Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI)
Oxford Department of International Development
University of Oxford

OPHI RESEARCH IN PROGRESS SERIES 68a

Resilient Human Development: Advancing Human Development amidst Shocks and Crises

Sabina Alkire*

September 2025

Abstract
This paper introduces the concept of Resilient Human Development, a framework that adapts the human development approach to today's reality of recurring, overlapping crises and interlinked stressors—climate, economic, political, and social shocks. It is the first background paper of the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Regional Human Development Report 2025. Building on Amartya Sen and Mahbub ul Haq's vision of human development, the paper argues that resilience is essential for safeguarding and expanding people's capabilities and agency in uncertain times. It emphasizes that development must now explicitly account for shocks and crises, ensuring that individuals and communities can not only withstand disruptions but also rebuild and flourish afterward. Resilient Human Development integrates three complementary ideas: the forward-looking vision of human development, the protective dimension of human security, and the active role of human agency. It recognizes that resilience is not only about absorbing shocks but also about adaptation, recovery, and transformation. The paper calls for proactive investments in prevention—such as disaster-resistant infrastructure, stronger health systems, and empowered local communities—while balancing trade-offs in resource allocation. Ultimately, it provides a conceptual and practical framework for advancing human progress in turbulent times, offering a pathway for people and institutions to rebound from adversity and sustain long-term flourishing.

Keywords: Resilient human development, resilience, Latin America and the Caribbean, capabilities, shocks, crises, flourishing.

JEL classification: O15, Q54, O54.

Acknowledgements:
I am grateful to Azul Fourcade for fantastic research assistance including assembling the appendices, to Aastha Mohaparte for research assistance, and to Michelle Muschett, Almudena

* Professor of Poverty and Human Development and Director of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), University of Oxford. sabina.alkire@qeh.ox.ac.uk.

Fernandez and others in UNDP LAC for very helpful comments and suggestions. All errors remain my own.

This paper was first published in 2025 as UNDP LAC Working Paper No. 41.

Funding information: This paper was funded by UNDP LAC, project number: 116730, project title: Acelerando el Progreso de los ODS en América Latina y el Caribe.

Citation: Alkire, S. (2025). 'Resilient human development: Advancing human development amidst shocks and crises', OPHI Research in Progress 68a, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), University of Oxford.

1. Introduction

In the prologue to the 2019 *Global Sustainable Development Report*, Gro Harlem Brundtland, the former Prime Minister of Norway, remarks that "[o]ur global ship is currently tossing and turning through stormy and dangerous waters."[1] In some sense, danger is nothing new. The *Kesh Temple Hymn*¸ one of the oldest surviving human writings from 2600 BC, mentions vipers, a lion and storms – which posed serious threats to the (much smaller) human communities, as did violence and hunger. But three things are new: i) the scope and complexity of overlapping crises and how deeply entangled our crises are, ii) the profound uncertainty of how and when shocks might unfold, and iii) the powerful role of human activity in creating calamities as well as, potentially, in preventing or mitigating them. Furthermore, while 40 years ago there was but one cataclysmic scenario, nuclear war, in the present-day, manifold scenarios endanger life as we know it. Much has been written on polycrises, their nature composition and potential magnitude, and will not be repeated here. This paper seeks to define resilience in the context of and in the processes of human development.

The novelty in our threat horizon calls for a necessary adjustment of our objective regarding human development as people and societies. The word for that adjustment is 'resilience', which essentially nurtures the individual and collective ability to create or creatively reconstruct valuable lives in shifting contexts.

When the concept of human development was articulated in 1990 by Amartya Sen and Mahbub ul Haq,[2] it offered a fresh and necessary alternative to a focus on economic growth or welfare maximization as the primary objective of development. As the human development approach became more embedded, it articulated its overlaps and value-added in comparison with other concepts such as human rights,[3] happiness[4] and human security.[5] Advancing human development required studying and articulating its implications for public actions pertaining to gender,[6]

[1] United Nations 2019, xvi.
[2] UNDP HDR, 1990.
[3] UNDP HDR, 2020.
[4] Sen 2009, Ch 11, Zamagni 2012 (mimeo).
[5] UN Human Security Commission. 2003; UNDP, 1994, 2014, 2022.
[6] UNDP 1995, 2016, 2023.

participation,[7] the environment,[8] inequalities,[9] migration,[10] democratic practice,[11] and components of development such as health, work,[12] technology,[13] water[14] and education.[15] Human development did not reject growth but called for inclusive growth,[16] created in part by dynamic investments in human capabilities,[17] which have instrumental as well as intrinsic value. Thus, the concept of human development has always risen to the challenge of wrestling with practical issues of the day and re-articulating its core principles as contexts shift. And an impending challenge is to address the need for resilience.

For, indeed, contexts have shifted. In 2024, the stage is again different – globally and in Latin America and the Caribbean. Climate crises and environmental stresses are visible and rising. Economic growth has slowed, including in Latin America. Democracies face a tumultuous period with a rise of populism and a dismantling of rule of law. Conflicts are more pervasive than in many years; far fewer are resolved, and the number of battle deaths is at a tragic high. New technologies, social media and AI are changing information flows, elections, labour markets and productive processes faster than in any previous generation. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how devastating pandemics could be – and recognized how probable future ones are. Globally, tensions are poised to escalate in East Asia or the Middle East or Europe, prompting increased military spending at the cost of other expenditure – and without any guarantee of avoiding nuclear warfare. This happens at a time when the United Nations and international institutions that work ceaselessly to balance and quell some of the worst calamities are internally challenged, externally precarious and financially underequipped. The surge of polycrises is accompanied by endemic uncertainty as to their timing and depth, and of their resolution in addition to their personal impacts on mental and physical health, trust, family and community relationships, and political engagement.

What these times require is a stalwart, serious, realistic and powerful commitment to advancing and protecting human capabilities and agency. This includes people's and institutions' ability to imaginatively recreate flourishing in changed and disrupted contexts. The focus remains on the

[7] UNDP 1993, 2007/8, 2013, 2016, 2021/22.
[8] UNDP 1998, 2007/2008, 2011, 2020.
[9] UNDP 2006, 2011, 2013, 2016, 2019.
[10] UNDP 2009.
[11] UNDP 2002, 2024.
[12] UNDP 2015.
[13] UNDP 2001.
[14] UNDP, 2006.
[15] UNDP, 1997, 2003, 2010, 2014.
[16] UNDP 1996.
[17] UNDP 1991, 2001, 2024.

fundamental aim of human development, which is to expand and sustain people's valuable capabilities on a shared planet, recognizing people to be both the drivers and beneficiaries of change. Yet human development must now be promulgated while explicitly recognizing the wider context of dangerous shocks and uncertainties, hence the need to build in human security which protects the vital core such gains. It must also explicitly recognize the need to invest in the agency and the psychological and social resilience in people and communities, so they can regroup and collaborate when calamities strike.

2. Human Development

The three most recent global *Human Development Reports* have moved to acknowledge this context. The 2020 *Human Development Report* focused on the Anthropocene, recognizing the strain on our planet and the need to transform how we live, work and cooperate in order to ease planetary pressures. The 2021/2022 *Human Development Report* profiled uncertainties immediately after defining human development: "The goal of human development is to help people lead lives they value by expanding their capabilities, which go beyond wellbeing achievements to include agency and freedoms. If uncertainty forms storm clouds over all aspects of human development, then it hurls lightning bolts at the idea of agency. *It can disempower... Uncertainty can turn up the heat on a toxic brew."* The 2023/2024 *Human Development Report* "starts to mould what could be called an emancipatory vision for development that shines Sen's notion of development as freedom on the grand challenge of our time: *people and planet in joint crisis*. This take on development centres the expansion of agency at the intersection of human development, human rights and sustainability. Its goal is the expansion of freedoms in their many forms".

Building on such analyses, the concept of resilience joins together i) the more expansive and sustainable concept of human development, ii) the more protected safeguarding notion of human security and iii) the renewed focus on human agency and determined creativity that is required to re-make human development in changing times. Before defining resilience, let us recall how human security and agency extend human development concepts.

3. Human Security

Thirty years ago the 1994 UNDP *Human Development Report* focused on human security. It argued that human security was universal, relevant to people everywhere. Its components are interdependent: famine, pollution and terrorism all cross borders. Human security is "easier to ensure through early prevention than later intervention" – and less costly. Furthermore, it is

people-centred, focused on "freedom from fear and freedom from want." The Report defined human security as safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression, along with protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in jobs, homes or communities. But it observed that it is easier to detect it by example: "In the final analysis, human security is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, a job that was not cut, an ethnic tension that did not explode in violence, a dissident who was not silenced" (1994: 21–22). Human beings need to do more than survive: they need to live lives of dignity.

Nearly 10 years later, the 2003 *Commission on Human Security* retained the people-centred focus of human development and clarified how human security concentrated attention on threats from both poverty and violence. The Report defined the objective of human security as "to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment." Human security "means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations." Human security is realized by joint strategies of *protection* – crafting institutions that protect and advance human security – and *empowerment* – enabling people to act on their own behalf.

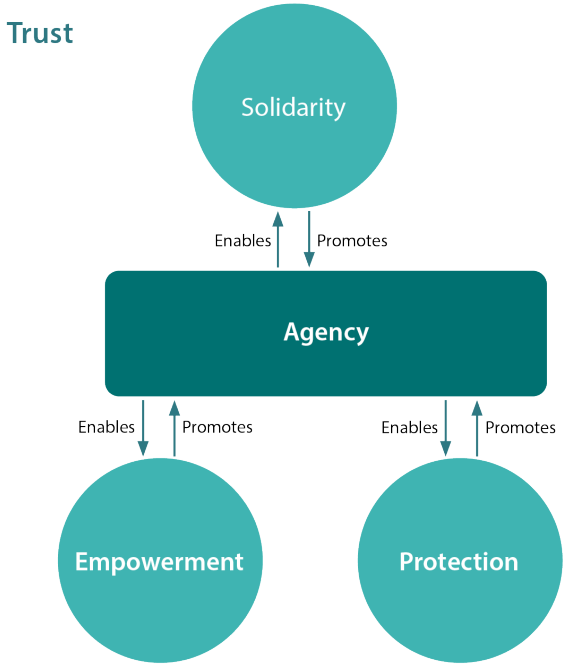
The Sen-Ogata report *Human Security Now* clarified the relationship between human development and human security, and we provide that distinction in some length because this will help to clarify how resilience complements both. Human development has "a powerfully buoyant quality, since it is concerned with progress and augmentation. It is out to conquer fresh territory on behalf of enhancing human lives and is far too upbeat to focus on rearguard actions needed to secure what has to be safeguarded." In contrast, "Human Security fruitfully supplements the expansionist perspective of human development by directly paying attention to what are sometimes called 'downside risks'. The insecurities that threaten human survival or the safety of daily life, or imperil the natural dignity of men and women, or expose human beings to the uncertainty of disease and pestilence, or subject vulnerable people to abrupt penury related to economic downturns demand that special attention be paid to the dangers of sudden deprivation. Human security demands protection from these dangers and the empowerment of people so that they can cope with – and when possible, overcome – these hazards."

The 2014 *Human Development Report* entitled *Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience* revisits the concept of human security, emphasizing vulnerability and dignity even more. The report stressed the need to address vulnerability across the life cycle – childhood, adulthood and older ages – because capabilities in preceding stages matter: capabilities "accumulate

over an individual's lifetime and have to be nurtured and maintained; otherwise they can stagnate and even decline" (2014, p 3).

The 2022 UNDP *Special Report on Human Security* observed that "people's sense of safety and security is at a low." It thus probed the current threats, both ancient and unprecedented, including wars, digital technologies and healthcare systems' ability to navigate challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic – and added freedom from anxiety (especially in rich countries) to earlier human security concerns for freedom from fear and freedom from want. As Figure 1 below shows, the 2022 report also added an emphasis on solidarity to the 2003 focus on empowerment and protection. Moreover, when the 2023/24 *Human Development Report* touched on human security, its definition was brief and to the point: "Human security is a multidimensional concept that pertains to people being free from fear, want and indignity." (p 153).

Figure 1. 2022 Report Enriching Human Security for the Anthropocene



Source: Human Development Report Office.

4. Agency and Values

The objective of development, Sen argues, is to expand capabilities and to support people's agency. Capabilities are people's real freedoms to enjoy valuable lives – to enjoy beings and doings that they value and have reason to value. Capabilities, like budget sets, convey information on the range of valuable opportunities that a person enjoys. Alongside opportunity freedoms, Sen's capability approach views all people, including vulnerable people, as active agents. Agency is an assessment

of "what a person can do in line with his or her conception of the good."[18] People who enjoy high levels of agency are engaged in actions that are congruent with their values. Because of the central importance of agency "people have to be seen... as being actively involved – given the opportunity – in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive recipients of the fruits of cunning development programs."[19] This requires attention not only to human development itself but also to the processes by which those outcomes are attained, in particular the extent to which people, especially disadvantaged and marginalized groups, are able to engage actively and freely. It is worth noting that Sen's concept of agency is far broader than most uses in development, as well as being narrower in one important aspect. First, agency is exercised with respect to multiple goals – and people can have agency in some goals while lacking it in others. Second, agency does not entail direct control – in many important circumstances agency is collective, democratic, contested or shared. Third, agency may focus on advancing one's own well-being, but it may also encompass other-regarding goals that seek to expand the capabilities of other people/beings or support the planet. Fourth, Sen restricts his use of the term 'agency' to advancing objectives that a person values and has reason to value, and therefore only recognizes human action to be agency when it advances constructive ends.[20]

Building on Sen's work, the 2020 Human Development Report clearly added the topic of 'values' to its traditional linkage to capabilities and agency, writing: "This time, the way forward is not only about expanding people's capabilities to lead lives they value—that is, expanding choices available to people." In addition, "[w]e must also carefully consider two other critical dimensions of human development: agency (that is, the ability to participate in decision-making and to make one's desired choices) and values (that is, the choices that are most desired), with special attention to our interactions with nature, to our stewardship of the planet." All three are needed if we are to countenance planetary limits: "Like a three-legged stool, capabilities, agency and values are inseparable in how we think about human development in the context of the Anthropocene. We cannot assume that expanding people's capabilities will automatically ease planetary pressures." But affecting agency and values cuts into topics that include and go beyond public policy. They involve incentives and regulations but also social norms – such as "enhancing equity, fostering innovation and instilling a sense of stewardship of nature."

[18] Sen 1985, p. 206.
[19] Sen 1999, p. 53.
[20] Alkire 2008 in *Arguments for a Better World*, Basu and Kanbur.

5. Resilient Human Development

Building on these overlapping concepts of human development, human security and agency, this paper crystallizes and defines a forward-looking concept of *Resilient Human Development* that can guide the regional report of Latin America and the Caribbean and may have relevance for other articulations of human development in other regions.

Resilient Human Development aims to enable people to enjoy valuable lives in terms of capability and agency in such a way that the impact of critical pervasive shocks on their lives is prevented or mitigated, and that people and communities, especially the most disadvantaged, can shape their lives and, if adversity strikes, in time rebound and flourish again.

Therefore, like human development, resilient human development seeks to enable people to lead lives they value by expanding their capabilities and agency. Going beyond this, human development is resilient when people's capabilities are safeguarded such that most shocks are prevented or mitigated, and people are able to recreate valuable lives after shocks. The ultimate unit of ethical interest is the person and the ultimate direction of movement is towards flourishing.

Like human security, resilience recognizes and proactively seeks to prevent or minimize critical pervasive shocks that affect the 'vital core' of human life. Resilience also considers additional shocks that may shrink capabilities or reverse human development – and it invests in expanding capabilities and agency, including the agency to remodel and recreate life after calamity.

In supporting agency and values, resilience requires cultivating mental and psychological health as well as the capability to live long and healthy lives. It particularly singles out the ways that agency can shore up a dynamic balance in rough waters: it recognizes the cross-cutting personal and societal value of skills like meaningful relationships and activities and of productive innovative work, recovery from trauma and tragedy, reconciliation and having hope for a better future.

A simple illustration may be useful. A house is not earthquake resistant if at the smallest tremor it tumbles down. An earthquake-resilient house, even if simply built, will shake and shudder but not fall. A health system is not resilient if when a sudden outbreak overloads it, its systems fail, its employees leave, and it simply shuts down and stands vacant – whereas in a resilient system the community gathers to extend its space and beds; its employees rally and support each other; volunteers arrive and are trained and managed; an alarm sounds for external or international backup, and teams organize themselves to absorb such support when it comes. As the surge of cases diminishes, volunteers are thanked; excellent actions from all sides are acknowledged; appropriate rest and support, including psychosocial support, are awarded to staff for recovery;

any new facilities are creatively repurposed; and preparations for future shocks are institutionalized, so the health system stands stronger going forward.

6. Other Definitions of Resilience

Definitions of resilience are multitudinous. Table 1 sets forth 46 definitions that give a sense of the field and its variations; Rodrigo (2024, mimeo) adds to these definitions that build on Holling (1973) in the sciences. Appendix 1 chronologically summarizes UN and international agency reports on resilience that have been published since the 2009 UNDP Report on Mercosur (2009–10). What conceptual elements do these definitions and analyses reverberate with or add?

Most definitions of resilience include one of a number of possible components:

- Clarify the **unit** – individual, household, community, organization, institution, system, country
- Clarify the steady and ongoing aim (in our case, **human development**) amidst shocks
- Speak of resilience as an **ability** to x – (which includes learning or upgrading skills to x)
- Recognize the existence of potential **threats** of various kinds
- Name the **actions** that are undertaken (prevent, adapt, mitigate, recover)
- Name the **time frame** with respect to the calamities (before, during or after the threat, including the long term)
- Identify **what stays the same** (structure, function, identity, feedback)
- Identify **what changes**
- Stress the **nature of the response** (timely, efficient)

Unit

Some authors do not define the focal unit. Many name several possible units: *people, households, communities, organizations, societies, systems, cities, countries or the planet*. Some focus solely on one unit from this list. For example, Adgar (2000) focuses on communities as the unit of interest and their ability to "withstand external shocks."

Our resilient human development perspective does take a view: the ultimate unit of ethical interest is the individual person – a view that is aligned with human rights. Yet this is importantly modified in two ways. First, advancing the intrinsically valuable outcome of people's flourishing requires actions that promote resilient human development to be undertaken by other units: from

households to communities to institutions, political actors, nations and international institutions. Resilience requires human cooperation, collaboration and healthy relationships – which, in the best instances, these also embody. Second, a range of personal and societal relationships themselves can be of intrinsic value to persons. In that sense, much in the same way as occurs for human development, there is a clear ultimate unit of moral concern – the person and their fulfilment (including in intrinsically valued relational terms) – and a panoply of units whose actions are required to advance people's resilient human development.

Aim of resilience

Many definitions of resilience frame their aim in relation to elements of human development, human security and/or agency. Brown and Westaway (2011) observe that definitions vary across fields, observing that, as regards environmental and socio-ecological systems, resilience is "a synonym for 'adaptive capacity'" (p 323), whereas Jha et al. (2013) define infrastructural resilience, institutional resilience, economic resilience and social resilience differently. Many definitions mainly focus on recovering a previous status quo – for example in the face of disasters, the capacity to "cope with and recover from direct damages" (Hallegatte et al. 2020, 42). DFID (2011, 6) went a step further framing resilience to conflicts and disasters as aiming to maintain or transform living standards without compromising long-term prospects discussed further below under time frames. Folke (2016) also stresses not only the "capacity to persist in the face of change" but also "to continue to develop with ever changing environments" – a helpfully forward-looking and agency-engaged aspect.

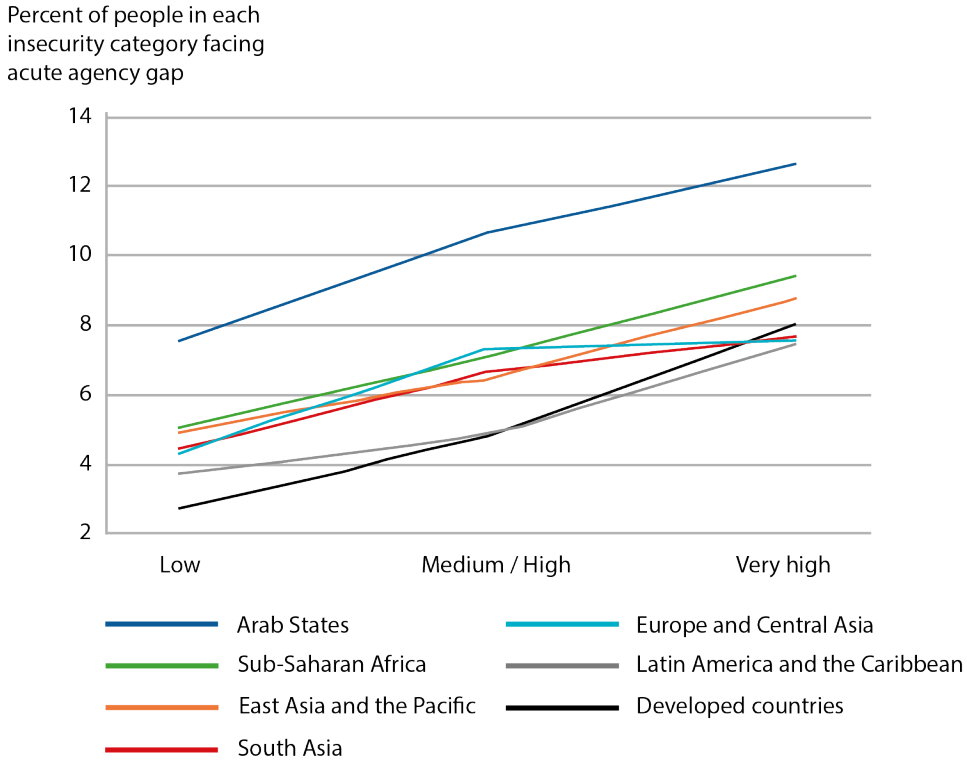
Some authors such as Crawford et al. (2005) recognize resilience as a way of evading poverty. Relatedly, Barrett and Constas (2014) write of the "capacity to avoid poverty in the face of various stressors and in the wake of myriad shocks," and Berkes (2007) calls resilience the "flip side of vulnerability." In some settings, then, building resilience can also prevent poverty – which is part, although not all, of resilient human development.

Resilience clearly involves external policies, but a notable subset of definitions also observe that people's inherent personalities can be more or less inclined towards resilience. They single out cultivating psychological resilience to navigate and recover from life's trials as an important area of policy. Foster observes that resilience also regards "a set of capacities, behaviors and external resources one can develop and draw upon to deal with difficult challenges" (2006, 6–7). Bahadur and Thornton (2015) write of "bouncing back better" because people learn from disturbances and take action based on that learning. This echoes in the writings of Brown and Westway (2011) and of Crawford, Wright and Masten (2005), who search for processes of "positive adaptation and

development in the context of adversity and disadvantage." Thus, resilience encompasses an 'interior' angle as well as an institutional one.

Interestingly, the interior field may be particularly apposite when it comes to unlocking human agency. The 2023/24 UNDP *Human Development Report* observed that persons who feel more insecure trust others less; they tend to be on the extremes of the political spectrum (in either direction). A common proxy measurement for agency is a person's perception of being in control of one's life. As Figure 2 below shows, Latin America has a lower acute agency gap as compared to other regions, but higher perceived insecurity raises the agency gap (UNDP 2023/24 Ch 5). As summarized in the report's findings, "Human insecurity constrains agency when people fear participating in social life or using public spaces and deliberation mechanisms without shame" (p. 153).

Figure 2. The higher the perceived human insecurity, the lower the sense of control over one's own life



Note: Perceived Human insecurity is measured as "low," "medium and high" and "very high," using weights across countries, and is based on the index described in annex 1.2 of UNDP (2022d). Acute agency gap measures the share of the population reporting feeling no or very little control over their lives (options 1-3 on a 1-10 scale).

Source: Human Development Report Office based on the latest available data from wave 6 (2010-2014) and wave 7 (2017-2022) of the World Values Survey (Inglehart and others 2022).

In our definition, resilient human development aims to continue to advance human security, human development and human agency (including its inner psychological drivers). In that sense,

the focus on protection, on expanding capabilities, and on agency are unchanged; what has changed is 'how' to build resilience given the new challenges.

Actions (ability to ___). Most definitions articulate several actions that define resilient units or systems. A classic type is offered by the International Panel on Climate Change (2012): "The ability of a system and its component parts to anticipate, absorb, accommodate, or recover from the effects of a hazardous event in a timely and efficient manner, including through ensuring the preservation, restoration, or improvement of its essential basic structures and functions." This definition and similar definitions include actions such as *anticipate, absorb, accommodate* or *recover from* shocks or calamities – to which other definitions add actions such as *resist, prevent, prepare for, mitigate, respond to, cope, adapt, manage, transform, maintain, withstand, reorganize, counteract, learn from and adjust to.* It is clear that these actions may be ongoing or may be temporally engaged before, during and after the shock(s).

It may be important to stress that the concept of resilience goes beyond the itemization of threats and risks by mapping a multidimensional, multi-level response to the polycrises of our day. It surpasses mere mitigation, because it also encompasses adaptation, change and transformation (Yang et al. 2024). It goes beyond a mere diagnosis of vulnerability by charting strategies to implement when managing recognized vulnerabilities when crises strike.

What stays the same. Some definitions clarify what has to stay the same, what is likely to change and what may need to be re-made in new contexts. For example, the IPCC definition above clarified that what needs to be preserved, restored or improved are the "essential basic structures and functions" of a *system*. Others name core attributes of individuals, people, households, groups, a community, country, society or civilization that in their view are to be preserved, restored or improved. Mathews et al. (2021) focuses on "interconnected social, economic and ecological systems" (cf. UNDRR 2023). Wilson (2013, 298) is perhaps the most ambitious, arguing that systems should "retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks."

We take the view also profiled by UNISDR (2004) and UNDP (2020), which says that resilience not only enables risks to be navigated but also maintains "an acceptable level of functioning."

What changes. What changes is often soft-pedalled or described in general, perhaps because the emphasis is on preventing or minimizing traumas of destruction, loss of life and loss of procedures and institutions, and also because in tragic circumstances, some things do change despite our best efforts. Manyena (2006) observed that disaster resilience may require "modifying non-essential traits."

In the case of resilient human development, the definition does not specify what stays the same or what changes because these are aspirational, and priorities vary across contexts. So, in a sense, these are already covered under the 'aims' of human development, security and agency. But this conversation does add a needed emphasis, which is to ascertain, when building resilience, what priorities different communities determine to be the 'core' or 'essential' features (acceptable levels of functioning) of people that are to be protected with utmost care, as these will vary but are vital to identify.

Time frame. While a surprising collection of definitions do not discuss the temporal element, others emphasize the need for ex-ante preparation or for quick responses. For example, Mitchell and Harris (2012, 2) write that the recovery should be "in a timely and efficient manner." UNDP (2014) focused on the need to think about people's choices "now and in the future" – so as not to respond in a way that would curtail future human development. WFP (2014) instead focused on the duration of the effect of shocks, calling resilience the capacity to ensure that shocks "do not have long-lasting adverse development consequences."

As mentioned previously, UK Department for International Development report (DFID 2011) focused on resilience to disaster, defining this as "the ability of countries, communities, and households to manage change... in the face of shocks or stresses... *without compromising their long-term prospects*". This eye for the long term brings to mind the Brundtland Commission and Amartya Sen's reformulation of their objective. Sen wrote, "we can see 'sustainable development' as development that promotes the capabilities of present people without compromising capabilities of future generations."[21]

In our view, like human security, resilient human development recognizes the need to invest in prevention – as difficult as that is to mobilize – and preparation, in order for responses to be timely and efficient. It also definitely includes a focus on not compromising the capabilities of future generations.

We might assemble this discussion into a slightly fuller statement of Resilient Human Development:

> **Resilient human development** aims to enable people to enjoy valuable lives in terms of capability and agency in such a way that the impact of critical pervasive shocks on their lives is prevented or mitigated, and that people and communities, especially the most disadvan-

[21] Sen 2013, p 11.

taged, can shape valuable dignified lives and, if adversity strikes, rebound and flourish in time.

Resilient human development combines the forward-looking vision of sustainable human development with the soberly preventative and protective aspect of human security, and invests in people's abilities to contribute as actors and agents.

Advancing resilient human development requires timely and effective action by people, communities, institutions, organizations, systems and countries to identify potential threats; prioritize core areas to protect; and work to prevent, anticipate, respond, adapt and mitigate the impact of unfolding crises, then to recover or rebuild for stronger futures, without compromising the ability of future generations to advance their own resilient human development.

7. Concluding remarks: Resilience and human development actions

The threats and crises that are striking Latin America and the Caribbean point to the vital and very operational need and value of focusing on resilient human development. The central policy recognition is this: certain types of resilience need to be built in advance. To give a simple example, affordable earthquake-proof and/or flood-resistant housing must be researched, advocated, funded and built. Health systems must be linked to external support, emergency scenarios must be rehearsed, and for the most likely or generic cases, volunteers pre-identified and trained. Thus like human security, building resilient human development requires investment in prevention and mitigation systems, as well as in human agency, to accompany ongoing investment in improving human development outcomes.

Yet the current period in Latin America and the Caribbean is one of downcast growth, slashed international assistance, an impending growth of poverty, yet heightened crises and threats of additional crises. Hence there is a need, above all, for prioritization and efficiency. Preventative investments involve trade-offs with other preventative strategies and with investments in human development. And uncertainty – of whether a given threat will materialize and, if so, whether the prevention or response will work well – makes the planning process more complex.

Recognizing these unavoidable features, the present regional report, and this conceptual reflection to inform it, have sought to define the ideal response – resilient human development – as a concept that is apt for our day. In particular, where preventative strategies are already in place, and when the conceptual framework of resilient human development gives them a recognized seat at the table when planning and advancing human development, the tradeoffs can be understood and

rationally undertaken. Where these strategies are missing, resilient human development gives a framework for articulating their priority with reference to other priorities.

Table 1. Definitions of resilience in international development and social sciences

	Study / Author	Definition or concept of "resilience"
1.	Adger (2000)	"Social resilience is defined as the ability of communities to withstand external shocks to their social infrastructure" (Adger 2000, 361)
2.	Bahadur and Thornton (2015)	"'resilience' is about learning from disturbances and taking action based on that learning and then 'bouncing back better' so as to reduce vulnerability to the same disturbances"
3.	Barrett and Constas (2014)	Definitions: • Conceptual: "'development resilience' focuses on the stochastic dynamics of individual and collective human well-being, in particular the capacity to avoid and escape from unacceptable standards of living—'poverty', for short—over time and in the face of myriad stressors and shocks." (Barrett and Constas 2014, 14625). • Operational: "Development resilience is the capacity over time of a person, household or other aggregate unit to avoid poverty in the face of various stressors and in the wake of myriad shocks. If and only if that capacity is and remains high over time, then the unit is resilient." (Barrett and Constas 2014, 14626).
4.	Béné et al. (2014)	"Resilience is about the *capability* of individual, households or community members to adapt, to change, to anticipate, or to respond—in our case to shock and (future) uncertainty—is also recognising that resilience is about agency and about the ability for these people to make informed decision [*sic*] that have an effect on their own life." (Béné et al. 2014, 616).
5.	Berkes (2007)	"Resilience is the flip side of vulnerability, placing the emphasis on the ability of the linked social–ecological system to deal with the hazard and providing insights on what makes a system less vulnerable" (Berkes 2007, 292).
6.	Brown and Westaway (2011)	Definitions according to different fields: • Environmental change and socio-ecological systems: "Resilience as synonym to 'adaptive capacity'" (Brown and Westaway 2011, 323). • Human development: "dynamic process wherein individuals display positive adaptation despite experiences of significant adversity or trauma" (Brown and Westaway 2011, 326). • "Adaptive capacity can be seen as a meeting point between these knowledge domains, with related concepts of resilience, well-being, capacity, and capabilities informing a dynamic and nuanced view of agency in environmental change" (Brown and Westaway 2011, 337).
7.	Carpenter et al. (2001)	"Resilience is the magnitude of disturbance that can be tolerated before a socioecological system (SES) moves to a different region of state space controlled by a different set of processes."
8.	CEPAL (2021)	"Institutional resilience includes the capacity [of institutions] to deliver and improve results over time in a credible, legitimate and adaptive manner; [it also relates to] the capacity to manage shocks and changes affecting institutions, whether they are of external or internal origin." (CEPAL 2021, 48).
9.	Crawford, Wright, and Masten (2005, 355)	"The study of resilience is 'a search for knowledge about the processes that could account for positive adaptation and development in the context of adversity and disadvantage'" (cited in Ungar 2008, 21).
10.	Cutter et al. (2008)	"Resilience is the ability of a social system to respond and recover from disasters and includes those inherent conditions that allow the system to absorb impacts and cope with an event, as well as post-event, adaptive processes that facilitate the ability of the social system to re-organize, change, and learn in response to a threat." (Cutter et al. 2008, 599)
11.	DFID (2011)	"Disaster Resilience is the ability of countries, communities, and households to manage change, by maintaining or transforming living standards in the face of shocks or stresses – such as earthquakes, drought or violent conflict – without compromising their long-term prospects." (DFID 2011, 6).
12.	Duchek (2020)	"Organizational resilience as an organization's ability to anticipate potential threats, to cope effectively with adverse events, and to adapt to changing conditions."
13.	FAO and Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano (2021)	"The ability to prevent, anticipate, mitigate, respond to or recover from disasters and crises in a timely, efficient and sustainable manner, including the protection, restoration and enhancement of livelihood systems from threats affecting agriculture, nutrition, food security and food safety." (FAO and Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano 2021, 2).

14.	Folke (2016)	"Resilience is having the capacity to persist in the face of change, to continue to develop with ever changing environments."
15.	Foster (2006)	• "Resilience is not simply an inherent personal trait—although one can exhibit resilience—but also a set of capacities, behaviors and external resources one can develop and draw upon to deal with difficult challenges." (Foster 2006, 6–7). • "Regional resilience as the ability of a region to anticipate, prepare for, respond to and recover from a disturbance" (Foster 2006, 14).
16.	Hallegatte et al. (2020)	"Socioeconomic resilience is defined as a country's or population's ability to cope with and recover from direct damages caused by natural disasters." (Hallegatte et al. 2020, 42).
17.	Holling (1973)	"Resilience, that is a measure of the persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables" (Holling 1973, 14).
18.	International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2012)	"The ability of a system and its component parts to anticipate, absorb, accommodate, or recover from the effects of a hazardous event in a timely and efficient manner, including through ensuring the preservation, restoration, or improvement of its essential basic structures and functions."
19.	Jha et al. (2013)	"Components of Urban Disaster Resilience: • Infrastructural resilience refers to a reduction in the vulnerability of built structures, such as buildings and transportation systems. It also refers to sheltering capacity, health care facilities, the vulnerability of buildings to hazards, critical infrastructure, and the availability of roads for evacuations and post- disaster supply lines. • Infrastructural resilience also refers to a community's capacity for response and recovery. • Institutional resilience refers to the systems, governmental and nongovernmental, that administer a community. • Economic resilience refers to a community's economic diversity in such areas as employment, number of businesses, and their ability to function after a disaster. • Social resilience refers to the demographic profile of a community by sex, age, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, and other groupings, and the profile of its social capital." (Jha et al. 2013, 11).
20.	Lebel et al. (2006)	"Resilience is a measure of the amount of change a system can undergo and still retain the same controls on structure and function or remain in the same domain of attraction"
21.	Luthar et al. (2000)	"Resilience refers to a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity."
22.	Manyena (2006)	"Disaster resilience is the innate capacity of a vulnerable system, group, or civilization to adapt, survive, and reconstruct itself by modifying non-essential traits when faced with shock or stress."
23.	Masten (2001)	"Resilience refers to a class of phenomena characterized by good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development." (Masten 2001, 228).
24.	Mathews et al. (2021)	"The capacity of interconnected social, economic and ecological systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure."
25.	Mayunga (2007)	"Community disaster resilience is referred to as the capacity or ability of a community to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover quickly from impacts of disaster. This means that it is not only the measure of how quickly the community can recover from the disaster impacts, but also the ability to learn, cope with or adapt to hazards. Thus, resilient communities should be organized in such a way that the effects of a disaster are minimal and the recovery process is quick." (Mayunga 2007, 4).
26.	Mitchell and Harris (2012)	"The ability of a system and its component parts to anticipate, absorb, accommodate, or recover from the effects of a shock or stress in a timely and efficient manner." (Mitchell and Harris, 2).
27.	Nelson et al. (2007)	"The amount of change a system can undergo and still retain the same function and structure while maintaining options to develop" (Nelson et al. 2007, 396).
28.	Schipper and Langston (2015)	"Resilience is used to mean the condition of being able to survive during an adverse situation (such as domestic abuse or an earthquake) and/or to refer to the ability to recover from such an event" (Schipper and Langston 2015, 10).
29.	Standard Chartered, KPMG and UNDRR (2024)	"The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management" (Standard Chartered, KPMG and UNDRR 2024, 8)

30.	UNDP (2011)	A "country's ability to cope with or recover from a shock. That is, a country's resilience reflects its ability to counteract (quickly recover from) or withstand (absorb) the impact of a shock. The indicators used to assess a country's resilience typically include some measure of fiscal capacity, institutional strength, and level of social development." (UNDP 2011, 5).
31.	UNDP (2014)	• Human resilience: "ensuring that people's choices are robust, now and in the future, and enabling people to cope and adjust to adverse events." (UNDP 2014, 2). • "Resilience is about ensuring that state, community and global institutions work to empower and protect people" (UNDP 2014, 7).
32.	UNDP (2020)	"Resilience is the ability of individuals, households, communities, cities, institutions, systems and societies to prevent, resist, absorb, adapt, respond and recover positively, efficiently and effectively when faced with a wide range of risks, while maintaining an acceptable level of functioning without compromising long-term prospects for sustainable development, peace and security, human rights and well-being for all." (UNDP 2020, 11).
33.	UNDRR (2023)	Climate resilience: "the capacity of economic, social or ecological assets or systems to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the current and projected impacts of climate change, both direct and indirect, maintaining their basic structure and function" (UNDRR 2023, 12).
34.	Ungar (2008)	"I define resilience as follows: First, resilience is the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to resources that sustain well-being; Second, resilience is the capacity of individuals' physical and social ecologies to provide these resources; and third, resilience is the capacity of individuals and their families and communities to negotiate culturally meaningful ways for resources to be shared." (Ungar 2008, 22–23).
35.	UNHABITAT (nd)	"The measurable ability of any urban system, with its inhabitants, to maintain continuity through all shocks and stresses, while positively adapting and transforming toward sustainability. Resilience is a catalyst for sustainable urban development. It ensures development gains are not lost when cities face shocks and urban residents can flourish in a safe environment while addressing major challenges such as climate change and rapid urbanisation."
36.	UNICEF, WFP, ST4N, MNF (2024)	Nutrition resilience: "capacities that enable multiple systems – food, health, water and sanitation, education, and social protection – to prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises, in ways that safeguard diets, services and practices, and contribute to equitable nutrition outcomes, with a focus on the most vulnerable" (UNICEF, WFP, ST4N, MNF 2024, 6– 7).
37.	UNISDR (2004)	"The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organising itself to increase this capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection and to improve risk reduction measures."
38.	UNISDR (2009)	"The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions." (UNISDR 2009, 10).
39.	UNISDR (2011)	"Resilience is the ability of a system, community, or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to, and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner."
40.	UNOCHA (2015)	"Resilience as the capacity to absorb, to adapt and to transform in the face of shocks and stressors. For the purpose of this [Resilience Context Analysis], resilience is viewed in terms of shocks and stressors contributing to food insecurity and malnutrition outcomes." (UNOCHA 2015, 13).
41.	USAID (2024)	"Resilience is the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth." "Put simply, resilience is the ability to protect and improve well-being despite shocks and stresses." (USAID 2024, 4).
42.	Wachs (2012)	Resilient children: "children who are doing substantially better than would be expected, given their level of risk exposure" (Wachs 2012, 152).
43.	WFP (2014)	• "Resilience is the capacity that ensures adverse stressors and shocks do not have long-lasting adverse development consequences." (WFP 2014, 6). • "Resilience as a capacity that prevents individuals, households, and communities from falling below a normatively defined level for a given developmental outcome (e.g., food security, poverty level, wellbeing)." (WFP 2014, 7).

44.	Whiteshield (2024)	"Resilience can be defined as the ability to face and recover from disruptions, regardless of their nature" (Whiteshield 2024, 17).
45.	Wilson (2013)	"Capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks" (Wilson 2013, 298).
46.	Yang et al. (2024)	• "resilience is now considered a strategy for prevention and preparedness" • "an inquiry emerges over whether resilience is essentially a rebranding of the previously prevalent notion of mitigation. However, the discussion concludes that resilience is not just a rebranding; it also encompasses adaptation, change, transformation, and mitigation." • "In the case of natural hazards, resilience is a critical tool for stimulating a socio-ecological system to protect, save, and lessen community vulnerability"

References

Adger, W.N. (2000). "Social and Ecological Resilience: Are They Related?" *Progress in Human Geography* 24 (3), 347–364.

Bahadur, A. and Thornton, H. (2015). "Analysing Urban Resilience: A Reality Check for a Fledgling Canon," *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development*.

Barrett, C.B. and Constas, M.A. (2014). "Toward a Theory of Resilience for International Development Applications," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), 111 (40), 14625–14630.

Béne, A.N., Davies, M., Ulrichs, M., and Godfrey-Wood, R. (2014). "Review Article: Resilience, Poverty and Development." *Journal of International Development* 26, 598–623.

Berkes, F. (2007). Understanding Uncertainty and Reducing Vulnerability: Lessons from Resilience Thinking, *Natural Hazards* 41: 283–295.

Brown, K. and Westaway, E. (2011). Agency, Capacity, and Resilience to Environmental Change: Lessons from Human Development, Well-Being, and Disasters, *Annual Review on of Environment and Resources* 36, 321–342.

Carpenter, S., Walker, B., Anderies, J.M., and Abel, N. (2001). "From Metaphor to Measurement: Resilience of What to What?" *Eccosystems* 4: 765–781.

Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL) (2021). Resilient institutions for a transformative post-pandemic recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean: Inputs for discussion (LC/CRP.18/3), Santiago, 2021.

Crawford, E., Wright, M.O., and Masten, A. (2005). "Resilience and Spirituality in Youth." In E.C. Roehlkepartain, P.E. King, L. Wagener, and P.L. Benson (Eds.), The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence (pp.355–70). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cutter, S. L., Barnes, L., Berry, M., Burton, C., Evans, E., Tate, E., Webb, J. (2008). "A Place-based Model for Understanding Community Resilience to Natural Disasters," *Global Environmental Change* 18, 598–606.

DFID (2011). Defining Disaster Resilience. A DFID Approach Paper. London: Department of International Development.

Duchek, S. (2020). "Organizational Resilience: a Capability-based Conceptualization," *Business Research*, vol. 13, No. 1, Berlín, Springer, 2020.

FAO and Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano. (2021). Criterios e indicadores sobre resiliencia climática en el desarrollo e implementación de programas de desarrollo agrícola rural. Quito.

Folke, C. (2016). Resilience (Republished,) Ecology and Society, Vol. 21, No. 4.

Foster, K.A. (2006). A Case Study Approach to Understanding Regional Resilience, Working Paper 2007–08, Institute of Urban and Regional Development, Macarthur Foundation Research Network on Building Resilient Regions, Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, Fort Worth, Texas November 9–12, 2006.

Hallegatte S., Rentschler, J. and Rozenberg, J. (2020). Adaptation Principles—A Guide for Designing Strategies for Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Holling C.S. (1973). Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems. Annu Rev Ecol Syst 4: 1–23.

IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2012). Glossary of Terms. In: Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation [Field, C.B., V. Barros, T.F. Stocker, D. Qin, D.J. Dokken, K.L. Ebi, M.D. Mastrandrea, K.J. Mach, G.-K. Plattner, S.K. Allen, M. Tignor, and P.M. Midgley (eds.)]. A Special Report of Working Groups I and II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, and New York, NY, USA, pp. 555–564.

Jha, A.K., Miner, T.W., and Stanton-Geddes, Z. (eds.) (2013). Building Urban Resilience: Principles, Tools, and Practice, Directions in Development, Washington, D.C., World Bank.

Lebel, L., Anderies, J.M., Campbell, B., Folke, C., Hatfield- Dodds, S., Hughes, T. P., and Wilson, J. (2006). Governance and the Capacity to Manage Resilience in Regional Social- Ecological Systems, Ecology and Society, Vol. 11, No. 1.

Luthar, S.S., Cicchetti, D., Becker, B. (2000). The Construct of Resilience: A critical Evaluation and Guidelines for Future Work. Child Development, 71(3), 543–562.

Manyena, S.B. (2006). The Concept of Resilience Revisited. Disasters, 30, pp. 434–450.

Masten, A.S. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience Processes in Development. American Psychologist, 56(3), 227–238.

Mathews, J.B. (2021). "Annex VII: Glossary" in Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, V. Masson- Delmotte and others, eds. (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Mayunga, J.S. (2007). Understanding and Applying the Concept of Community Disaster Resilience: A Capital-Based Approach, USA.

Mitchell T. Harris, K. (2012). Resilience, a Risk Management Approach. Overseas Development Institute: Background note, London.

Nelson, D.R., Anger, W.N., Brown, K. (2007). Adaptation to Environmental Change: Contributions of a Resilience Framework, Annual Review of Environment and Resources 32: 395–419.

Schipper, L. and Langston, L. (2015). "A Comparative Overview of Resilience Measurement Frameworks: Analyzing Indicators and Approaches." ODI, Working paper 422.

Sen, A.K. (2013). "The Ends and Means of Sustainability" Journal of Human Development and Capabilities. Vol. 14, No. 1, 6–20.

Standard Chartered, KPMG and UNDRR (2024). Guide for Adaptation and Resilience Finance, April 2024.

UNDP (2011). Human Development Report 2011. Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

UNDP (2009). Innovar para incluir : jóvenes y desarrollo humano: informe sobre desarrollo humano para Mercosur. (1a ed.) Buenos Aires : Libros del Zorzal: Programa Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo – PNUD, 2009. 360 p.; 30x21 cm. ISBN 978- 987-599-151-4

UNDP (2011). Towards Human Resilience: Sustaining MDG Progress in an age of economic uncertainty.

UNDP (2013). Human Development Report 2013. The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

UNDP (2013). Regional Human Development Report 2013–2014 Citizen Security with a Human Face: Evidence and Proposals for Latin America. Summary.

UNDP (2014). Human Development Report 2014 - Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

UNDP (2015). Human Development Report 2015. Work for Human Development. New York: United N2ations Development Programme.

UNDP (2016). Human Development Report 2016. Human Development for Everyone. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

UNDP (2017). Regional Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean: Update Policy Note Applying PovRisk Tool to 15 Countries in Latin America. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

UNDP (2020). UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies.

UNDP (1991). Human Development Report 1991: Financing Human Development. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

UNDP (1992). *Human Development Report 1992: Global Dimensions of Human Development*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

UNDP (1993). *Human Development Report 1993: People's Participation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

UNDP (1994). *Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

UNDP (1995). *Human Development Report 1995: Gender and Human Development* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

UNDP (1996). *Human Development Report 1996: Economic Growth and Human Development* New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

UNDP (1998). *Human Development Report 1998: Consumption for Human Development*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

UNDP (1999). *Human Development Report 1999: Globalization with a Human Face* New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

UNDP (2000). *Human Development Report 2000: Human Rights and Human Development*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

UNDP (2000). *Human Development Report 2001: Making New Technologies Work for Human Development* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

UNDP (2002). *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

UNDP (2003). *Human Development Report 2003: Millennium Development Goals: A Compact among Nations to End Human Poverty* New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

UNDP (2004). *Human Development Report 2004: Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World*. New York: Hoechstetter Printing Co., 2004.

UNDP (2005). *Human Development Report 2005: International Cooperation at a Crossroads: Aid, Trade and Security in an Unequal World*. New York: Hoechstetter Printing Co., 2005.

UNDP (2006). *Human Development Report 2006: Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis*. New York: Palgrave, 2006.

UNDP (2008). *Human Development Report 2007/2008: Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World* New York: Palgrave, 2008.

UNDP (2009). *Human Development Report 2009: Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*. New York: Palgrave, 2009.

UNDP (2010). *Human Development Report 2010: The True Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development. 20th Anniversary Edition*. New York, 2010.

UNDP (2019). *Human Development Report 2019: Beyond Income, Beyond Averages, Beyond Today - Inequalities in Human Development in the 21st Century,* UN, New York.

UNDP (2020). *Human Development Report 2020: The Next Frontier - Human Development and the Anthropocene*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

UNDP (2022). *2022 Special Report on Human Security*. New York.

UNDP (2022). *Human Development Report 2021/2022: Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives - Shaping our Future in a Transforming World*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

UNDP (2023). *The paths to equal: Twin indices on women's empowerment and gender equality*. New York.

UNDP (2024). *Human Development Report 2023/2024: Breaking the gridlock: Reimagining Cooperation in a polarised world*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

UNDP (1990). *Human Development Report 1990: Concept and Measurement of Human Development*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

UNDP (1997). *Human Development Report 1997: Human De- velopment to Eradicate Poverty*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

UNDRR (2023). Designing a Climate Resilience Classification Framework to Facilitate Investment in Climate Resilience through Capital Markets. UNDRR: Geneva, Switzerland.

UNESCO (2022). Inclusive and Resilient Societies: Equality, Sustainability and Efficiency.

Ungar, M. (2008). Putting Resilience Theory into Action: Five Principles for Intervention, in Liebenberg, L. and Ungar, M. (Eds.) Resilience in Action, 17–36.

UNHABITAT (nd) Resilience and Risk Reduction.

UNICEF, World Food Programme (WFP), Standing Together for Nutrition (ST4N), Micronutrient Forum (MNF) (2024). Global resilience report: Safeguarding the nutrition of vulnerable children, women, families and communities in the context of polycrisis. Washington, DC: MNF; 2024.

UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) (2004). Terminology: Basic terms of disaster risk reduction.

UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) (2009). UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction.

UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) (2011). Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction: Revealing Risk, Redefining Development. Geneva.

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). (2018). *Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty* (2018–2027). A/73/298.

United Nations. (2019). *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development.* New York.

UNOCHA (2015). Resilience Context Analysis: Resilience to Shocks that Impact Food Security and Nutrition in South Sudan, November 2015.

USAID (2024). 2024 Resilience Policy.

Wachs, T.D. (2012). "Poverty, Child Risk, and Resilience in Developing Countries," in Boyden, J. and Bourdillon, M. (Eds.) *Childhood Poverty: Multidisciplinary Approaches*, Palgrave Studies on Children and Development: 148–165.

WFP (2014). Resilience Measurement Principles: Toward an agenda for measurement design, Technical Series No. 1, FSIN- Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group, January 2014. (Consulted 21/08/2024).

Whiteshield (2024). Global Labour Resilience Index 2024. London, Whiteshield Partners.

Wilson, G.A. (2013). Community Resilience, Policy Corridors and the Policy Challenge, *Land Use Policy* 31, 298–310.

Yang, L., Sarker, N.I., and Firdaus, R. (2024). Disaster Resilience in Climate-Vulnerable Community Context: Conceptual analysis, *Ecological Indicators* 158.

Appendix. UN or international agencies' reports on resilience.

This appendix contains summaries excerpted from institutional publications on resilience.

UNDP (2009) Informe sobre desarrollo humano para Mercosur 2009–2010

Enhanced agency for the youth is key for human development. UNDP's (2009) report on human development for Mercosur focuses on both objective and subjective conditions for youth development, particularly analysing the structural weight of social exclusion and differentiation in dimensions such as education, TIC knowledge and access, labour and social protection. Observing that more than half of young people within Mercosur experience at least one deprivation, and that youth unemployment and labour informality rates are high, the report states that both social exclusion and multidimensional poverty are the most important social challenge to ensure youth's well- being and protagonism. These diverse objective conditions affect youth's subjective well-being, and their overall capabilities and agency. The report ends with a systematization of progress made and challenges to tackle among youth policies for the region.

UNDP (2011) Towards Human Resilience: Sustaining MDG Progress in an age of economic uncertainty

This report argues that developing economies are vulnerable to financial and economic shocks due to specific, structural conditions, which act as drivers of macro-economic vulnerability. Such vulnerability affects the sustainability of MDG progress via two principal channels: fiscal channels and economic growth channels. Both are critical from the perspective of sustaining MDG progress.

The importance of sustained economic growth for reducing income poverty has long been established, although the extent of poverty reduction in any given country depends on the nature of growth and its distributional impacts. In turn, reductions in income poverty are important for sustaining progress on other MDG targets. "Higher income can reduce undernourishment directly, lower barriers to basic needs – like education and health care – and facilitate more generally the improvement of living conditions" (Claessens and Feijen 2007).

However, many developing countries, especially low-income countries (LICs), are not well equipped to deal with the impact of such shocks. Still, despite these fiscal constraints, many low-

income economies laudably adopted crisis mitigation measures in 2009. However, by 2010, they were cutting budgets.

International policy attention remained preoccupied with the question of finance. "More permanent and stable sources of funding for developing countries that could be activated quickly and are not subject to inappropriate conditionality are necessary" (Stiglitz et al. 2009). Though G20 leaders pledged huge external financing rises to help poor countries combat the crisis and reach the MDGs, external loans and grants together filled only one-third of LICs' fiscal hole in 2009–2010. Low-income countries had to fill two-thirds of the fiscal hole by borrowing domestically or by running down reserves. Furthermore, the response was very slow, taking between 6 and 18 months for G20 financing commitments to reach the international financial institutions and for them to commit money to LICs. At present, there is little sign that financing or flexibility on the scale needed will be forthcoming.

IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2012) Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation

Extreme weather and climate events, interacting with exposed and vulnerable human and natural systems, can lead to disasters. This Special Report explores the challenge of understanding and managing the risks of climate extremes to advance climate change adaptation. Weather- and climate-related disasters have social as well as physical dimensions. As a result, changes in the frequency and severity of the physical events affect disaster risk, but so do the spatially diverse and temporally dynamic patterns of exposure and vulnerability. Some types of extreme weather and climate events have increased in frequency or magnitude, but populations and assets at risk have also increased, with consequences for disaster risk. Opportunities for managing risks of weather- and climate-related disasters exist or can be developed at any scale, local to international. Some strategies for effectively managing risks and adapting to climate change involve adjustments to current activities. Others require transformation or fundamental change.

The report consists of nine chapters, covering risk management; observed and projected changes in extreme weather and climate events; exposure and vulnerability to as well as losses resulting from such events; adaptation options from the local to the international scale; the role of sustainable development in modulating risks; and insights from specific case studies.

The report draws on current scientific knowledge to address three specific goals:

1. To assess the relevance and utility of the concepts, methods, strategies, instruments and experience gained from the management of climate-associated disaster risk under

conditions of historical climate patterns, in order to advance adaptation to climate change and the management of extreme events and disasters in the future.

2. To assess the new perspectives and challenges that climate change brings to the disaster risk management field.
3. To assess the mutual implications of the evolution of the disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change fields, particularly with respect to the desired increases in social resilience and sustainability that adaptation implies.

Case studies:

- Extreme event examples: These are followed by case studies on drought in Syria and *dzud* (cold- dry conditions) in Mongolia. Tropical cyclones in Bangladesh, Myanmar and Mesoamerica,22 and then floods in Mozambique are discussed in the context of community actions. The last of the extreme events case studies is about disastrous epidemic disease, using the case of cholera in Zimbabwe, as the example.
- Vulnerable regions: Mumbai as an example of a coastal megacity; the Republic of the Marshall Islands, as an example of small island developing states with special challenges for adaptation; and Canada's northern regions as an example of cold climate vulnerabilities focusing on infrastructures.

UNDP (2013) Regional Human Development Report 2013–2014, Citizen Security with a Human Face: Evidence and Proposals for Latin America*

*Note: The report analyses 18 countries in the region: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Citizen security is key for human development and "crime, violence and fear severely limit the capabilities and freedoms of people, the way in which they organize their lives in society and the way they relate to the state and to other institutions" (UNDP 2013, 4). While in other regions homicide rates have fallen, between 2000 and 2010 they increased in Latin America. UNDP's 2013 report analyses different factors that enable or facilitate violence in the region, such as weapon possession; alcohol consumption; and growing, producing or selling drugs (not necessarily their consumption). It highlights the importance of location disparities both within and among countries and goes through different types of violent crimes, observing that though homicides are high, the most common crime in the region are robberies. Yet under-reporting of all violence is a

crucial problem. In Latin America, underreporting is a result of people's distrust of institutions such as police, legal systems and overall rule of law. Furthermore, the report explains Latin America's increase in violence as a multidimensional crisis, analysing both economic-structural and social dimensions, drivers of crime, and the lack of state capacity.

UNDP (2014) Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience

The report's authors particularly emphasize systemic and perennial sources of vulnerability and ask why some people do better than others in overcoming adversity. People experience varying degrees of insecurity and different types of vulnerability at different points along the life cycle.

The Report makes the case that the sustained enhancement of individuals' and societies' capabilities is necessary to reduce these persistent vulnerabilities – many of them structural and many of them tied to the life cycle. Progress has to be about fostering resilient human development.

The Report explores the types of policies and institutional reforms that can build resilience into the fabrics of societies, particularly for excluded groups and at sensitive times during the life cycle. People's well-being is influenced greatly by the larger freedoms within which they live and by their ability to respond to and recover from adverse events – natural or human-made. Resilience underpins any approach to securing and sustaining human development.

WFP (2014) Resilience Measurement Principles: Toward an agenda for measurement design

This paper sets an agenda for resilience measurement. It presents 10 design principles that introduce the primary objectives and challenges associated with resilience measurement. It also highlights general technical guidelines for use in promoting rigor in all measurement approaches. Its premise is that resilience must be measured because interventions focused on building resilience at multiple scales continue to proliferate (Constas and Barrett, 2013) but are rarely evaluated. With the goal of providing credible, data-based insights about the attributes, capacities and processes observed at various scales (e.g. individual, household, community, national), data obtained from resilience measures will support efforts to evaluate the impact of interventions and inform discussions of how to promote resilience.

OCHA (2015) Resilience Context Analysis: Resilience to Shocks that Impact Food Security and Nutrition in South Sudan

Key recent shocks and stressors affecting households and communities in South Sudan were analysed, and trends in food insecurity and malnutrition were examined against them. Using quantitative data from seasonal rounds of the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System (FSNMS, previously FSMS) since 2010, and other surveys including the National Baseline Households Survey (NHBS), households were classified as 'resilient' based on the following criteria:

1. Food secure according to food consumption indicators and coping capacity;
2. No malnourished children according to anthropometric data; and
3. Non-receivers of food assistance for three months before the survey.

Analysis was then carried out to identify a range of 'resilience capacities' – absorptive, adaptive and transformative – which distinguished non-resilient from resilient households. This was done using long-term household data (FSNMS/FSMS and others) as well as a literature review and partner inputs. Where quantitative data were available, significance tests (t-tests and chi-square) were run to establish whether differences between the resilient and non-resilient households were significant.

Some resilience capacities among the findings are:

- **Absorptive capacities:** Food-related coping strategies / Livestock ownership / Expenditure / Psychosocial strength / Savings and informal safety nets / Conflict management and justice systems
- **Adaptive capacities:** Livelihood risk diversification / Improved access to productive and fertile land / Income Source Reliability and Sustainability (ISRS) / Salaried or skilled labour / Seasonal migration / Educated household head / Early warning systems (EWS)
- **Transformative capacities:** Access to markets and infrastructure / Access to quality and relevant education / Land tenure security / Access to water and sanitation / Access to health services / Access to credit and formal safety nets or social protection / Youth employment and empowerment / Women's empowerment, attitudes and aspirations / Community networks

UNDP (2016) Update Policy Note Applying PovRisk tool to 15 Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean

UNDP's (2016) report analyses and compares two different periods in Latin America, from 2003–2013 and 2013 onwards. In the first period due to a favourable economic scenario and an increase in social spending by Governments in the region, income per capita overall and particularly among the poor observed a real increase. However, between 2013 and 2016, Latin America saw a deterioration of previous achievements, as there was an increasing proportion of the region's population that started (or returned to) living in vulnerability. What is interesting is that this situation was not a result of poor people moving upwards, but rather, middle class going downwards. Additionally, the report identifies some factors underlying high probabilities to fall into poverty, such as increases in the household size, low education level (particularly of household head), and historical inequalities such as ethnicity, race or living in rural areas. In some but not all countries, other factors included the labour informality of the household head and whether or not the household owned durable assets.

CEPAL (2021) Instituciones resilientes para una recuperación transformadora pospandemia en América Latina y el Caribe: aportes para la discusión

The report "focuses on an essential element for ensuring transformative recovery: the renewed capacities of the State to build more resilient institutions, understood not only as the ability to anticipate or cope with a crisis, but also to learn, adapt and incorporate new knowledge in order to deal with new adverse events that may arise in the future." (p. 13).

It discusses some of the capacities that institutions require for transformative recovery and examines the different meanings of the concept of resilience from the perspective of different disciplines, international agendas and some specific issues, in order to contribute to the discussion on the capacities required to build institutional resilience. Additionally, it describes the role of prospective (foresight) in building resilience through new trends in foresight methods, the current role of prospective in institutions, the importance of innovation and futures studies and their contribution to building more resilient institutions.

FAO and Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano (2021) Criterios e indicadores sobre resiliencia climática en el desarrollo e implementación de programas de desarrollo agrícola rural

This report develops a proposal to identify climate resilience criteria and indicators in public policies and programmes on rural agricultural development and family farming in particular. It builds as much as possible on existing advances in the literature on resilience, sustainability, rural development, agri-environmental programmes and policies. It is expected to be a practical application tool for a variety of stakeholders, including government officials and agricultural and rural development practitioners.

The report is divided into five sections, including a final part of recommendations. The first section develops the conceptual framework on the meaning of resilience 'criteria' and 'indicators'. The second section discusses national experiences and captures how resilience is currently addressed in policies, standards and programmes. The third section attempts to reconcile and seek a more or less common language on resilience criteria and indicators in the field of rural agricultural development. The fourth section forms the core of the report in that it proposes some key general criteria and indicators of climate resilience for identification or incorporation into rural agricultural development policies and programmes. The fifth section identifies some of the challenges that countries face in integrating and implementing resilience considerations into their policies and programmes.

UNESCO (2022) Inclusive and resilient societies: equality, sustainability and efficiency

The report analyses the causes, nature and evolution of inequalities during the COVID-19 pandemic. It found that COVID-19 exacerbated economic and social inequality. Economic inequalities grew, and societies were scarred. As a result of the pandemic, the world soon realized how good health underpins the viability of global economic systems. Policy frameworks must be better designed to ensure that economic efficiency is accompanied by equity and sustainable outcomes. Current policy frameworks would not be able to deal with larger and deeper crises. After decades of seeing economic growth as the main measure of success and social progress, it is time to put societal well-being front and central, including through redistribution policies, integrating equality in overall policy design and objectives. This report proposes a people-centred approach to policy design, with a focus on well-being.

UNDRR (2023) Designing a climate resilience classification framework. To facilitate investment in climate resilience through capital markets

This white paper presents a blueprint for the development of a climate resilience classification framework (hereafter referred to as the climate resilience framework or "the Framework"), with the primary objective of promoting and facilitating the much-needed investment in climate resilience through capital markets.

This requires recognizing and pursuing the considerable potential for investment in climate resilience: US$ 1.8 trillion of investment in climate resilience is needed up to 2030 alone, which will result in an estimated US$ 7.1 trillion in economic benefits. In this context, the Framework has the potential to make a significant contribution to the advancement and expansion of climate resilience financing.

UNICEF, WFP, ST4N, MNF (2024) Global resilience report: Safeguarding the nutrition of vulnerable children, women, families and communities in the context of polycrisis

This report describes the impact of polycrises on nutrition, and highlights the experiences of different countries, offering lessons on the resilience of systems to safeguard nutrition. It builds upon these findings to propose policy and programmatic recommendations for strengthening the nutrition resilience of systems, before, during and after a crisis.

Evidence was extracted and synthesized from peer-reviewed publications and reports by global organizations, including United Nations' agencies, using the UNICEF Conceptual Framework on Maternal and Child Nutrition. A 'nutrition resilience framework' was developed to analyse how key systems in selected countries responded during the polycrisis and to derive lessons learned.

Key findings indicate that, despite data limitations, acute malnutrition rose significantly among women and children in the worst affected countries. However, many countries demonstrated their ability to adapt, absorb and transform their systems in response to the polycrisis, and in doing so, were able to blunt its effect. Governments successfully strengthened and adapted food, health, water and sanitation, education and social protection systems. They worked to maintain or even expand these critical systems to protect nutrition among the most vulnerable groups. Community-based actions were leveraged to build trust, tackle misconceptions and bring services closer to where vulnerable women and children live. The use of innovative digital technologies and strong coordination platforms made systems more adaptable in the face of a crisis.

Lessons learned:

1. All systems have the potential to be resilient.
2. Countries with the flexibility to leverage nutrition interventions across multiple systems were well placed to be able to safeguard nutrition.
3. Prioritizing the most vulnerable groups, particularly through the social protection system, was an important factor.
4. Expanding and strengthening local capacities and empowering communities were key strategies.
5. Shared management information systems, innovative technologies, collaborative platforms and swift decision-making were enabling factors that made systems more resilient.

Standard Chartered, KPMG and UNDRR (2024) Guide for Adaptation and Resilience Finance

The Guide aims to unlock private sector capital flows into adaptation and resilience in emerging markets. It sets out, for the first time, an indicative list of adaptation and resilience activities alongside guidance on the process for assessment of this. The Guide aims to accelerate the development and structuring of financial products focused on adaptation and resilience, such as loans, bonds, private placements, structured notes, letters of credit and deposits.

No. 41 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Resilient Human Development: Advancing Human Development amidst Shocks and Crises** Sabina Alkire.

No. 42 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Understanding the Challenge of Resilience and Mental Health in Latin America and the Caribbean** Edgar Valle.

No. 43 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **From a Resource-Intensive to a Symbiotic Tech** Amir Lebdioui, Angel Melguizo and Victor Muñoz.

No. 44 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Diversification of Employment in Latin America and the Caribbean: Gig Employment and Implications for Economic Resilience** Mariana Viollaz.

No. 45 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Gender Bias in AI: Risks and Opportunities for Latin America and the Caribbean** Gemma Galdon-Clavell.

No. 46 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **What Do We Know about Organized Crime in Latin America and the Caribbean? Trends, Definitions, and Risks for Democracy** Lucía Dammert and Carolina Sampó.

No. 47 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Redefining Socio-Natural Resilience within the Human Development Framework: Disaster, Risk and Resilience in Latin America and the Caribbean** Allan Lavell.

No. 48 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Sharing Risks beyond Social Insurance in Latin America and the Caribbean** Matías Morales Cerda.

No. 49 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Retratos de la Resiliencia en el campo: Investigación cualitativa sobre riesgo, resiliencia y desarrollo** Azucena Cháidez.

No. 50 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Human Mobility, Resilience and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean** David Khoudour.

No. 51 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Unequal Assets, Uneven Resilience: Mapping Poverty Quadrants and Opportunities** Salome Ecker, Sandra Martinez-Aguilar and Eduardo Ortiz-Juarez.

No. 52 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Resilient Human Development in Latin America and the Caribbean** Carol Watson.

No. 53 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Fragmented Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean** Santiago Rodríguez-Solórzano.

No. 54 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Riesgos Emergentes: Empleo en plataformas digitales. Perspectivas sobre la informalidad y nuevas formas de informalidad ante el auge de la economía digital y el trabajo por plataformas, Caso Guatemala** Elías Miguel Ahuat and Juan Roberto Hernández.

No. 55 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Desafíos de la incorporación política, estabilidad y resiliencia democrática en América Latina** Verónica Perez-Betancur, Rafael Piñeiro-Rodríguez and Fernando Rosenblatt.

No. 56 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Estudio sobre las implicancias de las sequías en Uruguay desde una perspectiva de desarrollo humano y resiliencia** Valentín Balderrín and Sabrina Rodríguez.

No. 57 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Cómo la extorsión mina la gobernabilidad democrática un Estudio de dos casos en el departamento de la Libertad** Noam López Villanes.

No. 58 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Nearshoring: Anticipando riesgos para aprovechar oportunidades** Maite García de Alba, Cynthia Martínez and Jesús Pacheco.

No. 59 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Desarrollo Humano Resiliente frente a choques Ambientales: Aprovechar las transiciones y nuevas tendencias para la sostenibilidad en la República Dominicana** Sócrates Barinas Guerrero.

No. 60 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Percepción de riesgos climáticos y resiliencia ambiental: Un análisis de la opinión pública en Argentina** Gabriela Catterberg, Patricio Yamin, and Maria Veronica Moreno.

No. 61 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **The Roots of Resilience: Towards Reparatory Approaches to Development** Kishan Khoday.

No. 62 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Impacto de la degradación de los ecosistemas y del cambio climático en asentamientos humanos de la Costa Sur de Cuba** Marta Rosa Muñoz Campos, Arianna Rodríguez García, Dariadna Barrios Tabares, and Leyner Javier Ortiz Betancourt.

No. 63 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **Impacto y respuesta ante incendios forestales en Chile: El caso de Viña del Mar de 2022 Y 2024** Javiera Troncoso and Rocio Berwart.

No. 64 UNDP LAC Working Paper Series **La salud mental en la población adulta salvadoreña. Un riesgo emergente en un contexto de envejecimiento poblacional y crisis de los cuidadoso** María José Erazo and Carolina Molina.