



CLICO meeting in Berlin - discussion on human security

News

"Security" is a much wider concept today than it was just some decades ago. Today, the concept is applied not only to new and diffuse military threats such as global terrorism but has been broadened to include additional areas such as food, water, health and other issues, of which many are intimately related to the environment and to its protection. But is this shift helpful for the environment and/or for populations under duress? What are the implications for the world's most conflicted and environmentally fragile regions? These questions formed the basis of discussions during a recent meeting of the CLICO project hosted by Ecologic Institute from 16 to 18 February 2011 in Berlin.

Traditionally, security is understood as being a national responsibility to protect and ensure the safety of citizens and territory from external threats. However, in 2009, more than 200 million people were affected by natural disasters, whilst violent conflicts drove a record 42 million people from their homes. Thus there is a need to provide security and protection for dispersed populations from the broad spectrum of natural disasters that climate change may present.

One potential solution is to approach these challenges from a human security perspective. Human security takes a broader, developmental view of security that focuses on ensuring that individuals have a number of 'freedoms'. These freedoms range from aspects of traditional security such as peace and stability to broader definitions of security that include human rights, reducing vulnerability and enhancing coping mechanisms for dealing with natural and human-induced hazards. In contrast to traditional military interventions which tend to be reactive, interventions from a human security perspective can be proactive, taking longer term planning into consideration to assist populations with adaptation and planning for climatic hazards and their effects.

Although human security has emerged as a challenge to traditional ideas of security, the two are not mutually exclusive concepts. Without human security, traditional state security cannot be attained and vice-versa. Early warning systems and emergency plans for hot spot areas to prevent crises and to protect humans are an important aspect of disaster preparedness and the military still have an important part to play in many of these strategies. However, governments are only beginning to consider the potential implications that environmental change may have for reconfiguring security policy and funding.

The nexus between human security, hydrological change and conflict formed the subject of discussions during a recent meeting between members of the CLICO research consortium funded by the EU's 7th Framework Programme for Research and hosted by Ecologic Institute from 16 to 18 February 2011 in Berlin. CLICO research partners from more than 20 countries attended the meeting, and presented their preliminary research results.

Further links:

- Official [CLICO website](#)

- Ecologic Institute Project: [Climate Change, Hydro-conflicts and Human Security \(CLICO\)](#)
- Dinner Dialogue with Simon Dalby: [Environmental Change, Human Insecurity and Earth System Science](#)
- Public panel discussion: [Climate Change, Human Security, and Conflict in Africa](#)

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