

Press Release

January 24, 2001

Plan for Establishment of the Commission on Human Security

A plan to establish a "Commission on Human Security" was announced today after a meeting between UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata in Tokyo on January 24, 2001. The Commission will be formally launched with an inaugural meeting in New York in the first half of 2001. The new Commission will be co-chaired by Mrs. Sadako Ogata and Professor Amartya Sen, Nobel Laureate and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. Approximately ten additional members from different parts of the world will be officially announced, along with the plans of the Commission's activities, before the New York meeting.

The proposed Commission responds to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's call at the Millennium Summit last fall for higher priority in the new century to achieve the twin goals of freedom from want and freedom from fear. Indeed, there is a growing awareness in the international community that collective efforts are needed to reduce significantly the level of human suffering and insecurity where it is most acute and prevalent. Such concerns, increasingly expressed by the term "human security," have become a central focus of policy imperatives of many nations in recent years. The late Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, in his policy speech in December 1998 characterized human security as the key concept to comprehensively seizing all the menaces that threaten the survival, daily life, and dignity of human beings and to strengthening the efforts to confront these threats. Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, in his statement at the UN Millennium Summit, announced his Government's plan to make an additional substantial contribution to the Trust Fund for Human Security that was established at the UN in March 1999 to promote specific efforts for human security. Such initiatives for promoting human security have been broadly supported by Asia-Pacific, African, Latin American, European and North American countries.

The Commission on Human Security has been conceived by several leaders around the world in order to seize this opportunity of enhanced awareness about human security, and as stated in the UN Millennium Declaration, to promote broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in the era of globalization.

The Commission will be independent of the United Nations, governments, and international organizations. The Commission, however, will maintain close contact with the United

Nations as much as the issues to be addressed by the Commission are closely related to the main initiatives of the United Nations. United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, in his meeting with Mrs. Ogata, the co-chair-designate, in Tokyo on January 24, 2001 gave an enthusiastic support for the creation of the Commission, expressed his strong anticipation for its contribution towards the global efforts related to human security, and his assurance of close cooperation by the United Nations system.

The Commission will have the following three goals:

- (1) to promote public understanding, engagement and support of human security and its underlying imperatives;
- (2) to develop the concept of human security as an operational tool for policy formulation and implementation; and
- (3) to propose a concrete program of action to address critical and pervasive threats to human security.

The Commission will be action-oriented to realize practical results. It will direct research and outreach activities, and endeavor to disseminate its work. The Commission will carry out ongoing evaluation of its own activities and release interim reports. It will publish its final report at the end of its two-year term.

Provisionally, the central secretariat of the Commission will be placed in Tokyo which will operate under the direction of the Commission.

Office of Sadako Ogata
c/o UNHCR Tokyo Office
UNU Building 6F, 5-53-70 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku Tokyo 150-0001, Japan
Tel. +81-3-3499-2011 Fax: +81-3-3499-2272
(Japanese) <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/hs.html>
(English) http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_secu/index.html