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HEALTH, HUMAN SECURITY, AND WELL-BEING: FINAL REPORT

Background

1. In 2010, the 50th Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) adopted Resolution CD50.R16 (1), Health, Human Security, and Well-being (Document CD50/17) (2). The resolution urged Member States to continue to promote analysis of the concept of human security and its relationship with health, with a view to its incorporation into country health plans, emphasizing coordination and multisectoral interagency participation to reflect the multidimensional aspects of this type of approach.

2. The objectives of the document were to: *a)* describe the evolution of the concept of human security and its relation to health; *b)* show the link between the concept of human security, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and health determinants; and *c)* study regional lines of action in this area. Also, the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau was requested to monitor the progress of discussions on the concept of human security and its relationship with health in relevant multilateral forums, explore the possibility of developing policy guidelines and methodological tools for integrating the human security approach and its relationship with health into PAHO programs and activities, and promote training for PAHO staff and Member States on health and human security. The document called for the preparation of a PAHO policy and strategy and plan of action on human security and its relationship with health in 2011, to be implemented over the period 2012-2021.

Analysis of Progress Achieved

3. In 2012, PAHO began developing the concept of human security and its relationship with health in a series of workshops, consultations with the Member States and technical publications (3-5). It also prepared and disseminated materials on the relationship between human security and individual and community resilience (6) and how integrating the approach into health plans can heighten that resilience and enhance health and well-being (7).

4. From 2016 to 2018, with partial support from the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS), PAHO launched a project for integrating the human security approach into health plans in Central America and the Dominican Republic (8, 9), adhering to the principles and approaches of the Health Plan for Central America and the Dominican Republic 2016-2020 (10) within the framework of the resolution on Health, Human Security, and Well-being (1). The project sought to promote use and understanding of the human security approach and its relationship with health, with a view to its early integration in national plans related to the health of adolescents and young adults. The process of integration into health plans involved multisectoral and interinstitutional coordination and participation at the national and local level to reflect the multidimensional integrating aspects of the approach. Moreover, the 2016 report “Health, Resilience, and Human Security. Moving toward Health for All” (11) emphasizes the following objectives related to implementation of a human security approach to health: *a)* enhance the resilience of the most vulnerable population groups by enabling them to enjoy good health; *b)* ensure that good-quality health services are available, acceptable, and accessible by promoting the self-reliance and self-determination of the most vulnerable population groups; and *c)* promote health through an understanding of the root causes of vulnerability, which vary depending on the local context and most often involve a web of interconnected threats. It is worth mentioning that one outcome of the project was that the human security concept and approach was adopted by the Meeting of Ministers of Health of Central America (COMISCA)/Central American Integration System (SICA) as a key pillar for the development of its subregional health policies (10, 12).

5. The principles of the human security concept and approach have been integrated either implicitly or explicitly into PAHO strategies, plans of action, and other more informal technical cooperation, particularly the Strategy and Plan of Action on Urban Health 2012-2021 (Document CD51/5 [2011]) (13), the Plan of Action on Health in All Policies 2014-2019 (Document CD53/10, Rev. 1 [2014]) (14), the Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage (Document CD53/5, Rev. 2 [2014]) (15), and the Strategy and Plan of Action on Health Promotion within the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals 2019-2030 (Document CD57/10 [2019]) (16).

Lessons Learned

6. Some lessons learned and good practices at the different levels of operationalization are presented below:

- a) Although referenced in the report Health, Human Security, and Well-being presented to the 50th Directing Council in 2010, a strategy and plan of action on human security and its relationship with health was not developed. However, the Region has made significant progress in this area (4-9, 11, 12).
- b) The concept of human security offers opportunities and an analytical lens to tackle critical public health issues such as pandemics, chronic and infectious diseases, and the effects of climate change on health and violence, among others. The concept of

- human security was embraced as one of the main elements in the design of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (17).
- c) Emphasis on human security can help shift the focus from survival to well-being, and dignity. This requires the involvement of stakeholders not directly related to health, such as those working in well-being and employment, among others. It also requires plans that focus on people, have a specific context, are comprehensive and intersectoral, adopt a preventive approach, and employ a protection-empowerment framework.
 - d) At this time, the COVID-19 pandemic once again imposes the need to examine the value of the human security approach to health, ensuring the identification of and attention to populations in conditions of vulnerability to guarantee health and well-being for all (18).

Measures Necessary to Improve the Situation

- 7. Some measures identified to improve the situation are:
 - a) Strengthen and continue implementing the Strategy and Plan of Action on Urban Health 2012-2021, the Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage, and the Strategy and Plan of Action on Health Promotion within the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals 2019-2030, in order to lend continuity to the principles of the human security concept and approach.
 - b) It is essential to continue efforts to broaden the knowledge of the health sector, other sectors, and the community regarding the connection between health and resilience.
 - c) It is necessary to increase the capacity of government sectors to recognize the importance of the concept of human security and its relationship with health in policy-making and policy implementation, in order to tackle the social and environmental determinants of health.

Action by the Directing Council

- 8. The Directing Council is invited to take note of this report and provide any comments it deems pertinent.

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