

who support the objective, about the means to achieve this end. In addition, the philosophical and normative underpinnings of the concept deserve closer scrutiny.

Participants began by considering whether human security represents a transitory policy change or a more long-term paradigm shift. A majority of participants agreed that 'paradigm shift', resulting from a profound set of changes in the international order, may be the more accurate way to conceptualize human security. This paradigm shift was described alternatively in terms of changing perceptions of what constitutes the main threats to security (from war and interstate conflict to environmental threats, drug smuggling, epidemic disease, etc.), changes in the political context of the post- Cold War world (including globalization, the much heralded international 'victory' of liberal democracy, the search for a new mandate for the UN) or the impact of the weakening nature of the nation-state to adequately respond to these changes.

Some argued that even if one accepted that human security is a paradigm shift, it is, nonetheless, too broad and vague a concept to be meaningful for policy makers, as it has come to entail such a wide range of different threats on the one hand, while prescribing a diverse and sometimes incompatible set of policy solutions to resolve them on the other. Moreover, it was argued, that in practice, human security is too amorphous to implement successfully, particularly in the days of dwindling public dollars. If human security is taken to be a 'grab bag' of either new threats or 'new goods', it becomes so elastic and beyond fiscal reach as to lose any utility as a principle for Canadian foreign policy.

Consensus developed during the day that human security should not be seen as either a particular set of threats, or as a substantive package of goods which can be applied uniformly and universally. Rather human security could be considered as a new *lens*, which if taken seriously, profoundly transforms the foreign policy landscape. In applying this lens, whether to initiate new global initiatives (like treaties on small arms or child soldiers), or more modestly, as a new way of looking at existing bilateral relations in a given country, multilateral institutions, or on the ground aid dollars and contracts, Canadian foreign policy makers should ask themselves, what is the best allocation of money to secure the lives and livelihoods of people and their communities, *in this particular context and at this particular time*. Human security could thus mean both incremental as well as large-scale visionary change. The specific mix of items and the agenda followed will differ in different contexts but the lens (which ensures human security is not only visible, but paramount) remains the same.

There may be dangers inherent in such a selective, 'pick and mix' definition, some of which are suggested below. The most obvious is the question of consistency between different responses to situations of human insecurity. Would widely varying responses to abuses of human rights, for example, undermine Canada's commitment to human security abroad? Secondly, there is the potential tendency of calling every policy initiative a support for human security. Thus, existing programs are simply sold in the new language of 'human security'.