

UNU-ONY side Event at the 17th session of UN CSD, 11 May 2009

Remarks by Hans Günter Brauch (Germany)

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am grateful to our host and its director, Dr. Jean-Marc Coicaud, and his staff, in particular Ms. Sidney Kinnear, for your support to make this book launch possible.

I also thank UNU-EHS for co-sponsoring this event. Last not least I thank the panelists for your comments on this second volume of a handbook on the environmental dimension of security.

I would like to address four questions: *Why? By whom? For whom?* was this security handbook written and *What is its relevance for the United Nations?*

What are the reasons for this publication project?

Three major developments have caused a fundamental reconceptualization of security:

First, the end of the Cold War in 1989 resulted in three changes of the security concept:

- a. in a *widening* of the political and military focus of national and international security to include its economic, societal and environmental dimensions;
- b. in a *deepening* from the state-centred concepts of “international peace and security” in the UN Charter, and of “national security” of UN member states to non-state referents such as human beings, ethnic and religious groups and humankind. A major innovation was launched by UNDP in 1994 with the human security concept that was introduced by Canada to the UN Security Council. In the Outcome Document of September 2005 the General Assembly was tasked to regularly discuss human security issues.
- c. a *sectorialization of security* that addresses the specific security relevance of selected policy fields, such as *energy security* (IEA), *food security* (FAO), *health security* (WHO), as well as *water security* (UNEP, UNU). The new concept of *soil security*, UNCCD and the Spanish Environment Ministry will launch on Thursday, 14 May, at 6.15pm at another side event.

Second, with globalization many non-state actors and processes have caused security threats, challenges, vulnerabilities and risks for states, international organizations and human beings: such as terrorism, organized crime (illegal trafficking of weapons, drugs, human beings and organs) and the uncontrolled financial flows that caused the present global economic crisis.

Third, since 2000, problems of global environmental change were *securitized* by UN members who declared them *issues of utmost importance* that require *extraordinary policy responses*. Climate change was discussed first on 17 April 2007 by the UN Security Council.

These developments are reflected in this security handbook for the Anthropocene, the era of earth history that is affected by human activities.

The first volume on *Globalization and Environmental Challenges* (2008) focuses on the first two reasons.

This volume on *Facing Global Environmental Change* addresses the securitization of climate change, water, desertification, population change, urbanization and natural hazards.

The second focus is on sectoral security on *energy, food, health* and *water as well as on environmental, human and gender security*. The volume concludes with proposals *from knowledge to action* linking sustainable development with sustainable peace.

This book offers *assessments* of problems of global environmental change, humankind and states face in the 21st century and *reviews* policy debates and scientific discourses on new security concepts and environmental and human security issues.

The third book on *Coping with Global Environmental Change* follows in 2010. It addresses threats, challenges, vulnerabilities and risks and policies for adaptation and mitigation to global environmental change.

By whom?

This handbook includes about 270 chapters by 250-300 authors from 80-100 countries. The editors and peer reviewers worked hard to guarantee high standards.

The handbook was edited by 11 scientists from 10 countries and of this volume four co-editors come from Africa, Asia and Latin America and four from Europe.

Among its 132 authors of this book are Mr. Steiner, Prof. Ogwu and Prof. R. Pachauri, the chairman of the IPCC that received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. Prof. Tony Allan received the Stockholm Water Prize of 2008. All authors, editors and reviewers worked for free.

In these books the south is not an object, many authors are distinguished scientists from developing countries that analyse the problems of their own region.

The volume combines distinguished scientists and promising young scholars.

For whom?

The handbook was written for scholars, policy advisers and policy makers, journalists and students globally and it should be available in the libraries of major universities, research institutes and ministries that can afford this huge compilation of global scientific and policy relevant topical knowledge.

This handbook is available as a hardcover, as an electronic book and all chapters may be purchased individually on the internet.

We plan a new book aid project to get these volumes to university libraries in developing countries that cannot afford such reference books.

- Of the Mediterranean Book of this Hexagon book series we sent 260 copies to national and university libraries in 90 countries.
- We plan to launch a new book aid project for our security handbook in three volumes.
- Springer publishers supports this project with a major discount.
- Thus, we are looking for public and private sponsors to get the 100 chapters of this huge and heavy book to readers in the South.
- All donors and recipients will be documented on a special website on this project.

Relevance for the UN System

Security is a key concept of international and national politics, a basic value in societies, cultures and religions. Maintaining and achieving security is also a major legitimator for the allocation of public resources on the national and international level.

Thus, the meaning of security matters for the United Nations system, for its member states and its peoples.

Maintaining “international peace and security” has been a key goal of the UN Charter. Achieving human security “in larger freedom” has also become a key goal of the Secretary-General.

Environmental, food, health, water and hopefully soon also “soil” security are policy priorities for specialized agencies, programmes, secretariats and networks within the UN system.

- Changes in the meaning of “international peace and security” affected decisions of the UN Security Council since 1989.
- Human security has become a key issue of the *Human Security Network* and of the *Friends of Human Security* and has resulted in several initiatives in the UN Security Council and in the General Assembly.
- Environmental, water, soil, food and health security are key concerns and areas of political activity of the UN system.

This collective global scientific effort hopes to contribute to better face and cope with the challenges humankind will experience in this century.

The editors and authors want to foster a global anticipatory learning and to contribute knowledge for proactive policies.

They address the security dangers to avoid the worst societal catastrophes that may occur in this century if the tipping points of global climate change should trigger more severe changes in global climate than the projections of the scenarios assessed by the IPCC indicate.

To be able to act early requires both anticipatory recognition of future threats and learning as well as political will to implement such policies.