

**Combating poverty in times of crisis:
a new challenge or a symptom of on-going policy failure**

- Poverty is a consequence of the violation of human rights because it is the result of various unfulfilled needs and shortcomings at the economic, social, cultural and behavioural levels. What the present global crisis has done is that it has, on the one hand, made these needs and shortcomings more acute and painful for those who have been traditionally poor and disadvantaged, while, on the other it had rendered new social groups more vulnerable to poverty and exclusion.

- Linkages between poverty / absence of conditions to live in dignity and:
 - **discrimination** (States now need to look at non-discrimination in a much more holistic perspective so as to minimize the effects of the economic down turn on persons and groups facing traditional or contemporary forms of discrimination)
 - **obligations of States parties** (core obligations that ensure the satisfaction of, at the very least, minimum essential levels of each of the rights enshrined in the ICESCR; use of maximum available resources for progressive realisation so that even in times of severe resource constraints, the most disadvantaged and marginalized members or groups of society are protected by targeted programmes)
 - **participation of rights holders** (pre-requisite for the shift from a needs-based approach to combat poverty to a human rights based approach of social inclusion; inclusive democratic processes can reinforce substantive participation and empowerment to help people deal with the consequences of powerlessness particularly in times of adversity)
 - **social security** (redistributive character and role in promoting social inclusion through non-contributory schemes)
 - **gender dimension** (women are often in a disadvantaged position in comparison to men due to unequal access to resources, goods and services)
 - **international assistance and cooperation** (obligations and responsibilities of the various stakeholders - international financial institutions, bilateral donors and recipient countries – recognizing that development of any kind is only sustainable if it fully integrates human rights dimensions)

States have to cover traditional risks as well as face new ones within a context of dwindling resources, with clear goals and strategies to ensure equality of rights, conditions and opportunities, so that all persons are able to participate in society as citizens, to exercise their entitlement to resources, and their ability to contribute to the well being of themselves, their families and their communities.