



CHAPTER 1.

HUMAN SECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

1.1. New UNDP Concept of Human Security

The UNDP describes human development as the process of widening the range of people's choices among options that they value. This expansion of choices is based on realising people's basic needs, such as being healthy and well nourished, being adequately clothed and sheltered, being mobile, being literate and having access to knowledge.

The concept of human development has four essential components: equity, which relates to equitable access to opportunities; sustainability, which refers to the responsibility toward future generations which should have the same chances for development as does the current generation; productivity, which relates to investment in human resources and in creating a macro-economic environment that will enable individuals to reach their maximum potential; and empowerment, in the sense that people should reach a level of individual development that will allow them to exercise choices based on their own will from among an enlarged number of opportunities facing them.

The focus on human development itself constitutes a fundamental reorientation of principles and aims, which is at the root of many contemporary social reforms. Human beings and their fundamental needs are henceforth considered as the corner stone as well as the highest value of development. Conversely, material assets, cash incomes and increased consumption are no longer seen as self-evident values, but rather as means to ensure sustainable human development.

This re-assessment of the relationship between the means and ends of human development represents a return to fun-

damental principles that characterize much of human culture, and particularly European culture, but which, due to social and historical circumstances, have been eroded or distorted at the end of the 20th century.

Human development cannot be realized without ensuring human security. "Human security usually implies a condition in which people can exercise their choices safely and freely, without fear that the opportunities that they enjoy today will be lost or taken away tomorrow. Security, in this people-centred sense, means that the gains that people have achieved in enlarging their opportunities and enhancing their capabilities are protected by current social, economic and political arrangements. Security relies on the widespread social acceptance — based on stable institutions — of people's entitlements and rights. Ultimately, a person's entitlements are based on having access to productive assets — physical, natural or human capital — either directly if the person possesses the assets, or indirectly, if it is other people, the community or the state that possesses the assets." (*Transition 1999: Human Development Report for Central and Eastern Europe & the CIS*)

The shift in outlook of the UNDP towards a new understanding of human security took place in the early '90s, after the end of the cold war and of the ideological confrontation between the superpowers. The threat of destruction of humanity by nuclear means weakened, and the focus of security shifted from the military to the human domain — to human life and dignity. If previously the notion of security largely referred to the state, nowadays it focuses on people. The emphasis has changed, from security through arms to security through sustainable human development.

*"We are humans.
Thus, our behaviour
should be human."*

Euripides

Methodologically, the introduction of the concept of human security is a positive development, because the new concept provides an integrated framework for bringing together parameters reflecting both objective and subjective aspects of the social life of human beings.

The concepts of “human development” and “human security” are closely inter-related, but they are not identical. Of course, there are close links between human development and human security: progress in each of these areas increases the chances of progress in the other. As happens with other fundamental concepts (for instance, freedom), it is much easier to perceive the absence of human security than its presence.

Human security has always been in the view of the UN, starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person” (Art. 3). “Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality” (Art. 22).

The issue of human security has two aspects: first, it means freedom from such threats as hunger, disease, and repression; second, it means protection against sud-

den and painful changes in everyday life, in the family, in the work place, and in the community.

As is well known, threats to human security can emerge at any level of social development, in rich or in poor countries. However, in a country with weakened state institutions and in a state of spiritual and economic crisis, the threats to the human security of the population naturally grow. In such cases threats can arise not only from certain individuals or groups (criminal behaviour, ethnic conflicts, xenophobia), or from political parties, but also from the state itself. There are many historical examples of states where problems of a political, economic and personal security nature accumulate until they form a “critical mass”, thus putting them at a high risk of national crisis and of either becoming involved in external adventures or resorting to violence against their own people. But neither state voluntarism nor violence can substitute for social and economic reforms. International experience also shows that short-term external assistance (loans, humanitarian assistance) can reduce tensions, but cannot replace the long-term concentration of efforts of the country and its population to ensure sustainable development.

Each country, proceeding from its own traditions and its own situation, thus has to develop its own legal and social

Box 1.1.1.

“Human security is not a concern with weapons — it is a concern with human life and dignity....

Human security is people-centred. It is concerned with how people live and breath in a society, how freely they exercise their many choices, how much access they have to market and social opportunities- and whether they live in conflict or in peace....

The concept of human security stresses that people should be able to take care of themselves: all people should have the opportunity to meet their most essential needs and to earn their own living. This will set them free and help ensure that they can make a full contribution to development- their own development and that of their communities, their countries and the

world. Human security is a critical ingredient of participatory development.

There is, of course, a link between human security and human development: progress in one area enhances the chances of progress in the other. But failure in one area also heightens the risk of failure in the other, and history is replete with examples.”

Source: New Dimensions of Human Security. Human Development Report. 1994, pp.22-24

mechanisms to ensure human security and the development of human potential, enabling individuals to realize vitally important possibilities such as “a long, active and healthy life” and “access to knowledge and resources.”

Human security can be described as a phenomenon having many components: *economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security.*

The structural elements of human security cited above are especially important for human beings in all social situations in modern society. Keeping in mind that all the components of human security are interrelated, the question may be asked, which of these kinds of security is most important? At a closer examination of these components two main groups can be identified: “freedom from need” and “freedom from fear.”

It is significant, for instance, that in countries with a high level of development the programs for sustainable development elaborated in the 1990s in compliance with the UN Declaration “Agenda - 21” (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) attach high priority to environmental protection.

At the same time, countries facing economic crisis (as in southeast Asia and some of the countries in transition), social violence, violation of civil liberties, or serious problems of mass disease (such as malaria or AIDS in a number of African countries), give greater priority to other policy variables for ensuring human development and human security.

We could ask: what is the relationship between economic security and human development? How does economic security correlate with personal, public, or political security?

The first answer could be that sustainable human development and human welfare are threatened first of all by economic crisis with its attendant roll of social evils: inflation, unemployment, uncertain or risky employment (including

in the shadow economy), poverty, malnutrition, poor health, low levels of education, pollution and destruction of natural environments, crime, suicide, and lack of support for the poor and the needy.

History shows that when people feel a direct threat to their security they become less tolerant of others. This means that political security, which at first sight may seem quite distinct from economic security, is in essence not so different. For, as we know from history, political catastrophes, totalitarian regimes and the like are usually brought about by economic anarchy and social hopelessness when the state itself, the institutions of state power, the state budget, balance of payments, etc., are in crisis.

In such conditions, the state can take various types of preventive measures: political, legal, economic, organizational, repressive, etc. For instance, it is well known that during the great depression in the United States, the Economic Security Committee was set up under the President (in 1934), with the main purpose of solving social problems: unemployment, pensioners’ hardships, etc. As President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared at the time, “true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security.” This was followed, in 1935, by the adoption by the US Congress of the law on social protection. Subsequently, the annual reports of the Economic Security Committee under the President of the U.S. were dedicated to various aspects of human security.

To mention another example, in Russia there is, under the Security Council, an interdepartmental commission on economic security which, with the help of scientific institutions and state agencies, developed the “State Strategy for Economic Security of the Russian Federation”, which was enacted in 1996 by a presidential decree.

National security councils exist in virtually all countries, including the Republic of Moldova. Monitoring economic security indicators and working out and

implementing preventive measures are among their main functions.

Taking into account the critical situation facing the country, the National Security Council of the Republic of Moldova, in December 1998 for the first time since the declaration of independence, dealt with problems of economic and social security, as well as with the growing threats, both external (energy dependence, large foreign debt, danger of insolvency) and internal, generated mainly by the difficulties of stabilizing the state, achieving the transition to a market economy and strengthening civil society.

In this connection it seems relevant to point out that, in the advanced capitalist economies, there is a trend towards replacing the concept of "security of employment" with that of "security of employability". This change reflects a shift of the world economy away from situations where employees could reasonably expect to be employed for life by the same company, often doing the same job. In the dynamic conditions brought about by the double impact of global competition and accelerating technical progress, fewer and fewer people can expect to spend their whole lives doing the same job. Under the new conditions of globalisation, where whole new industrial sectors may appear suddenly to capitalize on certain advantages only to dwindle and disappear almost as quickly once those advantages are exhausted, innovation and flexibility are essential for survival, and this applies to workers as well as to firms. Security of employability implies both a much greater flexibility of the labour force, ready, willing and able to change jobs and to learn new skills throughout its working life, and an economy in which enterprises constantly adjust to new conditions in order to maintain and reinforce their competitive position, even if this adjustment may entail radical changes in the kind of business in which they engage. It also requires considerable public investment in general

education and in the capacity to retrain workers who need to move from one sector to another. Developing countries and the countries in transition need to take note of this trend, which has important implications for them, in terms of long-term policy.

The World Summit for Social Development suggested that the concept of human security should be made a priority issue for the 21st century. As the Programme of Action approved at the Summit states, "Social development is inseparable from the cultural, ecological, economic, political and spiritual environment in which it takes place. Social development is also clearly linked to the development of peace, freedom, stability and security, both nationally and internationally" (*Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. Copenhagen, 1995, p. 39*).

As is mentioned in the *Human Development Report (UNDP, 1999)*, globalisation has created new threats to human security both in rich and poor countries, which are reflected in financial instability (global and regional crises), uncertainty about work places (migration, workers without contracts), and illness (AIDS, rapidly spreading of diseases). Also, globalization has created access to different cultures, though presently the cultural flows are not balanced (Hollywood movies, expansion of global media networks etc.). Threats for personal security are created by criminal elements and are linked with illicit trade (drugs, arms, money laundering). Globalization has given new characteristics to conflicts, as was shown by events in Kosovo which echoed not only in southeastern Europe, but also worldwide.

In spite of these drawbacks, the global era opens new possibilities for millions of people in the entire world. Widening of trade, new technologies, foreign investments, extension of communication networks, global ideas and global solidarity are feeding people's lives on Earth, considerably extending their options.

Box 1.1.2.

The threat to human security

Before the 1990s, countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS were notable for providing their populations with a high degree of basic security. Freedom, democracy and genuine political participation were wanting, and the security based on the protection of basic political and civil rights was also lacking. But with regard to many economic and social rights, people were relatively secure in their entitlements. People's right to full, lifetime employment was guaranteed. Although cash incomes were low, they were stable and secure. Many basic consumption goods and services were subsidized and regularly supplied. People had food security and were adequately clothed and housed. They had free guaranteed access to education and health. They were assured pensions when they retired and regularly benefited from many other forms of social protection.

The transition period has drastically altered this situation. People enjoy much more freedom—in terms of thought, expression and organization—and are beginning to benefit from some of the halting and uneven advances in political democracy. It will be difficult for any regime to overturn the current advances in basic human freedom. However, in a number of countries the gains in political democracy, although significant, remain vulnerable to reversal. Moreover, a secure economic

basis for exercising freedom is being eroded as impoverishment has intensified and income and wealth inequalities have widened. Despite the many advances, the losses in human security have been severe. The gains in freedom have been accompanied by the loss of many of the basic economic and social rights that the population had come to enjoy and expect over the course of decades. Millions of people in the region are unemployed or underemployed.

People continue to receive pensions but all that these seem to ensure now is an old age afflicted by misery and poverty.

The whole previous comprehensive system of social protection has been allowed to crumble. Many basic social services now require the payments of fees or have been partially privatised. Public education and health facilities have been allowed to deteriorate while private facilities have taken their place for those rich enough to pay.

Laying new foundations for human security should be an overriding objective of economic, social and political policies in the countries in transition. The old foundations were clearly not adequate. Undoubtedly, one of the most challenging tasks is to rebuild a system of human security that is consistent with, and supportive of, human freedom.

Source: UNDP Human Development Report for Central and Eastern Europe & the CIS, 1999, pp. 2-4

1.2. Economy in Transition: Threats to Human Security

One decade has passed since the political and economic changes of 1989/90 swept through the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union (FSU). Having chosen to introduce democratic and market reforms, those countries are normally described as countries in transition.

“At the dawn of a new millennium, the region of Eastern Europe and the CIS reflects on the realities of the latest experiment in social engineering. Again, people are the objects instead of participants in shaping policies that affect their daily lives.” (*Transition 1999 Human Development Report for Central and Eastern Europe & the CIS, p. 3*)

At present about 30 countries in Europe and Asia are involved in vast changes of system. The transition to democracy and to a market economy is a lengthy process involving many different spheres of human activity. The main argument in favour of transition is a desire to put these countries on the path to democracy, freedom, and sustainable development.

Indeed, during the transition period these countries obtained a number of attributes of democracy—a free press, emerging institutions of a civil society and much greater respect towards the freedom of the person and human rights. With regard to the transformation of economic systems, the expected efficiency has not been attained. Moreover, it has been in the economic sphere where problems have appeared in ensuring human security.

*“Dies diem docet
/ The next day
learnes from the
past one.”*

Anonymous Latin

Social and economic development in this group of countries in transition moved at very different speeds. Only a few have managed to reach GDP levels above those they had in 1989. In most of these countries, GDP decline varied between 30 and 60%, and the population is experiencing growing social distress.

number was about 147 million, or one person in three. In most of these countries inequality increased very fast, considerable uncertainty has emerged in the fields of education and health care, while problems of energy use and environment have become more acute.

The specific nature of the processes

Box 1.2.1

Countries in Transition: the Arrhythmia of the Economy (GDP annual percent change)

	Avg.									Projections	
	1998-90	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2002
World	3.4	1.8	2.7	2.7	4.0	3.7	4.3	4.2	2.5	2.3	3.4
● Advanced economies	3.1	1.2	1.9	1.2	3.2	2.6	3.2	3.2	2.2	2.0	2.3
● Developing countries	4.2	4.9	4.7	6.5	6.8	6.1	6.5	5.7	3.3	3.1	4.5
● Countries in transition	2.1	-7.4	-11.7	-6.4	-7.5	-1.1	-0.3	2.2	-0.2	-0.9	2.5
Eastern & Central Europe	...	-9.9	-8.5	-3.7	-2.9	1.6	1.6	3.1	2.4	2.0	3.7
Russia	...	-5.0	-14.5	-8.7	-12.6	-4.1	-3.5	0.8	-4.8	-7.0	...
Transcaucasus & Central Asia	...	-7.0	-14.4	-9.6	-10.4	-4.4	1.6	2.4	2.0	1.8	3.1

Source: World Economic Outlook. International Monetary Fund, April 1999.

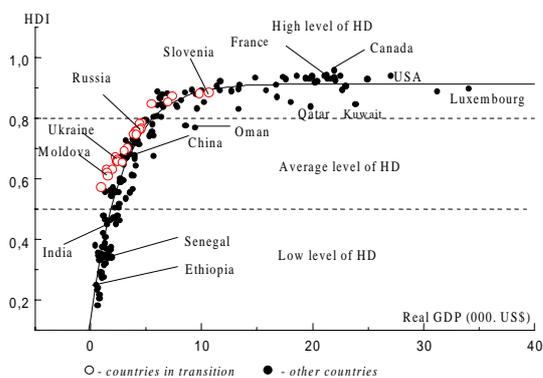
In Central and Eastern Europe and the countries of the CIS, millions of people have seen their living standards deteriorate sharply during the difficult move towards establishing modern market economies. In 1989, about 14 million people in the transition economies of the CIS were living under the poverty line of four dollars a day. By the mid of 90s that

that took place in the countries in transition has been reflected rather well in the UN documents, including the UNDP Human Development Reports. Almost all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including Moldova, have produced annual Human Development Reports since 1995. UNDP Regional Bureau for Central and Eastern Europe and CIS has, since 1996, issued an annual publication entitled "Human Development Under Transition: Summaries of the National Human Development Reports for Europe and the CIS", which constitutes a summary of trends in human development in the countries of this region.

First of all, it is worth asking the question: what is the place of the countries in transition among the world community, and what are the trends in human development in these countries?

Figure 1.2.1 provides some elements for an answer to this question. We can see the interrelationship between GDP

Fig. 1.2.1. World community and countries in transition: levels of human development.



Source: Based on data of Human Development Report, 1998.

and HDI of all the UN member-countries. In the UNDP Human Development Reports, countries are subdivided into three groups, according to their level of human development: respectively countries with high (HDI > 0.8), medium (0.5 < HDI < 0.8) and low (HDI < 0.5) levels of human development. Most of the transition countries are medium level countries. Only Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland, with HDI > 0.8, belong in the category of high human development countries.

It is worth mentioning that, according to this graph, all the countries in transition might be classified as countries that “successfully transform material assets into final indices of human development”, because all of them are placed above the median curve of the graph under analysis. The value of this conclusion is however relative, because these countries’ position above the curve does not so much indicate the efficiency of the “processing” of material assets into the human development indexes as it reflects the high average life expectancy of the population of those countries, figures that are associated with conditions from the past and have declined more slowly than GDP *per capita*.

Should the same principle be used not only for HDI but also for its other components — life expectancy index (LEI), educational index (EI) and living standards index (GDP) — and countries be divided as in the case of HDI in high, average and low levels, one might notice that all the East European and FSU countries have practically the same indices of life expectancy, that would lead them to be classed as medium level countries. With the exception of Albania, they also all have high educational indices (0.89±0.02). With a few exceptions, values of the living standards index are, on the other hand, quite low.

In the majority of the countries in transition, largely due to inertia, the level of education and health care remains relatively high. And it is their unfavourable economic situation that prevents these countries from achieving higher human

Table 1.2.2.

Human Development Indices for the Countries of Europe and FSU

Rating HDI	Country	Life expectancy Index LEI	Educational Index EI	GDP	HDI	RGDP* RHDI
High level of human development						
33	Slovenia	0,82	0,91	0,80	0,845	5
36	Czech Rep.	0,81	0,91	0,78	0,833	3
42	Slovakia	0,80	0,91	0,73	0,813	9
44	Poland	0,79	0,92	0,70	0,802	18
Medium level of human development						
47	Hungary	0,76	0,91	0,71	0,795	8
54	Estonia	0,73	0,93	0,66	0,773	15
55	Croatia	0,79	0,88	0,65	0,773	18
60	Belarus	0,72	0,93	0,65	0,763	15
62	Lithuania	0,75	0,91	0,62	0,761	22
63	Bulgaria	0,77	0,89	0,62	0,758	23
68	Romania	0,75	0,88	0,63	0,752	13
71	Russia	0,69	0,92	0,63	0,747	8
73	Macedonia	0,80	0,86	0,58	0,746	28
74	Latvia	0,72	0,90	0,61	0,744	15
76	Kazakhstan	0,71	0,91	0,60	0,740	15
85	Georgia	0,80	0,90	0,50	0,729	37
87	Armenia	0,76	0,90	0,53	0,728	26
91	Ukraine	0,73	0,92	0,52	0,721	27
92	Uzbekistan	0,71	0,91	0,54	0,720	19
96	Turkmenistan	0,67	0,95	0,51	0,712	24
97	Kirgizstan	0,71	0,88	0,52	0,702	19
100	Albania	0,80	0,79	0,51	0,699	19
103	Azerbaijan	0,75	0,88	0,46	0,695	34
104	Moldova	0,71	0,89	0,45	0,683	35
108	Tadjikistan	0,70	0,89	0,40	0,665	46
119	Mongolia	0,68	0,74	0,43	0,618	26

Source: World Human Development Report, 1999, UNO experts calculation

* GDP *per capita* rank minus HDI rank; a positive figure indicates that the country ranks higher on HDI than on real GDP *per capita*.

development indices. In the long term the values of the indices of life expectancy and of education may be expected to decline if the economic problems remain as severe as they are at present.

Unfortunately, the main tendency of the human development processes in transition countries points towards a decrease

Table 1.2.3

Income distribution for the countries of Europe and FSU (Gini Coefficient)

Country	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	Change, %
High level of human development									
Slovenia	0,219	0,232	0,273	0,260	0,275	0,275	0,358	0,298	36
Czech	0,204	-	0,212	0,214	0,258	0,260	0,271	-	33
Hungary	0,268	0,293	-	0,305	0,315	0,337	-	-	28
Poland	0,207	-	0,239	0,247	0,256	0,281	0,290	-	40
Middle level of human development									
Belarus	0,234	-	-	0,341	0,399	-	-	-	70
Lithuania	0,260	-	-	0,372	-	0,349	0,341	0,350	34
Bulgaria	-	0,212	0,262	-	0,251	-	-	0,291	37
Romania	0,155	-	0,204	-	0,226	0,276	0,278	0,303	95
Russia	0,271	0,269	0,325	0,371	0,461	0,446	0,471	0,483	78
Macedonia	0,223	0,267	0,235	0,272	0,253	0,270	0,250	-	12
Latvia	0,244	-	0,247	0,333	0,283	0,325	0,346	0,349	43
Georgia	0,301	-	-	0,369	0,400	-	-	-	33
Armenia	0,258	-	0,296	0,355	0,366	0,321	0,381	-	48
Ukraine	0,249	-	-	0,251	0,364	-	-	0,413	66
Kyrgyz	0,260	-	-	0,300	0,445	0,443	0,395	0,428	65
Moldova	0,250	-	-	0,411	0,437	0,379	0,390	-	56

Source: Human Development Reports, UNDP 1991-1999.

in the value of the HDI. It must be stressed that in all countries in transition the income distribution inequality has widened, which is expressed by increasing values of the Gini coefficient.

Most of the problems relating to human security that emerged in the transition period have been due to the weakening of the state. Governments, including those in Moldova, made a number of major mistakes in economic policy. As a result, the liberalization of prices led to huge poverty; mass privatisation had a low social and economic efficiency; "porous" borders stimulated smuggling, etc.

In the transition countries, the problems of human security need to be resolved at both national and individual levels, as well as at the level of social groups. Why is this so important?

"Experience shows that where there are multiple problems of personal, economic, political and environmental security, there is a risk of national breakdown. Identifying potential crisis countries is not an indictment — it is an essential part of preventive diplomacy and an active peace policy. A clear set of indicators and an early warning system

based on them, could help countries avoid reaching the crisis point." (Human Development Report 1994, p. 38)

In order to assess human security in a transition country it is important to use indices that characterize economic security as a whole together with the indices typically used for monitoring human development processes.

The economic security of a country consists of the totality of conditions and factors that guarantee the competitiveness and sustainability of the national economy, as well as its ability to develop and bring about progress through innovation and investment and through enhancing the educational, professional and cultural levels of the population. At the micro-level — at the level of the household, family and individual — the perspective changes since the interests of each citizen of the country have to be taken into account.

The economic security of the country is usually assessed on the basis of such parameters as: living standards, employment, efficiency of the social protection net, state of the financial sector — inflation, budget deficit, state debt, etc.

In most transition countries after the

early 1990s economic security was endangered, with direct consequences for the human development process. A crisis in the manufacturing sector, destruction of the scientific and technical potential and growing external debt led to emerging unemployment and decreasing income of the population. There was also the emergence of the poverty problem.

Most FSU countries have a state debt to public employees (teachers, doctors, civil servants) which has become permanent, and which essentially constitutes a hidden budget deficit which contributes to public debt. The state's capacity for social protection, for subsidizing education, health care and scientific research, and for protecting the environment has decreased.

Before the beginning of the transition period there was, in the FSU, generally guaranteed employment and a relatively egalitarian distribution of incomes. There was a system of subsidies and grants for basic goods and services (housing, transport). The fiscal burden was low — the net income of most of the population was almost equal to the gross income. People had guaranteed access to free education and medical services.

With the beginning of the transition to the market economy, the state and the population at large were faced with new tasks: property reform, privatization of enterprises, land and housing, social reforms, reform of the pension system, elimination of privileges and introduction of egalitarian criteria in the domain of social support.

The liberalization of prices and trade, development of the private sector, privatization of property, and cancellation of subsidies and transfers led to a situation where the deficit of goods and services (the disease of socialism) disappeared. At the same time, however, it led to a fall in the real income and financial resources of households. Simultaneously, an unprecedented differentiation of income took place. The gulf between the income of the "new rich" and the "new poor" continues to widen.

The weakness of state structures, violations of the law and poor financial discipline led to the appearance of a large shadow economy. In some transition

countries the share of the shadow economy reached 30 to 50% of GDP. One consequence of the growth of an informal sector is that, due to tax evasion, the inflow of cash to the state budget declines. On the other hand there are also some positive aspects, mainly related to the creation of new jobs and of additional incomes for the population. As a consequence, a redistribution of income occurs both within the parallel economy and between it and the formal economy.

A particularly important aspect of human security indicators relates to their critical thresholds (for unemployment, the difference between the income of the poorest and the richest groups, inflation, etc.). When indicators in a country approach these thresholds, social and economic stability is threatened. If these critical limits are crossed, the country enters a period of instability and social conflict, which results in a significant undermining of economic security and human development.

In some countries in transition the problems mentioned above have become so serious that material needs have become, for many people, the greatest threat to their security and to their welfare. This, in particular, has been the situation in Moldova. As a result, economic realities are foremost in people's concerns, and the satisfaction of material needs plays a key role in determining human behaviour. Equally importantly, it also determines people's attitudes towards the reforms being implemented in the country, and their readiness to play an active part in the solution of social problems. Other aspects of social life tend to be seen as secondary by people for whom economic circumstances are the main worry.

It may also be concluded that, in the difficult conditions that prevail in the countries in transition, it is in relation to economic security that we find that critical threshold in social development which, if crossed, is bound to cause a sharp contraction of the social basis of support for reform. If this happens, extremely negative consequences are bound to follow for the development of democracy, strengthening of the rule of law and reinforcing of civil society.