

Rethinking national security in the age of pandemics. Reorientation of security thinking in light of the pandemic: “*Human security perspective*”

Hon. Mr. Anusart Suwanmogkol (Thailand)

1. In a world trying to recover from the devastating coronavirus pandemic where traditional threats to public safety and international security are increasingly taking a back seat, the crisis has prompted us to reconsider the whole concept of modern security challenges. For the last 20 years, humanity has faced with non-military threats that know no borders and do not have military solutions, including pandemics, climate change, and cybersecurity problems.
2. While the pandemic continues, current security tools and resources are insufficient to deal with these threats as conventional defense capabilities have been of limited use against a current emerging infectious disease, which is much more than a health crisis, but a catastrophic multi-pronged socio-economic global shock, threatening every aspect of people’s lives and livelihoods. These threats have turned into “*inequality and exclusion crisis*”, among and within countries, that widens the existing gaps and exposes fundamental weaknesses in our healthcare systems and social protection, while poorer and marginalized populations bear the brunt of the pandemic.
3. Recognizing the limitations of prevailing paradigms to effectively manage today’s global instability, Thailand strongly advocates “*human security*” as an alternative perspective to address modern security challenges and advance sustainable improvements in all dimensions of people’s lives. This holistic approach prompts a rethinking of how we prepare to tackle pressing global challenges; how we come together as an international community to address them; what strategies are best suited to protect and empower people, particularly those most vulnerable; and how we allocate resources to this end.
4. Facing with pressure to decrease military defense spending, governments acknowledges that threats like COVID-19 pandemic cannot be coped with military-type responses and there is a clear imperative for shifting budget priorities to meet the new challenges. As such, in the context of a pandemic, human security framework emphasizes that well-resourced health for all depends on robust disease prevention systems, equitable and timely access to quality healthcare, vaccines and effective treatment, as well as the broader conditions in which people live. It promotes a combination of protection and empowerment measures that improve early warning capabilities and preparedness, build the capacity of healthcare infrastructure, mobilize and educate the public, while safeguarding the most vulnerable.
5. Lastly, the concept of human security recognizes that in the face of complex threats an effective response to the pandemic would certainly require more extensive and inclusive international multilateral cooperation, with stronger sense of solidarity, and national partnerships that bring together all stakeholders from governments, academia, civil society and the private sector.

Thank you.