

# Freedom from Poverty



Federal Ministry  
for Foreign Affairs  
of Austria



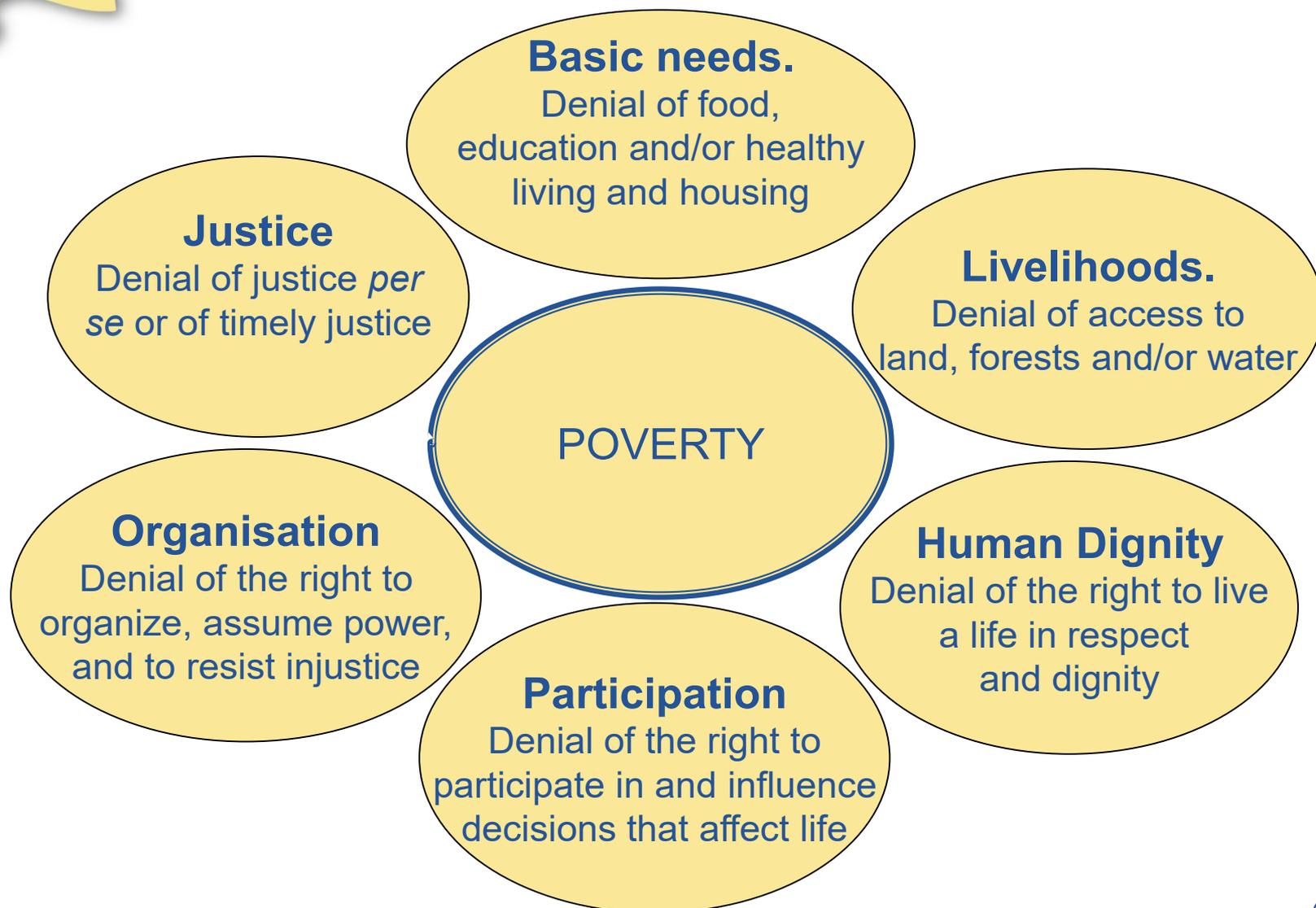
**“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”**

**Art. 25(1), Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.**

### **Poverty is...**

- ...the denial of economic, social and political power and resources that keeps the poor immersed in poverty.
- ...an extreme form of deprivation.
- ...able to lead to a short life, lack of basic education and lack of access to public and private resources.
- ...hard to measure as vulnerability and deprivation cannot be narrowed to fit into some kind of framework.

# Dimensions of Poverty



- ▶ In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there has been an **increase in global inequality**: The richest country today is now 3 times richer than the richest country in 1970 and the poorest country is now 25% poorer than the poorest in 1970.
- ▶ In 2014, an estimated **1.2 billion people survived on less than 1.25 \$ per day**. Almost **1.5 billion people in 91 developing countries are living in poverty** (UNDP Human Development Report 2014).
- ▶ **Women and children** represent the groups most vulnerable to poverty.
- ▶ Structural Adjustment Programmes can intensify poverty if not carried out comprehensively.
- ▶ Neo-liberal globalisation ignores the basic rights of people to fulfil their own needs.

- ▶ **Absolute Poverty:** people are poor in relation to what is held to be the standard of minimum requirement.
- ▶ **Relative Poverty:** a person or a group of people is poor in relation to others or in relation to what is considered to be a fair standard of living or level of consumption in a particular society.
- ▶ **Social Exclusion:** may lead to relative poverty, but may be, at the same time, the outcome of relative poverty.

- ▶ **Millennium Development Goals (MDG):** in the pursuit of the 8 MDGs, states need to tackle poverty.  
*The UN Secretary General's Message on the 500-Day Mark to the Conclusion of the MDG – "500 Days of Action to Build Better World" (18 August 2014).*
- ▶ **Human Rights Education:** empowers the poor to make freedom from poverty possible.
- ▶ **Treaty Bodies:** the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights comments on state reports.
- ▶ **The Independent Expert on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty:** reports to the Human Rights Council.

- ▶ **International Agreements such as the Cotonou Agreement:** between ALP and the EC with a special focus on food security.
- ▶ **The Poor are Bankable:** the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh mobilises the poor to ensure self-reliant, social-economic development through mutual support.
- ▶ **The UN World Food Programme:** “The State of Food Insecurity in the World” of 2013: “Developing regions as a whole have registered significant progress towards the MDG 1 hunger target. If the average annual decline of the past 21 years continues to 2015, the prevalence of undernourishment will reach a level close to the target.”

## Millennium Development Goals:

- ▶ Are the countries on track?
- ▶ UN Human Development Report **2013**:
  - The first MDG of halving the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day relative to 1990 has been met three years before the target date. This is primarily because of the success of some of the most populous countries in eradicating extreme poverty: Brazil, China and India.
  - Over the past decade, Africa has made great strides in instituting political and economic reforms that are starting to bear fruits. The new global development agenda that will be agreed upon in 2015 presents an opportunity for Africa to take stock of these challenges and our position in the world.
- ▶ The Human Development Index has increased 18% since 1990.

## Europe 2020 Initiative:

- ▶ Five ambitious objectives to be reached by 2020:
  - Employment.
  - Innovation.
  - Education.
  - Social inclusion.
  - Climate and energy.
- ▶ Each EU member state will adopt national targets in each of these areas underpinned with concrete actions at EU and national levels.

- 1948 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Arts. 22, 23, 25 and 26.
- 1961 European Social Charter.
- 1965 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Art. 5.
- 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Arts. 6, 7, 9, 11, 12 and 13.
- 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Arts. 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14.
- 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Arts. 14-17 and 20-22.

- 1988 Additional Protocol of San Salvador on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to the American Convention on Human Rights.
- 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 27.
- 1992 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, October 17, officially recognised by the UN.
- 1996 Revised European Social Charter.
- 1998 Establishment of the Independent Expert on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty.
- 2000 Adoption of Millennium Development Goals.
- 2005 World Summit “Outcome Document”.
- 2010 Millennium Development Goals 2010 Review Summit: Adoption of a global action plan.