

HUMAN RIGHTS – HUMAN SECURITY – HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Assessing the inter-relationships of human development, human security and human rights in poverty reduction in Vietnam

Nguyen Hong Hai*

ABSTRACT:

Human development, human security and human rights are all human focused. In other words, human beings are at the center of any activities or programmes under the umbrella of these pillars. However, a question rises concerning these concepts: Which one should precede the other? This paper will answer that none should take precedence as they are all intertwined; each can not be implemented independently from the other. An understanding of the inter-relationships of human development, human security and human rights will be shown to have both theoretical and practical implications. In the latter case, the paper will examine the concepts behind and results of poverty reduction in Vietnam, demonstrating that a developmental approach incorporating all three pillars in some cases can be highly effective in improving the quality of life for disadvantaged sectors of a given society.

Introduction

Today, globalization brings in both opportunities and challenges for from a private person to a super-power country at large; people travel more across borders from one to another country, and we are becoming more and more interdependent;¹ after all, the wide world is compressed into a small

* PhD candidate in the Human Rights and Peace Studies Programme, Mahidol University, Thailand

¹ US President Bill Clinton, *Speech at Hanoi National University*, 2001, during his visit to Vietnam, available at <http://hanoi.usembassy.gov/index.html> (viewed on 28 March 2007)

global village.² Thus, instability in one country is likely to be a potential threat to the stability of another. Threats to the security of a state, except the traditional ones like armed aggression from external forces or as protection of national interests in foreign policy, or as global security from the threat of a nuclear holocaust,³ have been broadened.⁴ Such threats, *inter alia*, include environmental pollution, transnational terrorism, massive population movements, such infectious diseases as HIV/AIDS, etc.⁵ This has led to an increasing recognition of the role of people – individuals and communities – in ensuring their own security⁶. In other words, the focus on security is now shifted to the security of people or human security with different dimensions.⁷

The fact shows that the well-being of an overwhelming majority of the population in every country is dependent, among others, on the developmental level, the protection of human rights, governance, security of that country. Basically, excluding some exceptions, social development and economic growth is followed by political liberalization, which allows ordinary people more involved in the decision-making process, disadvantaged people can have their voices heard in a given society where inaccountable actions done by authorities like unfair land requisitions can be dealt with by the rule-of-law principle.⁸ Political liberalization in recent decades has also begun movements towards democracy,⁹ deepening public participation in the development process of the country. In such context, human rights are better safeguarded.

The implementation of human rights is ensured by two foundational factors – the duty and obligation of the state, and participation of the people. Human rights are respected and protected, but also are violated. Violations

² Christian Akani, "Improving human rights in the Global South through Human Security", presented at the Conference on Human Security in Asia, held in Jeonju, Republic of Korea, 24-25 March 2007, p.4

³ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994*, Chapter 2: New Dimensions of Human Security, p. 22

⁴ Sadako Ogata, "Human Security and State Security" (Box.1.2) in the *Final Report: Human Security Now*, of the Commission on Human Security, 2003, p. 5

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The UNDP Human Development Report 1994 listed seven main categories of human security, which include: Economic Security, Food Security, Health Security, Community Security, Political Security, Environmental Security, and Personal Security. See more details about each of these categories in the Report, pp. 25-33

⁸ See an article by Wu Zhong, *A step towards the rule of law*, 18 April 2007, on the website of the Asia Times Online, at <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/ID18Ad01.html> (viewed on 19 April 2007)

⁹ Commission on Human Security, 2003, *loc.cit*, Chapter 1, p. 2

of human rights may be attributable to action or ignorance of states, which basically stem from State policies. Thus, state policies are always used as an effective justification for any possible violation of human rights. A development-oriented policy can be good for the country's development in general, but may be the intangible cause of violations of human rights of a group of people, especially those in disadvantageous circumstances, under the human security perspective.

Human rights and human development are explicitly expressed in former Secretary-General Kofi Annan's statement as "*integrated blocks of human security*".¹⁰ By the same token, on the Human Rights Day of 2006, Kofi Annan made clearer the inter-relationship of rights, development and security: "Today, development, security and human rights go hand in hand; no one of them can advance very far without the other two. Indeed, anyone who speak forcefully for human rights does nothing about human security and human development – or vice versa – undermines both his credibility and his cause. So let us speak with one voice on all three issues, and let us work to ensure that freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to live in dignity carry real meaning for those most in need"¹¹. As such, it is understood that rights, development and security are three pillars of human beings, which are recognized in international human rights instruments. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)¹², for instance, proclaims that "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration..."¹³ and "has the right to life, liberty and security of person".¹⁴ As a principle provided in international human rights law, states have the duty to respect for, protect and fulfil human rights for all without distinction on the grounds indicated in international human rights treaties.

Vietnam remains a developing country at the low level.¹⁵ The development goal set forth by the Government is to bring the country into basically an industrialized one by the year 2020.¹⁶ Vietnam has ratified and

¹⁰ Annan. 2000

¹¹ Kofi Annan, *Message of the United Nations Secretary-General*, on the Human Rights Day of 2006 with a theme "Fighting Poverty: A Matter of Obligation not Charity", at <http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/2006/statements.shtml> (viewed 10 December 2006)

¹² Adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948

¹³ See Article 2 of UDHR

¹⁴ See Article 3 of UDHR

¹⁵ This development status of Vietnam is recognized in the Bilateral Trade Agreement between Vietnam and the United States of America, signed in 2002 and entered into force in 2001, at

¹⁶ Communist Party of Vietnam, *Documents of the Tenth National Congress*, 2006, available in Vietnamese at <http://www.cpv.org>

acceded to five of the current nine core international human rights treaties.¹⁷ Vietnam has also committed to materialize the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the General Assembly in 2000.¹⁸ So as to realize the country's developmental goals, to fulfil its legally-bound obligations under international human rights treaties, the Vietnamese Government has adopted and put into reality various socio-economic policies and programmes, including notably the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS).

As human security brings together human elements of security, of rights, of development,¹⁹ the inter-relationship between these three concepts is always on the academic agenda and under discussion. Some relevant questions rise in this regard, for instance, like which one of the three pillars is more encompassing and important than the others? Are they independently standing in an inserted developmental programme that is designed to improve the quality of life for those in need?

This paper attempts to examine the inter-relationship of these concepts from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The first part of the paper, therefore, discusses the theoretical dimension of this relationship on a respective bilateral basis, between rights and security, development and security; while much literature has discussed rights and development, so they are not remarked again here. The practical dimension of these interwoven concepts is reflected by views and policies of the Vietnamese Governments regarding poverty reduction, and tested by some relevant selected cases, in the second part of the paper. The conclusion sum-ups the

¹⁷ Up-to-date, nine core international human rights treaties with treaty-based bodies are: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT); Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW); International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Forced Disappearance (CFD) and; the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). CFD and CRPD are the most UN recently-adopted treaties. CFD and CRPD were adopted by the General Assembly on 23 September 2005 (E/CN.4/2005/WG.22/WP.1/REV.4) and 6 December 2006 (A/61/611), respectively. Vietnam has ratified and acceded to five of these nine treaties, which include: ICESCR, ICCPR, CERD, CEDAW, and CRC, at http://www.forum-asia.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=206&Itemid=32 (viewed on 16 April 2007)

¹⁸ Communist Party of Vietnam, 2006, *loc.cit.* At the UN Millennium Summit held in September 2000, Head of the State of Vietnam joining with Heads of State and Government of 189 other member countries of the United Nations signed and expressed Vietnam's commitment to realize the Millennium Development Goals or also known as the Twenty-first Agenda.

¹⁹ Commission on Human Security, 2003, *loc.cit.*, Chapter 1, p. 4

whole ideas discussed and assesses the inter-relationship of human development, human security and human rights.

Rights and Security

The relationship between human rights and human security is the one between the two concepts, which is on the one hand the old – human rights, emerged in 17th century²⁰ – and on the other hand, the new²¹ – human security, which has not yet been developed to the degree of independent priority that has been achieved by human rights.²² Human rights are specific contents, recognized and prescribed in international human rights instruments, such as the International Bill of Rights,²³ the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Forced Disappearance, etc... while the topicality of human security can be traced to the last Human Development Report of UNDP of 1994.²⁴ The UNDP 1994 Report referred to two major components of human security: freedom from want and freedom from fear.²⁵ Interestingly, these two major

²⁰ Andrew Fagan, *Human Rights*, Human Rights Centre University of Essex, at <http://www.iep.utm.edu> (viewed on 15 March 2007). Expressions of inviolable and inalienable rights could be found in literature of political theorists in the 1600s like John Locke, J.J. Rousseau, Charles Montesquieu, and latter they were echoed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens after the French Revolution in 1789 and in the American Declaration of Independence in 1776.

²¹ Arabinda Acharya and Amitav Acharya, *Human Security in Asia: Conceptual Ambiguities and Common Understandings*, 2000. Though the concept itself is new, but as Amartya Sen said human security is not a new idea (See Amartya Sen's presentation at the Workshop on "Basic Education and Human Security", which was co-organized by the Commission on Human Security, UNICER, the Pastiche Trust (India) and Harvard University in Kolkana, 2-4 January 2002, at <http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/index.html> (viewed in March 2007).

²² Ellen Seidensticker, 2002. This idea is based on her own work of trying to extract and organize ideas discussed at the seminar on "Human Rights, Human Development, Human Security", which was jointly organized by Harvard University and the Commission on Human Rights in 2002

²³ The International Bill of Rights includes The International Bill of Rights is considered to include: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. See *A Compilation of Human Rights Instruments*, Volume One, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2002

²⁴ Christian Akani, 2007, *loc.cit*, p.2

²⁵ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994*, p. 24

components of human security are among rights enshrined in UDHR in 1948.²⁶ As such, one now can say that "everyone has the right to human security".

One leading specialist in the human rights field, Bertrand G. Ramachan, said that human rights define human security²⁷ (see the Annex of an incomplete list of human rights instruments defining human security). This implies that a human right itself also encompasses human security. For individuals and entire communities at large, in order for them to enjoy the right to life, food, housing, education, participation, etc. it can not help without saying about security factors.²⁸ There are two questions, in this regard: Firstly, to exercise human rights, is this necessary for an individual to have a secure environment, or is this important for a person that he or she must have a feeling of security imbued in himself/herself? Secondly, are human rights and human security two independent categories, but supplementary one to another?

Security is a secure condition or feeling.²⁹ This short definition can be interpreted that human security should be understood to include the objective factor – the surrounding setting – and the subjective factor – personal feeling. The Commission on Human Security defines human security as "to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment". It further contends that human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life; protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations; using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations; creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity. Given the definition and further explanation of human security as such by the Commission, one now can realize that human security is the foundational component to exercise human rights. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan pointed out that human security is far more than the absence of armed conflict, encompassing human rights,

²⁶ The second preambular paragraph of UDHR partly reads: "... human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want..."; Article 2 of UDHR provides: "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration".

²⁷ Bertrand G. Ramcharan, *Human Rights and Human Security*, <www.humansecurity-chs.org/activities/outreach/ramcharan.html> (viewed 10 March 2007)

²⁸ See *Human Security – as people see it* (Box 2.1) in the UNDP Human Development Report 1994, p. 23

²⁹ See *The Oxford Modern English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, 1992

good governance, access to education and health care, and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her own potential.³⁰ Among the two above-mentioned factors – objective and subjective – that constitute security, it seems the former having a more dominant role to play. This means a surrounding secure environment is more crucial, because such environment is sometime beyond the control of will and capacity of human beings as a consequence of natural disasters, epidemics or pandemics like HIV/AIDS, bird flu, nuclear wars that are ironically caused by human beings themselves. At the same time, the obligation of maintaining the public security is vested with states. However, an insecure environment is sometime created by the political will of the state, even in the development field. The on-going ethnic or internal conflicts in some countries or the 1997 Asian monetary crisis, the recent tsunami disasters in the region show that once the surrounding environment is insecure, human security is certainly at risk. As a result, it is hard to guarantee that without security human rights are protected. In other words, the implementation of human rights is dependent on security. States in any event want to promote development of the country, especially economic development. However, it is sometime the ignorance of the state in dedication for socio-economic development that human rights are violated or not guaranteed. This is where human security can make a significant contribution by identifying freedom from basic insecurities.³¹

As a principle provided in international human rights law, states have the duty to respect for, protect and and fulfil human rights for all. As such, states are obliged to undertake all necessary measures to ensure human rights to be implemented, including those rights can not be even in the public emergency derogated or deprived in contrary to their other obligations under international law.³² Hence, human rights have the legal claim for the duties and obligations bound upon the states. However, human security does not have the same claim to correlative duties as human rights.³³ So, while the claim for human security might not be guaranteed by the state, by implementing legally-bound obligations upon them in consistent with the international human rights law, human security is still

³⁰ Annan, *loc.cit*

³¹ Amartya Sen, *Developments, rights and human security* (Box 1.3) in the Final Report "*Human Security Now*", 2003, Commission on Human Security.

³² See Article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

³³ Ellen Seidensticker, 2002, *loc.cit*

ensured when such human rights as the right not to be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to be free from hunger, the right not to be subjected to unequal treatment of women, etc... are protected.

Taken all together, human rights and human security can be fruitfully supplementary one to another.³⁴ Though the human rights framework is more basic and more fundamental³⁵ due to its legal basis as well as enforcement mechanisms, there are gaps left by the normative nature of the concept of human rights, especially when it comes up with the question of which particular freedoms are crucial enough to count as human rights that society should acknowledge, safeguard and promote,³⁶ and this is where human security can support and supplement human rights.

Development and Security

Since the early 1990s, the issue of human development has attracted much discussion among academics, development workers and economists. The person who pioneered with the human development approach was the economist Mahbub ul Haq.³⁷ His idea of this approach was demonstrated in the first Human Development Report published by UNDP in 1990. In this report, UNDP gave a definition of human development as follows:

"a process of enlarging people's choices. In principle these choices can be infinite and change over time. But at all levels of development, three essential ones are for people to lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. If these essential choices are not available, many other opportunities remain inaccessible" (UNDP. 1990, p.10)

One can see that focus of the human development approach was shifted to concentrating on issues related to human life quality, such as education, life expectancy, the extent to which participation in society counts, etc., instead of merely emphasizing on the objects of convenience like commodities produced³⁸ or economic growth indicators, though one can not ignore the economic growth in discussing the issue of human

³⁴ Amartya Sen, 2003, *loc.cit*

³⁵ Ellen Seidensticker, 2002, *loc.cit*

³⁶ Amartya Sen, 2003, *loc.cit*

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Commission on Human Security, 2003, *loc.cit*, p.8

development in developing countries.³⁹ One of the main objectives of human development is to create opportunities for all people to implement their own choices, participating in the development process, particularly in those issues impacting on their lives and interests, enjoyment of freedoms. Human development is "about people, about expanding their choices to lead their lives they value" (UNDP. 2002). In other words, the human development approach is to place human beings at the central part of the development process, for the people and by the people. Hence, when one mentions the expanding of opportunities for human beings to participate in the development process, it is synonymous to emphasize on the equality or "growth with equity".⁴⁰ Nevertheless, there is nothing to guarantee that, even in a highly developed society, people are not subjected to vulnerability created by themselves and brought in by the development process itself,⁴¹ depriving opportunities away from participating and implementing their fundamental freedoms. Swift economic development, for instance, may lead to environmentally unsustainable development, creating the risk to livelihoods of future generations.⁴² In other words, people may be subjected to consequences brought about by the negative side of development. Globalization, increased trade liberalization, inappropriate exploitation of natural resources, etc..., for instance, can be considered as catalysts causing such risks. It is in this context that human security counts. Human security is to protect human fundamental freedoms, to shield people from vulnerabilities. More specifically, it aims to protect people from risks that they may face in their daily lives.

Human development is a broader concept, which is defined as a process of widening the range of people's choices; while human security means that people can exercise these choices freely and safely and that they can relatively confident that the opportunities they have today are not totally lost tomorrow.⁴³ As such, progress in one area enhances progress in the other, but failure in one area also heightens the risk of failure in the other.⁴⁴

³⁹ Marc M. Linderberg, *The Human Development Race – Improving the Quality of Life in Developing Countries*, 1993, p.13. This book can be found at the Library of the International College, Mahidol University, Thailand, with the series number HN 980 L 744h 1993

⁴⁰ Commission on Human Security, 2003, *loc.cit*, p.10

⁴¹ See the Climate Change Report 2007 by WMO and UNEP, available at <http://www.ipcc.ch> (viewed on 19 April 2007)

⁴² David Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century*, Harford, Kumarian Press, 1991; World Bank, *World Development Report 1992*

⁴³ UNDP, 1994, *loc.cit*, p. 13

⁴⁴ *Ibid*

Failed or limited human development leads to a backlog of human deprivation – poverty, disease, hunger or persisting disparities between ethnic communities or between regions, and as consequence this backlog in access to power and economic opportunities can lead to violence.⁴⁵ So, as Jakkie Cilliers contends that "if human development is freedom from want (a process of widening the range of people's choices), human security can be understood as the ability to pursue those choices in a safe environment and on an equal basis with others. Human development contributes to human security by tackling the long-term structural causes of conflict and by strengthening the capability of societies to deal with conflict in a peaceful manner".⁴⁶

Like rights and security, development and security go hand in hand with each other. Evidence of the contemporary history of mankind proves that insecurity due to violence or deprivation prevents development. Development in turn brings in opportunities and better conditions for individuals to realize their freedoms. In other words, development, on the one hand, enable individuals to materialize and bring into play their potentials, while security, on the other hand, aims to protect people from risks in the development process and to implement their fundamental freedoms.

In conclusion, human development, human security and human rights are pillars aimed at ensuring the life quality, enabling people to realize and bring into play their potentials, at the same time protecting people from vulnerabilities arising in their daily lives. These three pillars have a supplementary relationship, like a tripod model. Where one of the three pillars is absent, the other two find them hardly standing firmly on their own foots, and individual survival is threatened.

Poverty, particularly extreme poverty, as a form of human deprivation is always a menace to the survival and development of human beings. Poverty can be attributable to human rights abuses, threatening stability and security or preventing the development of a country. The United Nations Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights observed that *"...poverty may be defined as a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and*

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Jakkie Cilliers, *Human Security in Africa*, African Human Security Initiative, 2004, p. 12

other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights" (2001). Thus, the international community and every single country is fully aware of the need to reduce and gradually eradicate poverty; it is not only central to ensuring the security of all people, but also the security of the state.⁴⁷ In Vietnam, the task of poverty reduction is as socially and politically important as it has been since independence.⁴⁸ Therefore, the Government of Vietnam recognizes poverty reduction as a goal in the course of Doi Moi.⁴⁹ The following part of this paper examines the inter-relationship of human development, human security and human rights through recent efforts of Vietnam in poverty reduction, especially through the implementation of the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS) adopted by the Government of Vietnam in 2002.

Vietnam's *Doi moi* policy and perceptions on Human Security, Human Rights and Human Development

In 1945, Vietnam gained independence. Nevertheless, up to thirty years later, war completely ended and unification was established in the country. From 1975, Vietnam stepped into the process of national reconstruction and development. Despite of great dedicated efforts by its people and assistance given by the then socialist countries, due to many reasons, including subjective and objective, Vietnam remained underdevelopment. Hunger was chronic, inflation reached as high as 700%, the people's living condition was extremely hard, the rights of people were not guaranteed.⁵⁰

Since 1986, Vietnam has implemented its *Doi Moi* (or renewal) policy. The Party and State of Vietnam are fully committed to comprehensive renewal, but first and foremost to economic renewal while step-by-step political reform is undertaken. Up-to-date, after twenty years of the renewal, the Party and State of Vietnam have assessed that "the country has surmounted out of the socio-economic crisis, having basic and comprehensive changes. The economy has grown rather rapidly; the

⁴⁷ Frene Ginwada, *Rethinking Security: An Imperative for Africa* (Box 1.1) in the Final Report "Human Security Now", Commission on Human Security, 2003, p. 3

⁴⁸ Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, *Vietnam Poverty Update Report 2006: Poverty and Poverty Reduction in Vietnam 1993-2004*, 2006, p. 10

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Communist Party of Vietnam, *Documents of the Sixth National Congress*, 1986. The original versions of these documents are in Vietnamese, accessible at <http://www.cpv.org>

industrialization and modernization drive, the socialist-oriented market economy has been speeded up. The people's living conditions have been explicitly improved".⁵¹ However, the Party and State of Vietnam also confessed by learning truth from the fact that the country remains less developed than many other countries in the region.⁵² This is partly because the human capital has not been effectively utilized; the role of the people as masters of the country is not yet brought into fully play; various social problems remain, threatening the political stability of the country. In that process, poverty is both a resulting effect and a menace to security and development. Thus, the Vietnamese Government is determined to eradicate poverty with the country's internal synergy and assistance from the international community of donors. Another factor pushing the Vietnamese Government to do that because Vietnam has committed to materialize the Millenium Development Goals, one of which is eradication of extreme poverty.⁵³

It is first of all necessary to affirm that perception of human rights in Vietnam is closely associated with the national liberation, the struggle for independence, and building of socialism in the country. Before 1945, Vietnamese people had no human rights,⁵⁴ thus the concept of human rights did not exist therein. After gaining independence in 1945 and up to 1975, the country was consecutively at wars. Consequently, human rights of Vietnamese people, which were deemed as the most sacred and fundamental, were the rights to live in independence and freedom, to determine their own destiny.⁵⁵ These rights are also consistent with the principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, the common Article 1 of the 1966 International Covenants on Economic, Social, Cultural, Civil and Political Rights. In the 1976 – 1986 period, the concept of human rights in Vietnam was vaguely recognized that "socialism meant the comprehensive and

⁵¹ Communist Party of Vietnam, 2006, *loc.cit*

⁵² *Ibid*

⁵³ The UN Millennium Summit in 2000 put forward eight Millennium Development Goals, which include: (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership for development.

⁵⁴ China Online, "Human Rights in Vietnam During the Renovation Process: Achievements, Challenges and Prospectives", at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/bjrenquan/190897.htm#> (viewed on 10 March 2007)

⁵⁵ Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (VNMoFA), *White Paper "Achievements in Protecting and Promoting Human Rights in Vietnam"*, 2005, Chapter I, p. 3

absolute liberation of human beings, therefore, no issue of human rights existed and everything was obviously excellent".⁵⁶ Since 1986 up-to-present, Vietnam has been implementing the *Doi Moi* policy. Along with achievements recorded in all fields over the last twenty years, the concept of human rights in Vietnam is increasingly clearer; human rights have been progressively safeguarded. In the 1991 Political Platform, the Communist Party of Vietnam stressed on "the building of a democratic and civilized society for the legitimate interest and dignity of the people".⁵⁷ Now that, the Party and State of Vietnam hold the view of human rights that "the issue of human rights should be harmoniously combined between commonly accepted norms of international law and peculiar economic – social – cultural – political characteristics of individual countries. A comprehensive approach to human rights should be applied, and all rights should be treated equally; at the same time, rights and freedoms of individuals can only be protected on the basis of respect for the common rights and interests of the nation and community; rights go along with obligations to the society".⁵⁸

As far as the issue of human development is concerned, the Vietnamese Government's standpoint is not to separate the implementation of human rights and the issue of human development. In other words, ensuring the implementation of human rights is to promote human development. The State of Vietnam considers human beings both as the goal and the driving force of the national building; human beings are placed at the center of all socio-economic policies.⁵⁹ In that spirit, the State of Vietnam asserts that promotion and protection of human rights are a crucial factor for sustainable development, ensuring successful implementation of the national industrialization and modernization cause. Any policy, line and programme of the Party and State of Vietnam is aimed at realizing the goal of building "a strong country with wealthy people in a just, democratic and civilized society", and all is for the benefit of people.⁶⁰ It should be noted that the idea of human development in Vietnam is integrated in socio-economic policies and programmes. In implementing these policies and programmes, human beings (people) shall play a role as the driving force, which means they are

⁵⁶ China Online, *loc.cit*

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ VNMoFA, 2005, *loc.cit*, p. 4

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 3

⁶⁰ Ibid

participating actors (P). Having said that, the idea of human development in Vietnam can be annotated by the following model:

$$\text{SED} + \text{P} = \text{HR/HD}^{61}$$

SED: Socio-economic development; P: Participants; HR/HD: Human Rights/Human Development

Human security is a new concept not only in Asia in general,⁶² but also in Vietnam in particular. It is hard to find so far any peculiar document or policy of the Vietnamese Government to mention directly the issue of human security. However, if one has a cross-look at the viewpoints and policies of the State of Vietnam concerning the role of people in connection with the country's development through the economic – social – cultural – environmental – political lens and the seven categories of human security listed in the UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report (economic, food, health, environment, community, political and personal), he or she can realize that the Vietnamese Government also pays attention to the issue of human security.

So, having pointed out the general above-mentioned viewpoints of the State of Vietnam on human development, human security and human rights, it can be said that the State of Vietnam has come up with its own perception of these issues in accordance with the characteristics, situation, demands and the current developmental level of Vietnam. The people always lie in the center of economic and social policies and the promotion and protection of human rights are an essential factor for sustainable development and successful implementation of national industrialization and modernization.⁶³ In other words, socio-economic programmes and policies are targeted at the people, for the people and by the people. And, the poverty reduction is one of such programmes.

⁶¹ In this model, the State of Vietnam is the main duty bearer. It shall undertake all necessary measures to ensure socio-economic development, to mobilize and guarantee the people's participation in the entire process. The utmost goal is to improve the quality of life of people in all fields, ensuring human rights and promoting development of the country at large.

⁶² Arabinda Acharya and Amitav Acharya, *loc.cit*; Tadashi Yamamoto, *Human Security – From Concept to Action: A Challenge for Japan*, Proceedings of the International Conference on Human Security in East Asia, 16-17 June 2003, Seoul, Republic of Korea

⁶³ VNMoFA, *loc.cit*, p. 3

Rights, Security and Development towards Poverty Reduction and vice versa

Arthur Simon in his contributing article, *The Basic Cause: Poverty*, to "The Causes of World Hunger" (William Byron, ed. 1982) quoted the conclusion made by the Presidential Commission on World Hunger: "the central and most intransigent cause (of hunger) is poverty". He said, people are hungry because they are poor. Simon further contended, "because poverty is the basic cause of hunger and, therefore, the causes of poverty are also the causes of hunger", and he suggested that the Presidential Commission on World Hunger should make another conclusion in parallel with the one that poverty is the basic cause of hunger, for instance: "the major world hunger problem today is not famine or starvation, but the less dramatic one of chronic undernutrition". Simon briefly sketched the answers to the question *Why are they poor?* According to him, there are the following fundamental reasons: (1) Powerlessness; (2) Dependency; (3) Neglect of Agriculture; (4) Inequitable growth; (5) Unemployment; and (6) Slow and/or unsustainable economic growth. In order to make it clear why these reasons attributable to poverty, much analysis is needed, even sometime it may cause debate, for example the reason powerlessness or vice versa. Simon said that as long as impoverished people look at life fatalistically or are prevented by others from taking steps that would enable them to improve their circumstances, they will remain powerless – and poor. This means that to help the poor get out of poverty, they must be empowered. Empowerment is considered a key to human security.⁶⁴

UNDP in the 1994 Human Development Report defined poverty is one of the human security issues, and moreover, it is not only the problem of this or other country, but it is a common concern of the international community. The United Nations considers poverty as an issue of human rights. Thus, fight against poverty was taken as the theme of the Human Rights Day in 2006. The UNDP Administrator, Kemal Davis, said that: "Freedom from poverty is a basic human right and tackling poverty should, therefore, be addressed as a basic human right, not as an act of charity".⁶⁵ In the Background Paper "Human Rights, Poverty Reduction, and Sustainable Development: Health, Food and Water" presented at the World Summit on

⁶⁴ Commission on Human Security, 2003, *loc.cit*, Chapter 1, p. 11

⁶⁵ Kema Davis, *Message of the UNDP Administrator*, 2006,

www.un.org/events/humanrights/2006/statements.shtml (viewed on 11 December 2006)

Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, from 26 August to 4 September 2002, the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights presented the following conceptual framework that can be directed towards promoting and protecting human rights of the people living in poverty: (1) Empowerment of the poor; (2) Equality and non-discrimination; (3) equal relevance of civil and political and economic, social and cultural rights; (4) Accountability; (5) Participation.⁶⁶ Assumably that this conceptual

⁶⁶ The paper further explains each of the above-mentioned five elements as follows: (1) **Empowerment of the poor:** A human rights approach to poverty is about empowerment of the poor. When human rights are introduced in policy making, the rationale of poverty reduction no longer derives only from the fact that the poor have needs but is based on the rights of poor people – entitlements that give rise to obligations on the part of others that are enshrined in law. See, for example, article 21 UNDHR, article 25 ICCPR and article 13(1) ICESCR. (2) **Equality and non-discrimination:** The right to equality and the principle of non-discrimination is the foundation of international human rights law. The poor are usually victims of discrimination based on various and often multiple grounds, such as birth, property, national or social origin, ethnic origin, color, gender and religion. As discrimination causes poverty, poverty also causes discrimination. In addition to other grounds of unequal treatment, the poor often suffer discrimination because they are poor. Where governments are responsible for any form of discrimination, they are under an obligation imposed by international law, to end it immediately through removing all discriminatory laws and practices. Governments must in addition take special measures in order to provide to their most vulnerable, discriminated and socially excluded groups, including the poor, effective protection against discrimination by governmental authorities as well as by private actors. (3) **Equal relevance of rights:** Recognition of the complementary relationships between civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other, can strengthen as well as broaden the scope of poverty reduction strategies. A human rights approach insists that guarantees to ensure civil and political rights are necessary components of poverty reduction strategies. (4) **Accountability:** Rights imply duties, and duties demand accountability. It is, therefore, an intrinsic feature of the human rights approach that any poverty reduction strategy should build into it institutions and legal/administrative provisions for ensuring democratic accountability. And (5) **Participation:** A human rights approach to poverty also requires the active and informed participation of the poor including in for example the formulation, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction Strategies (PRSs). The international human rights normative framework includes the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs. The international human rights normative framework includes the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs. See, for example, article 21 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 13(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The enjoyment of the right to participate is therefore dependent on the realisation of other human rights. For example, if the poor are to participate meaningfully in PRSs, they must be free to organise without restriction (right of association), to meet without impediment (right of assembly), and to say what they want without intimidation (freedom of expression); they must know the relevant facts (right to information) and they must enjoy an elementary level of economic security and well-being (right to a reasonable standard of living and associated rights). A human rights approach to poverty also requires the active and informed participation of the poor including in for example the formulation, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction Strategies (PRSs). The international human rights normative framework includes the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs. The international human rights normative framework includes the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs. See, for example, article 21 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 13(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The enjoyment of the right to participate is therefore dependent on the realisation of other human rights. For example, if the poor are to participate meaningfully in PRSs, they must be free to organise without restriction (right of association), to meet without impediment (right of assembly), and to say what they

framework is true in any case, one can use it to look at human rights in connection with poverty reduction in Vietnam.

Being fully aware of the effect of poverty, the Vietnamese Government considers "poverty reduction as a cutting-through objective in the process of socio-economic development of the country".⁶⁷ Poverty reduction and sustainable growth has an organic relationship. Therefore, the Vietnamese Government contends that "Poverty reduction is the basic element to ensure social justice and sustainable growth; and in turn, high and sustainable growth could bring about synergy to support and provide opportunities for the poor to get out of the poverty hole".⁶⁸

In 2003, the Vietnamese Government adopted the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS). The Strategy attempts to, among others, "effectively address pressing social problems arising from the process of urbanization and industrialization, create jobs and reduce unemployment in urban areas as well as underemployment in rural areas; develop integrated and coordinated policies and guidance that is appropriate to specific regional circumstances to eradicate hunger and rapidly reduce the number of poor households; overcome social problems; ensure sustainable development; vigorously develop culture, communications, health care and sports; raise the material and spiritual living standards of the people; meet part of the people's requirement for curative medicines; reduce the child malnutrition rate; and increase the percentage of rural people having access to clean water; reduce social ills such as HIV/AIDS, drug addition and traffic accidents; promote gender equality, integrating it into various development policies, programmes and projects...".⁶⁹

From the above objectives set forth in the CPRGS, one can see that it includes the issue of implementing human rights (the right to work, health care, information, to enjoy cultural life...), of human development (reduce the child malnutrition rate, access to clean water...) and of human security (HIV/AIDS – health security, community security; traffic accidents – personal security...).

want without intimidation (freedom of expression); they must know the relevant facts (right to information) and they must enjoy an elementary level of economic security and well-being (right to a reasonable standard of living and associated rights).

⁶⁷ The Government of Vietnam, *The Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS)*, 2003, p. iii

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Ibid, pp. 37-38

With regard to the duty to ensure the respect for, protection and fulfilment of human rights for all as provided in international human rights law, the Government of Vietnam holds the view that "protecting and promoting human rights are primarily the responsibility of the State".⁷⁰ The fact shows that governments can not say for certain that human rights are perfectly respected, protected and fulfilled in the territories under their jurisdiction. As mentioned earlier, due to ignorance of the government, even a development-oriented policy may lead to violations of human rights or cause insecurity of people who are supposed to be the target group of the policy. In views of one or the other, the poverty reduction programmes introduced and implemented in Vietnam bring in both success and failure stories relating to human rights and human security.

Case 1: Phu Yen province (Central part of Vietnam)

Within two years, 2004-2006, thanks to the implementation of the Programme No.134,⁷¹ about 2,246 poor ethnic minority households have been supported with house construction. Apart from the state and provincial budget earmarked to the programme (13,000 VND), each household contributes either their labor power or materials. Thanks to the Programme No.134, made-shift houses of ethnic minority households in Phu Yen have been basically eradicated.⁷²

This case represents for the right to housing, the right to participation of the people, and accountability of local authorities.

Case 2: Lam Dong province (Central part of Vietnam)

Over the last three years, each year, the province planted 3,000 hecta of forest. In that process, about 8,000 households, including ethnic minority households, are contracted with forest management. Thanks to this, many households gain an earning of between 1,2 and 1,5 million VND. With regard to the outcome of the poverty reduction in general, by the end of 2005, the rate of poor household (according to the poverty line of Vietnam for the

⁷⁰ VNMoFA, *loc.cit*, p. 4

⁷¹ The Programme No.134 is implemented in accordance with the Decision No.134/2004/QD-TTg issued by the Prime Minister of the Government of Vietnam in 2004 concerning assistance given to ethnic minorities in poverty and difficult circumstances with land for production, land for housing, drinking water.

⁷² Nhan dan Online, at <http://www.nhandan.com.vn/tinbai/?top=36&sub=48&article=84364> (viewed on 15 January 2007)

2001-2005 period), had been reduced to 7% (the figure was 17.5% in 2001).⁷³

This case reflects the economic right, the right to participation of the people (human rights), forest expansion (environmental security).

Case 3: Ma Lieng ethnic minority facing challenges⁷⁴

Ma Lieng ethnic minority group has a population of 1,200 people, inhabiting near the mountain range of Giang Man in the area of two provinces of Ha Tinh and Quang Binh, along the Viet-Lao border. From 1993, various programmes and projects supported by the State have been implemented by local authorities, border military forces, provincial committees for ethnic minority and mountainous area affairs to enable Ma Lieng ethnic minority group to stabilize and improve their living conditions. However, after more than thirteen years, around one hundred investment projects have been assessed as ineffective. Under the housing construction programme in such villages as Rao Tre and Chuoi, many houses have been rebuilt for the second time, some even have been rebuilt for the third time. All houses were built in a way that public officials provided money and building materials and signed contracts with builders. Having the construction finished, ethnic minority households just moved in these houses. After a short period in use, the houses degraded; people did not know how to fix leaks and breaks. The fact demonstrates a common phenomenon and a consequence that houses built in the "key-to-hand" manner exposes many problems, of which the most notable is economic problem. More importantly, however, there are bigger and untold losses behind those problems, which could not be immediately realized.

This case shows that the right to participation of people (human rights), customary and cultural values of Ma Lieng ethnic minority group are not respected (community security); local authorities did not hold accountable for the construction.

The above-mentioned three cases are randomly selected, therefore they may not reflect and represent for the overall picture of poverty reduction programmes in Vietnam. However, they somehow show the

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ The case is recited from an article under the same title in the *Van nghe Dan toc (Ethnic Affairs)* magazine, published by TEW, CHESH and CIRD – three Vietnamese non-governmental organizations working on poverty reduction for ethnic minorities and in mountainous areas, 2006.

interwoven relationship of human development, human security and human rights. Though one can realize that none of the three concepts is specifically mentioned or stated as the goal in these programmes, they are reflected in the implementation and by outcomes of such programmes. This inter-relationship was implied in a speech delivered by the Vietnamese permanent Deputy Prime Minister, Nguyen Sinh Hung, at a conference reviewing one of the poverty reduction programmes that "...This is one of major investment policies aimed at socio-economic development, poverty reduction, maintaining security, public order and social safety...".⁷⁵

Concluding remarks

Human development, human security and human rights are people-centred concepts. In order to understand their relationship, people tend to trace back their original development. However, if human beings are placed at the center of each of these concepts, then it naturally can argue that they are products of people's intellecture, developed by the practice and conceptualized by academic literature. Human security, for example, is considered by many as a new concept that can traced back to the UNDP Human Development Report 1994⁷⁶ or in Asian context, the origin of the concept is normally referred to statements by former Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi following the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and 1998.⁷⁷ However, components of the human security concept in the UNDP Human Development Report 1994, such as freedom from want and freedom from fear, can in fact found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948;⁷⁸ and in Asia, the concept of human security was linked with the catastrophe of Hiroshima in 1945.⁷⁹ Citing examples of different understandings of the origin of the concept of human security is to prove the above argument. Though there are different opinions about their relationship,

⁷⁵ Nhan Dan Online (People's Daily on-line), *Conference reviewing two-year implementation of the Prime Minister's Decision 134/2004/QD-TTg concerning assistance given to ethnic minority households in poverty and difficult circumstances with land for production, land for housing and drinking water*, Hanoi, 2006, at <http://www.nhandan.com.vn> (viewed on 27 October 2006)

⁷⁶ Christian Akani, 2007, *loc.cit*

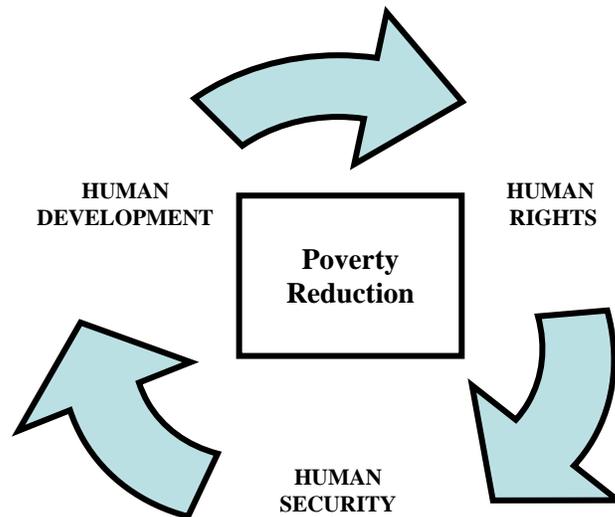
⁷⁷ Tadashi Yamamoto, 2003, *loc.cit*

⁷⁸ See paragraph 2 in the Preamble of the UDHR

⁷⁹ Emma Rothchild, "Introduction", in Tatsuro Matsume and Lincoln C. Chen (eds) "*Common Security in Asia: New Concepts of Human Security*", Tokyo, Tokyo University Press, 1995, pp. 3-5

an increasingly common awareness that today they go hand in hand,⁸⁰ are complementary one to another. And, this is proven by practical evidence.

The interwoven relationship of human development, human security and human rights is reflected by objectives set forth in policies and programmes and is proven by the random cases relating to poverty reduction in Vietnam. Such interwoven relationship of the three concepts can be illustrated by the following diagram:



Perception of human development, human security and human rights in Vietnam is development-oriented. In order to realize the goal of building "a strong country with wealthy people in an equal, democratic and civilized society",⁸¹ all efforts now in Vietnam are dedicated to development, bringing in strength and necessary conditions that in turn make human rights of the people better protected, security of the state and people guaranteed. Poverty reduction programmes are of great significance, contributing to achieving that goal. Thus, one can not find any specific term relating to human development, human security and human rights in policies and programmes regarding poverty reduction. But, the objectives set forth in those policies and programmes imply the three concepts and outcomes of poverty reduction count.

⁸⁰ Kofi Annan, 2006, *loc.cit*

⁸¹ VNMoFA, 2005, *loc.cit*, p. 3

From the practice of poverty reduction programmes in Vietnam, the interwoven relationship of human development, human security and human rights can be summarized in one term: **HUMAN DERISE**. The word 'DERISE' is an acronym for development – rights – security. The term reflects the complementarity and a trade-off relationship of the three concepts. Hence, human derise can be defined as:

The promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are only ensured by strict implementation of state duties and obligations in accordance with international law and national characteristics, the enjoyment of certain level of development and a real condition or feeling of achievable security, and proactive participation of individuals.

References

- Sabina Alkire, *A Conceptual Framework for Human Security*, Center for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, CRISE, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University, 2003
- Arabinda Acharya and Amitav Acharya, *Human Security in Asia: Conceptual Abuguities and Common Understandings*, Center for Peace and Development Studies in Orissa, India and York University in Toronto, Canada
- Jennifer Leaning and Sam Arie, *Human Security: A Framework for Assessment in Conflict and Transition*, CERTI Crisis and Transition Toolkit, 2000
- Lynn Thiesmayer, *Genger, Public Health and Human Security in Asia*, 2005
- Sadako Ogata, *Human Security in the 21st Century*, Coca-Cola World Fund Lecture, Yale University, 2002
- Sadako Ogata, *Human Security and New Approaches for Poverty Reduction*, 2005
- Shin-Wha Lee, *Promoting Human Security: Ethical, Normative and Educational Frameworks in East Asia*, 2004
- No author, *Poverty Reduction and Human Security*, Institute for International Cooperation, Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2006
- Mely Caballero-Anthony, *Revisioning Human Security in Southeast Asia*, Asian Perspective, Vol. 28, No. 3. 2004, pp. 155-189
- William T. Tow, Ramesh Thakur, and In Taek Hyun (ed.), *Asia's Emerging Regional Order: Reconciling Traditional and Human Security*, United Nations University Press, 2000
- Amitav Acharya, *Human Security in the Asia Pacific: Puzzle, Panacea, or Peril?*, www.cpsindia.org/globalhumansecurity/index_m.htm#puzzle (viewed on 2 September 2007)

- Ellen Seidensticker, *Human Security, Human Rights and Human Development*, Kennedy School, Harvard University, 2002
- *Declaration on Human Rights as an Essential Component of Human Security*, Workshop on Relationship between Human Rights and Human Security, San Jose, Costa Rica, 2001
- Gerd Oberleitner, *Human Rights and Security – The Two Towers?* Center for the Study of Human Rights, 2003
- UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994*
- Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighborhood*, Oxford University Press, 1995
- Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*, New York, 2003
- UNESCO, *Human Security in East Asia*, proceedings of the International Conference on Human Security in East Asia, 2003, Seoul, Republic of Korea
- Human Development Network, *Peace, Human Security and Human Development in the Phillipines*, 2005

Annex

List of International Human Rights instruments that defines Human Security (Picado 2001)

- Charter of the United Nations
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
- Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity
- Principles of International Co-operation in the detection, arrest, extradition and punishment of persons guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity
- Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field
- Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea
- Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War
- Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War
- Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I)
- Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II)
- Declaration on the Human Rights of Individuals Who are not Nationals of the Country in which They Live

- Declaration on Territorial Asylum
- Proclamation of Teheran
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief
- Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions
- Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples
- Declaration on Social Progress and Development
- Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition
- Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interest of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind
- Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace
- Declaration on the Right to Development
- Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness
- Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families