

## **A Human Security Approach to Economic Security**

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In an increasingly interdependent world, policies that do not consider the interrelatedness of the seven human security pillars—community security, economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, and political security—risk inflicting lasting damage to fragile and conflict-affected states. However, concentrating on one or a few pillars while still acknowledging the overlapping nature of security threats allows us to better understand and devise strategies to enhance human security. Economic security, which includes a series of monetary and non-monetary measures, promotes a more distributive justice approach to socioeconomic development.

Strong local institutions that are able to operate fairly and impartially, public-sector reform, impartial and influential leaders, and the existence of fair policies enhance normative convergence. A well-functioning government that delivers high-quality public services, demonstrates political stability, and upholds the rule of law engenders trust and participation in the political process. Political stability and institutional effectiveness are key attractors of foreign capital and investment, which, if harnessed properly, can contribute to the creation of local jobs and the development and independence of the local private sector. The ease of opening and registering a business, as well as the presence of a free and fair business environment, are key to establishing trust in the market. The establishment and implementation of strong labor laws are fundamental to ensuring that local communities, particularly those from vulnerable groups, have access to safe employment opportunities with a fair wage. Legal provisions that require the international private sector to employ robust numbers of locals in their business activities can ensure access to employment in the formal economy.

Providing hefty sums of government subsidies and keeping large numbers of civil servants on the payroll can pose challenges to encouraging economic growth and the diversification of region's economy. A local private sector that is independent of the government's business activities can optimize the allocation of resources, all the while supporting competitiveness, innovation, and productivity in the local economy. However, it takes a significant amount of time, cash, and support to develop successful businesses, especially in fragile and conflict-affected environments. It would prove beneficial for bloated public sectors to enact voluntary early retirement schemes or to offer to transfer benefits for civil servants willing to be employed in the private sector. Strengthening labor laws and private-oriented social security and contributions programs could encourage job seekers to look for employment in the private sector, rather than falling back on seemingly secure employment in the public sector.

By developing multidimensional human resource strategies, companies can minimize costs while improving job quality. An integrated and innovative framework that not only offers good benefits, training opportunities, a safe work environment, and fair wages, but that also addresses barriers that make it difficult for job seekers, especially individuals from vulnerable groups, to acquire and maintain a job—such as needs for child care, home health support, sick leave, and transportation to and from workplaces—would also expand employment opportunities.

The presence of anchor institutions such as hospitals, museums, universities, and other institutions that provide a public good can serve as multipliers for social change. Strong relations among community leaders, representatives from the government, and the private

sector can help to reduce the likelihood that local people's livelihoods and traditions will be destroyed in the name of economic progress. Infrastructure recovery serves as a major pillar in the development of farm-to-market roads, thus contributing to the rehabilitation and diversification of the agriculture sector. The restoration or building of critical infrastructure such as banking and finance systems, electrical grids, telecommunication systems, and water systems is crucial not only to facilitate self-sufficiency, but also to improve the capacity of a society to adapt and reconfigure in times of disaster.

Integrating social enterprises aimed at expanding employment opportunities for people who are typically seen as unemployable, into socioeconomic development strategies could support individuals outside of the formal labor market. Employment in social enterprises can provide much-needed work for people with little work experience, former soldiers who might not have compatible job skills for private-sector employment, individuals with past criminal records, people who suffer from trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and individuals who are in need of acquiring further job skills to advance to more suitable positions. Social enterprises can range from property care, waste recycling, and landscaping to more sophisticated activities, such as web design and market research. Social enterprises can be vitally important to raising working standards if they provide employees with a safe and supportive environment, health benefits, and a fair wage. By providing an entry point into the formal workforce for people with the abovementioned challenges, social enterprises contribute public goods and services to meet some of the needs of the community. Oftentimes, after working for a social enterprise, employees are prepared to transition to a position in the private sector. Such efforts are particularly important for rentier states since they address the needs of vulnerable workers while developing businesses that are not dependent on the oil industry or the existence of a robust government budget.

In fragile and conflict-affected states, the government often cannot afford to provide the majority of employment opportunities, especially in times of economic and humanitarian crises. If there is a bloated and inefficient workforce of government employees, it must be significantly scaled down. However, a dramatic reduction in public-sector jobs may well be a political risk that the political leadership will not want to take. Therefore, such a radical change in policy would need to be coupled with strong government support for a concurrent growth of opportunities in the private sector. Better training and workforce development efforts in all professions and at all levels of skills are critical to the development of such growth opportunities. The state, in cooperation with the business community, should begin an intentional policy of privileging and training the indigenous labor force, including IDPs and refugees, to rapidly replace foreign workers, such as professional engineers, technicians, skilled trades, service workers, and day laborers.