. Anti-religion ideas

should be identified. Religious men should play an active role, particularly, in increasing awareness in face of intellectual fanaticism, respect of woman, etc.

3. The reasons of extremism, including poverty and ignorance, should be encountered. Intellectual oppression should be stopped by permitting the use of legitimate ways of expression and recognizing the importance of intellectual tolerance.
4. The civil society should be encouraged and supported. There should be communication between the civil society and the internal powers which provide funding and policies.
5. There should be established a parliament for the Arab youths following the model of the Euro Mediterranean Parliament of Youths. Also, parliaments for children should be established for familiarizing them with the culture of participation and respect of the others.
6. Threats to woman. There is a need to build the capacity of, and empower, woman not by adopting the west approach but, rather, by training woman in the skills and abilities that will enable her to improve her situation. The focus, in this connection, should be placed on the roles of the community, customs, and traditions in showing respect to woman and different opinions. Solutions are not necessarily reached by disregarding the traditions and heritage.
7. The human resources, particularly women, should be utilized. Woman should be given the opportunity but without positive discrimination. This point raised controversy.
8. There is a need to disseminate the culture of rights and duties and for a force to protect the exchange of rights and duties.
9. There is a need to change the concepts and visions even of the children towards certain jobs and those who practice them.
10. There should be job security which is achieved by preventing managers from arbitrariness against the employees and by paying attention to efficient local employees.
11. There is a need for the people to know that their personal choices can be against many good policies such as emigration from the countryside to the cities.
12. The rift between educated people and politicians should be healed. Development should be achieved by participation. There should be social integration so that sustainable development can be achieved. The Arab peoples should be encouraged to call for change by using proper ways and legitimate methods for expression such as demonstration and sit-ins. Change occurs only when the citizen respects himself and takes action rather than waiting for the state's policies.

Comments on the report

Different comments were made on the report's theme and the forum's idea. Most participants said that the human security issue was a good theme. However, was that issue selected from among other different issues? And, what are these issues? What is the basis of selection? Presumably, selection is made on the basis of the urgency of the issue and its impact on the Arab

region's conditions. Others asked about poverty. Does it come under the ambit of the economic dimension? Are the chapters ordered according to the importance of the subjects? Will the discussions held in the forum be included in the report? Will the second version of the report take into consideration these discussions?

Some would prefer that the report focus on the development aspects of interest to the youths. According to them, the human security dimensions discussed by the report were addressed from a human, and not youth, perspective. It would be better if the report focused on the elements of interest to the youths. All participants wished that the report would lead to concrete results on the ground. What counts is not just writing the report but, rather, the change it will cause.

As to the elements addressed by the report, some said that it would have been better if it discussed the military aspect even by reference. Others argued that some issues were more important than the food situation in the Arab region, and, therefore, should have been handled by the report. Instead of focusing on food, the report could have addressed the health issue, in general, and then discuss the food situation as a sub-heading. Bearing in mind the clear great cultural impact in the Arab region, some called for adding a chapter on cultural security. Some asked: how far can the Arabs communicate with each other? There was also a desire to shed light on the cultural dimensions, intellectual threats, and generalization in the west's look at the Arabs. All Arabs are, in the west's eyes, terrorists. The threats to the Arab culture, and the cultural and intellectual invasion they are exposed to unconsciously should also be discussed.

A participant from Morocco suggested that the report should be divided on geographical lines to adopt suitable methodology. She also suggested devoting a bigger space for health security and minorities. The idea of the Arab unity should also be discussed in depth. Some criticized the lack of data. As to the way in which the theme was put forward for discussion, two different opinions were expressed. Some were of the opinion that the theme should be put forward in each state separately for discussion by the governments and the youths to give a chance for in-depth discussion of the problems. Others argued that discussing these issues in a collective context, such as the forum, would enable the participants to exchange experiences and information and, even, come up with collective recommendations and proposals.

As to the forum, the comments made by the participants showed that the subject was discussed from various perspectives; personal, social, economic, and political. Discussions, therefore, were rich and gained momentum at the same time. However, this was insufficient though much has been done. It is the figures and analyses, and not impressions, which reflect the situation on the ground. Some said that the discussions in the forums were characterized by a kind of fanaticism; a matter which was not useful for the discussions.

However, most participants agreed that the forum has added new dimensions for thinking of human security, which had not been taken into consideration

before the forums were held. These dimensions were added through dialogue and the comments made by the participants themselves.