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# *CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL COHESION IN AFRICA*

*Organized by*

*The Haut Commissariat au Plan of Morocco, and  
The OECD Development Centre*

## **Social Cohesion: An Evolving Concept, A Challenging Reality!**

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## *Social Cohesion:*

*Belonging, inclusion, participation,  
recognition, legitimacy...*

Abstract in content / normative in aspiration

Takes its full meaning in the social, economic and political context of countries and societies at different stages of development, hence its changing and evolving nature

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## Primary Determinants of Social Cohesion:

- **Governance patterns,**
  - **Social political structures,**
  - **Economic modes of production and integration,**
  - **Social organization and accountability institutions.**
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**Policies and institutions** may facilitate or impede

**Processes and practices** through which diverse

**Individuals and social groups** can identify with the

**Purpose of shared public policies** and are acknowledged as

**Full status citizens** regardless of their background and physical, legal, or social and economic characteristics.

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**Social Cohesion is an Outcome  
That Can Be Defined / Measured  
Through**

**Policy / Performance / Processes  
Proxies**

**A Proposal for Defining and Measuring  
three Primary Proxies of Social  
Cohesion**

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# Challenges Before Social Cohesion in Many Countries in North Africa and on the African Continent

- Wide income disparities
- Public expenditure on social sector is still low
- Wide variations in access to water and sanitation
- Inequity due to poor distribution of social services
- High illiteracy rates and adult literacy rate imbalances
- High unemployment rates (11-18% in 2009) twice as much for 16-29 age group
- Structural gender imbalances in access to education, health and job opportunities
- Widespread poverty and social exclusion

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## In Addition...

Cost of wars and conflict in terms of lost lives, displacement and setbacks to development continues to be significantly high, hence, there is a tendency for governments to “take every day as it comes”. Some countries face political instability, conflict and upheaval on a daily basis



Political and economic uncertainty

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# Constraining Factors Affecting Social Cohesion Outcomes

## Nationally:

- Lack of consensus on the definition of social policy
- Poor data compilation methods and lack of availability of quality social statistics
- Waste of human and financial resources due to poor management and disbursement of funds
- Continued political instability leading to large allocation of budget to militarization



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# Constraining Factors Affecting Social Cohesion Outcomes

## Nationally:

- Poor coordination among government institutions with regard to budgeting, delivery of social services and non-rationalized investments in the social sector
- Weak or limited role of civil society: Collectivities more than individuals; Families more than classes
- Substitution of the role of the state by other groups such as fundamentalist organizations and partisan groups

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# Constraining Factors Affecting Social Cohesion Outcomes

**Globally:**

■ **Globalization / Transnational Influences**

**Indeed acting in opposite directions:**

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On the one hand:

Values, images, and goals that influence transnational forces (as a result of globalization of capital, trade and communications) portray an abstract, ideal society where **economic progress, technological development, social upward mobility, individual success** ( ingredients of social cohesion), blend together as an appealing, short-term, achievable objective (Morales-Torres)

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On the other hand

Globalization takes place in a world in which economic growth has been inequitable and demographic trends have been explosive, and where belonging to a broader civil and identity relevant entity has been challenged

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Two public policy challenges emerge with globalization:

How to make the state more efficient in its role as mediator of transnational forces and still effectively promote human development and social cohesion?

How to enlist private interest/corporate sector to become a positive force for social change/internalized sentiments of cohesion?

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# OECD Letter of Introduction:

- This situation calls for an examination of development paradigms and the policy options for more equally shared progress.
  - “Having focused on major macroeconomic changes occurring in the world economy – what we call “Shifting Wealth” - in 2010, the PGD report now turns to the challenge of how we can build more cohesive societies in the new global context.”
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# Defining Social Policy

- Beyond conventional social sectors, it is concerned with influencing the design and the institutional provisions required for integrating and mainstreaming social equity and human rights parameters in every public policy and every public domain not in the least in every economic policy
  - It is not and cannot be reactive to market failures or residual to economic growth
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# Defining Social Policy

- Social policy is a government instrument to build equitable, stable, sustainable and above all more COHESIVE societies;
  - Its ultimate aim beyond curbing poverty and social exclusion is to reduce or eliminate the sources of poverty, social injustice and social tension;
  - To that effect it creates the institutions, processes and environments towards nurturing and sustaining social cohesion
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## Social Policy:

Any public action designed to expand choices and opportunities for people throughout the development process.

It simultaneously addresses aspects of social production, reproduction, protection and redistribution, as well as issues of equity, inclusion and rights (UNRISD, ESCWA Social Policy from Concept to Practice p. vii)

Redefines Social Development in terms of freedom

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For Amartya Sen Development is made up of five types of instrumental freedoms that complement one another and that define the capability of a person to live more freely:

- (a) Political freedom (civil rights);
- (b) Economic facilities (production and consumption);
- (c) Social opportunities (education and health);
- (d) Transparency guarantees (trust and openness);
- (e) Protective security (social safety net).

**Source:** Sen, A. *Development as Freedom*. 1999. Oxford University Press.

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# The Right to A Fair Race

## The 400m Race

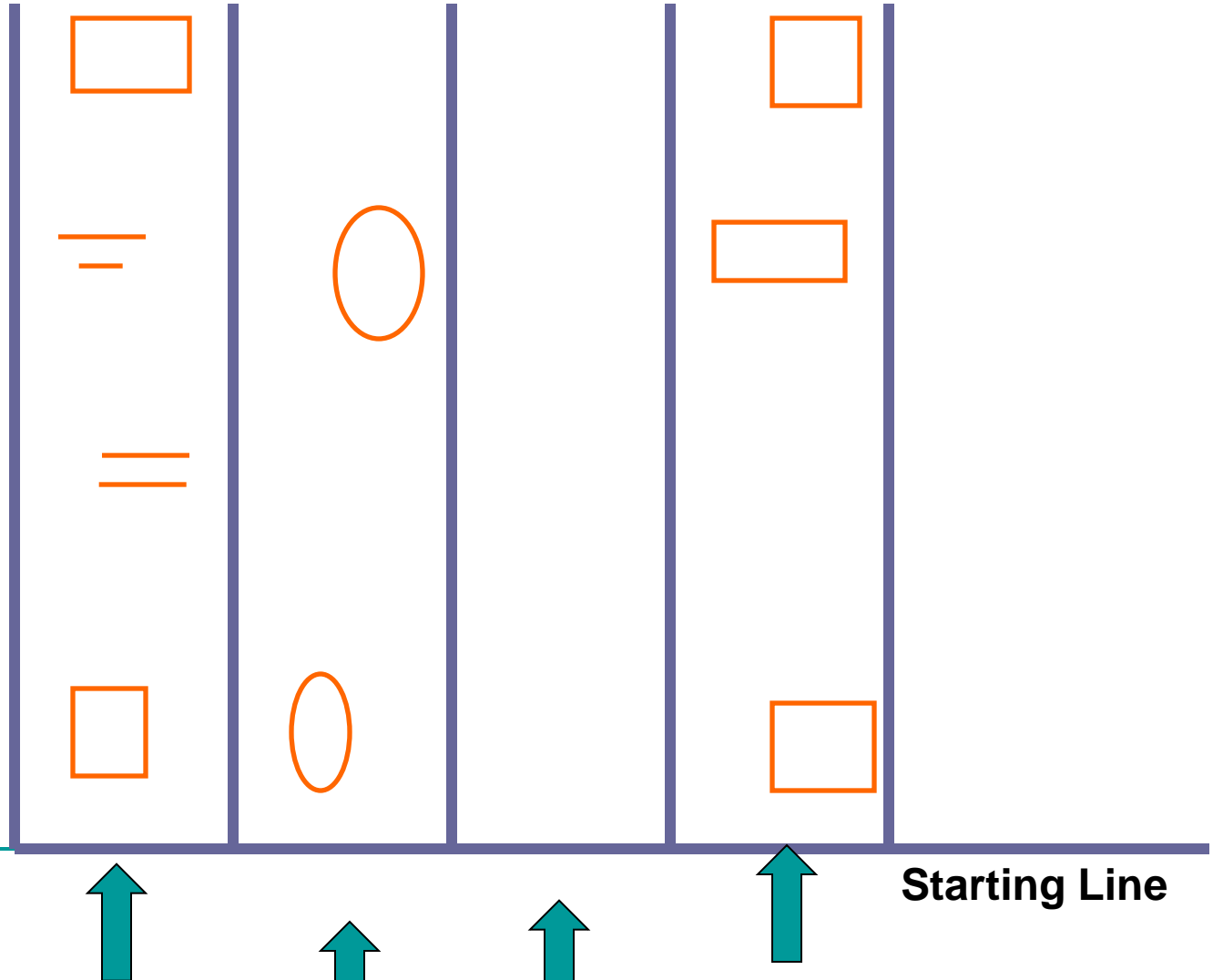
**Marginalized**

**Abuse?**

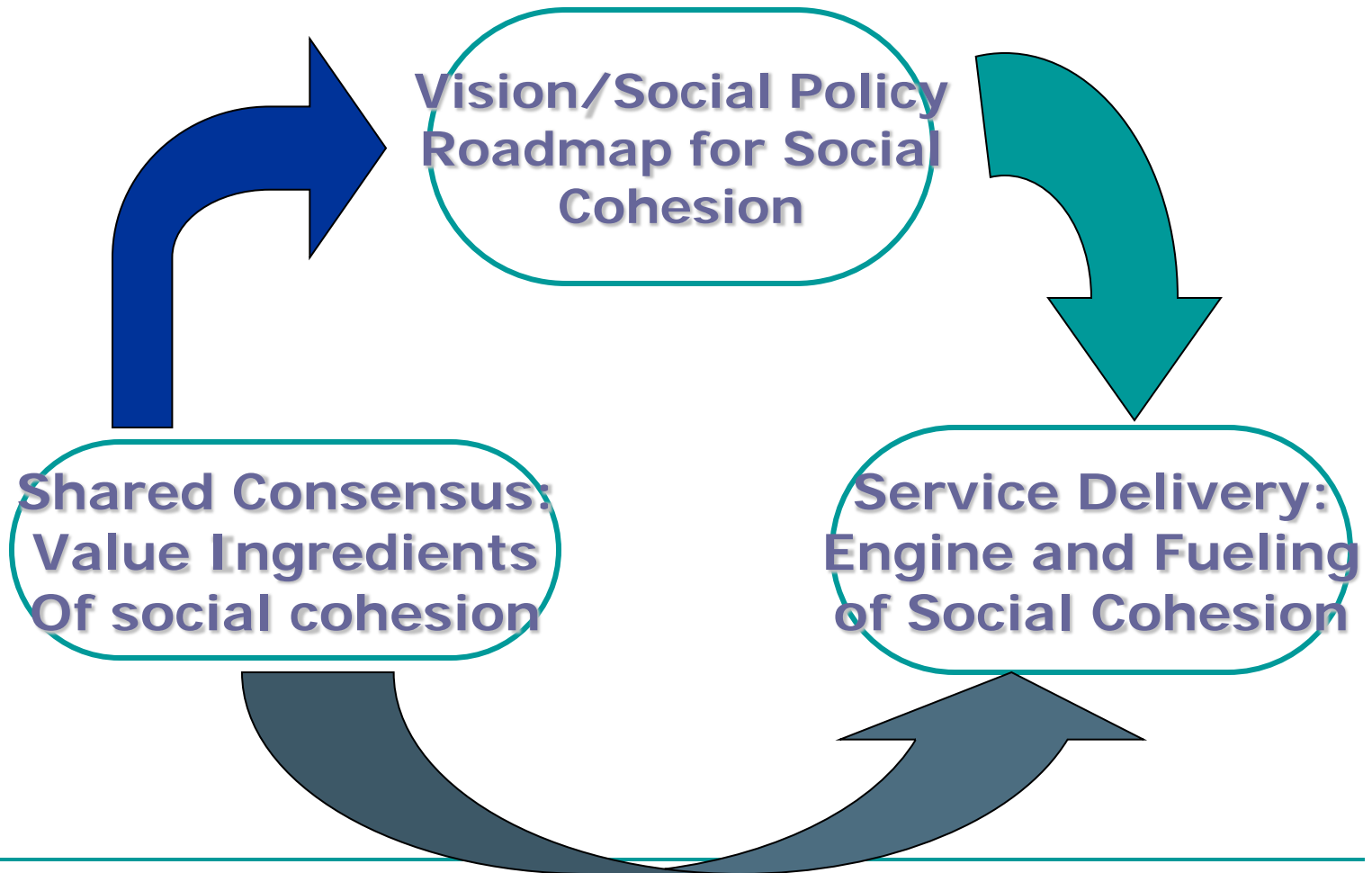
**Regulatory  
Mechanisms**

**Equal Access to  
Opportunities**

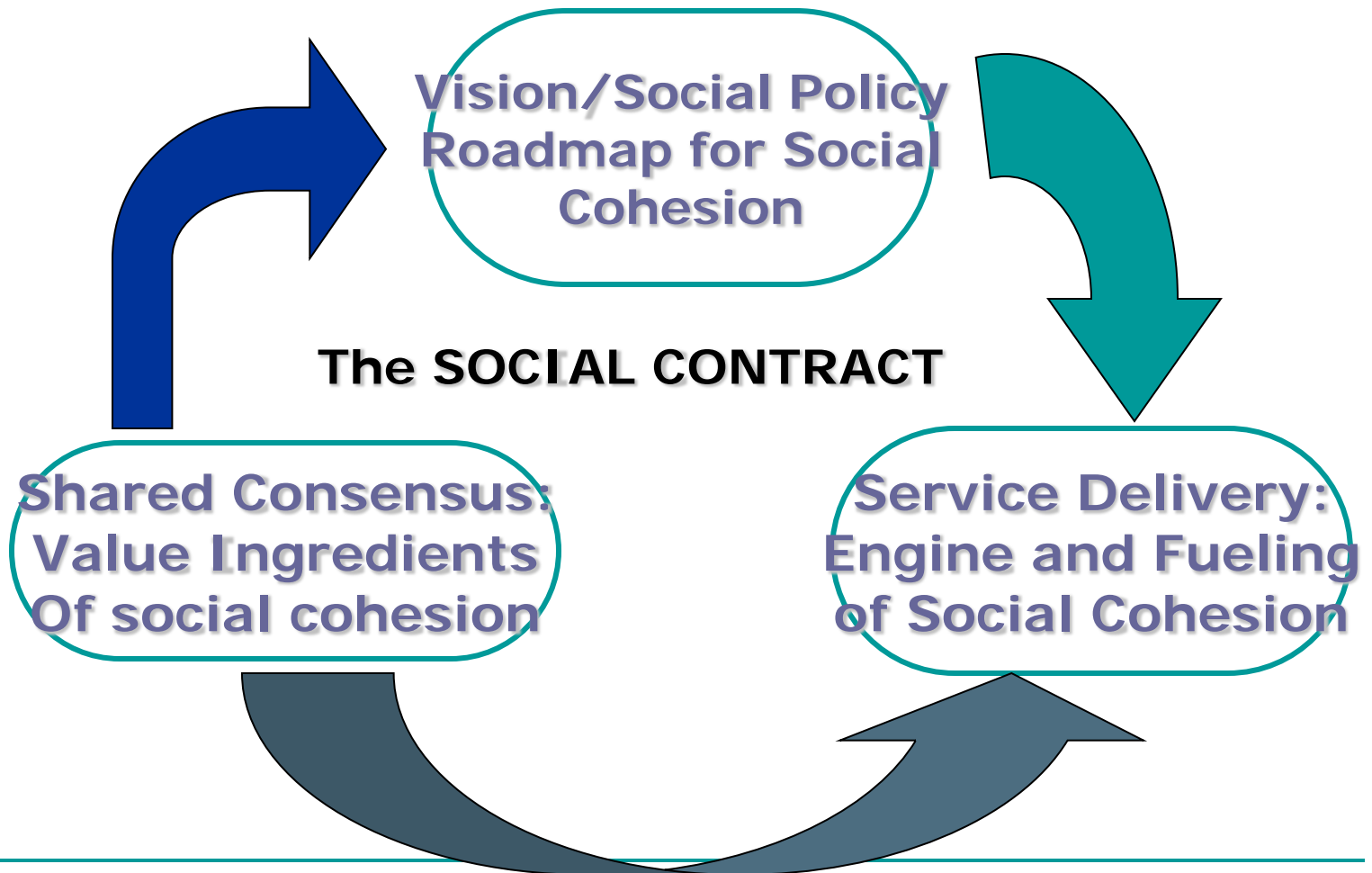
**Equal Access  
to Services**



# Framework for a Social Policy Engineered Social Cohesion



# Framework for a Social Policy Engineered Social Cohesion



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# Three Central Premises

## 1. Public Policy Making

- Public office, government, institutions/check-list
- Instruments and policy tools, budget

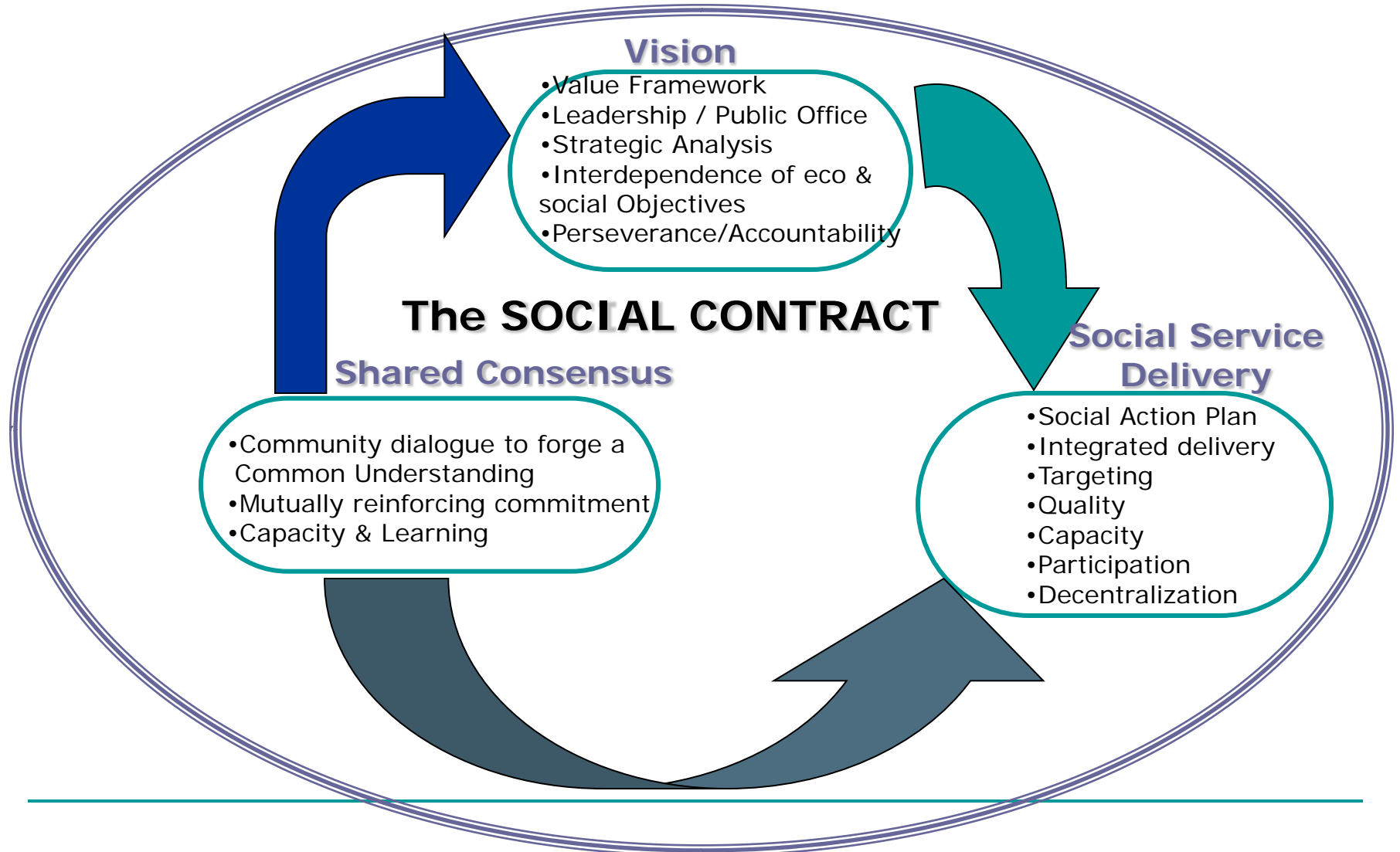
## 2. Services

- Government and Partner sector service delivery
- Targeting, Monitoring, Quality, Participation ..

## 3. Forging Shared Values

- Constituent buy-in
- Evolving process to build and sustain legitimacy

# A framework for Social Policy



# Functional Role of Social Policy Actors

## ■ Policy

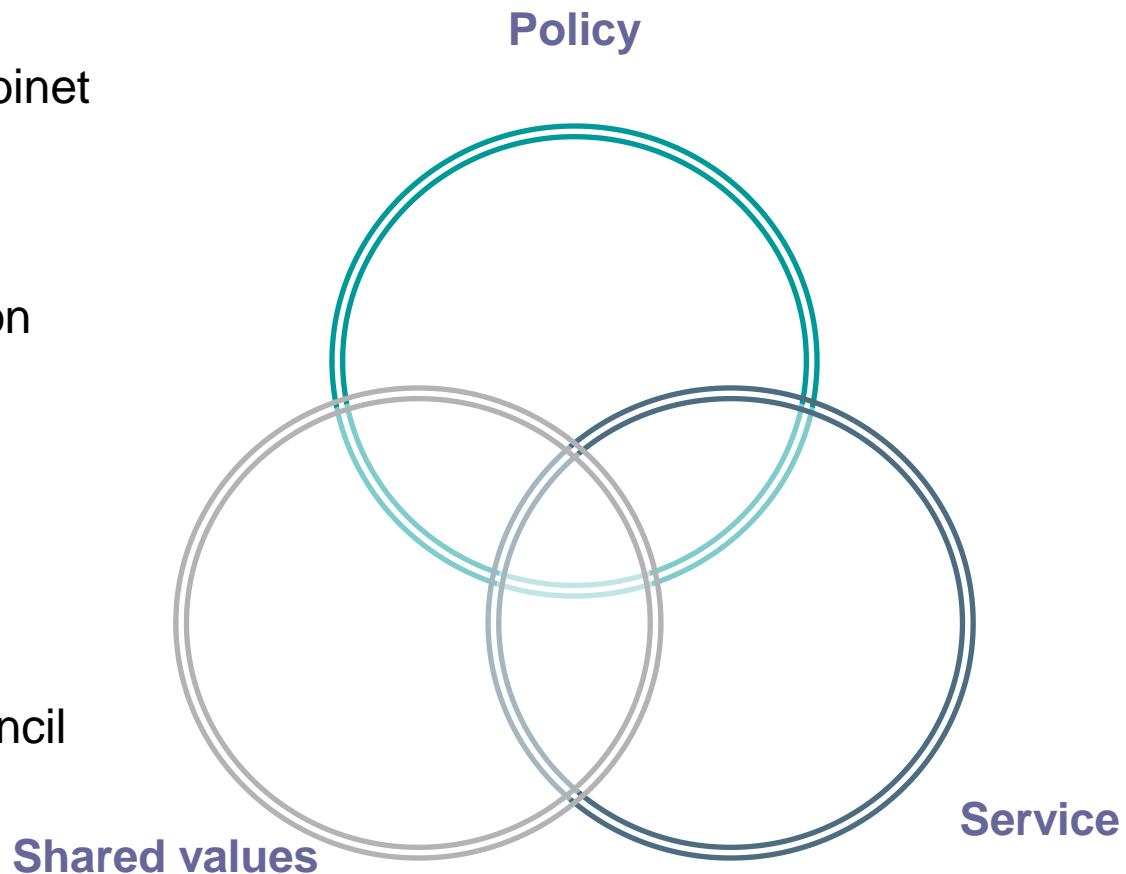
- Executive Branch & Cabinet
- Sector Ministries
- Parliament/Legislature
- Local Government
- Civil Society Participation

## ■ Service

- Sector Ministries
- Local Government
- NGOs/Civil Society
- Private sector

## ■ Shared Values

- Economic & Social Council
- Parliament
- Civil Society (NGOs/  
Media/Unions)





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# What should successful social policy strategies comprise?

Several principles required for social policy initiatives to be effective and sustainable at the national level:

- **Balancing between economic and social development**, such that the benefits of one feeds into the other.
- **Adopting a strategy of redistribution/protection**, such that people's needs are met and the negative effects of potential risks are minimized.
- **Investing in production**, such as building human capital and promoting employment generation and opportunities.
- **Adopting a participatory strategy**, such that the needs and concerns of all stakeholders - including the traditionally excluded segments - are taken into account at the outset.

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# **A Broader Social Cohesion Environment Articulated Around Three Dimensions:**

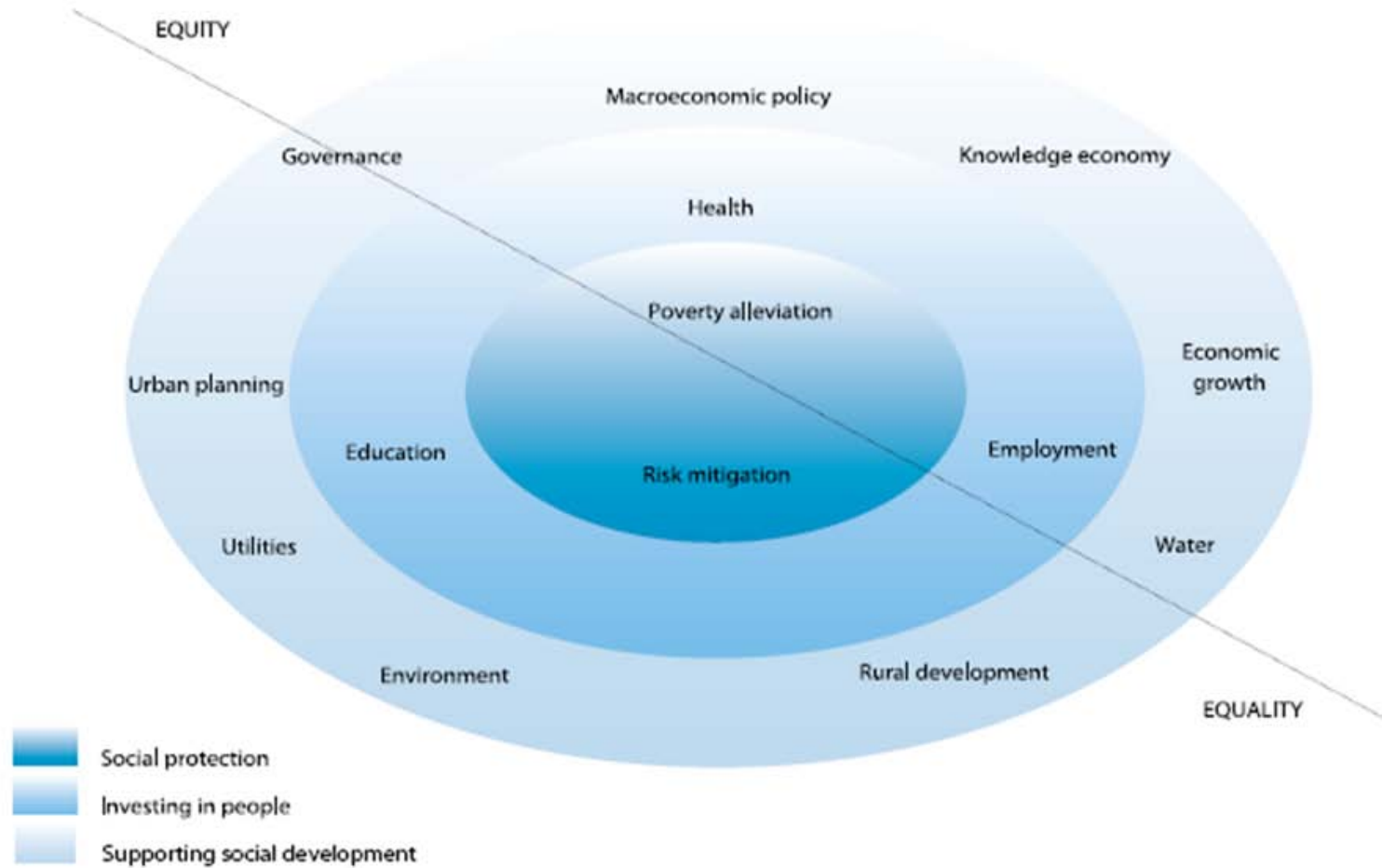
- A wider policy context, including macroeconomic policy, the quality of economic growth and governance issues
  - Policy areas regarding investing in people including access to health, education and employment opportunities
  - Areas that have traditionally formed the core of social paradigms in the narrow conception including mitigation of consequences of economic fallouts, social protection and poverty alleviation addressing needs of special groups
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# Proposal for A Social Cohesion Index (SCI)

## Integrating three Dimensions

- Existence and functioning of policy instruments that carry a social policy check list in public policies
- Universality and performance of basic social services (e.g. % of social in national budget, disparity measurement) and packages to mitigate consequences of economic fallouts
- Existence and functioning of institutions and processes that sustain dialogue among differing constituencies and allow access to shaping/sanctioning public policies, (parties, community associations/representations, media, vibrancy of civil society, etc.)

Figure I. Different dimensions of social policy



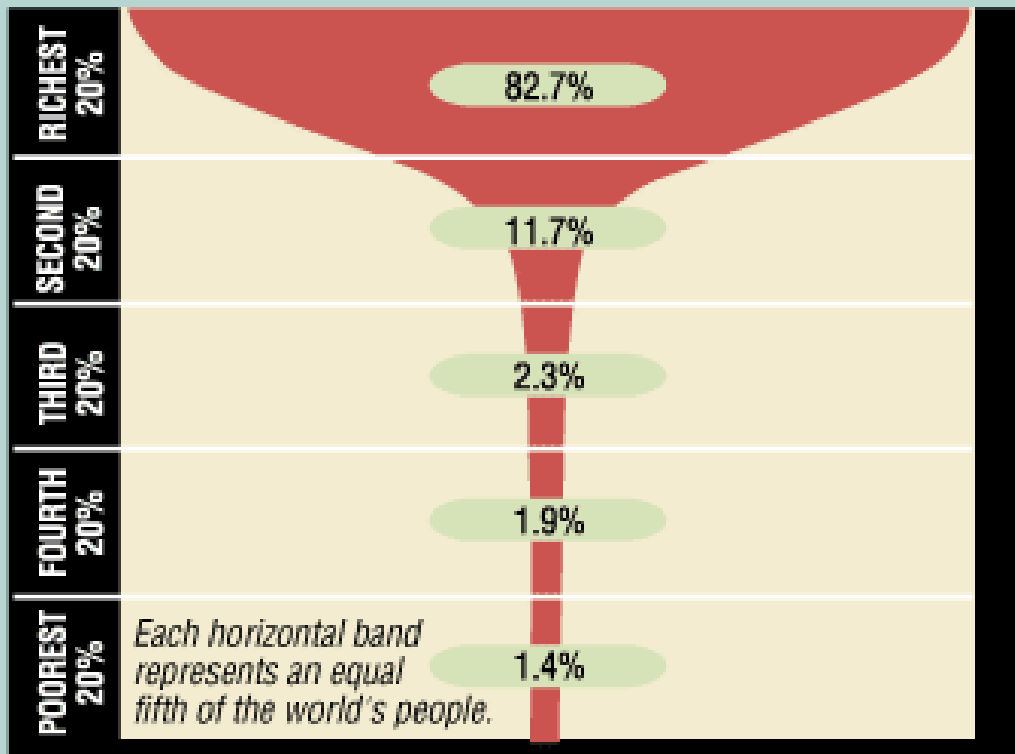
Source: ESCWA.

Source: ESCWA

# Development for whom?

## Distribution of world GDP, 1989

(percent of total, with quintiles of population ranked by income)



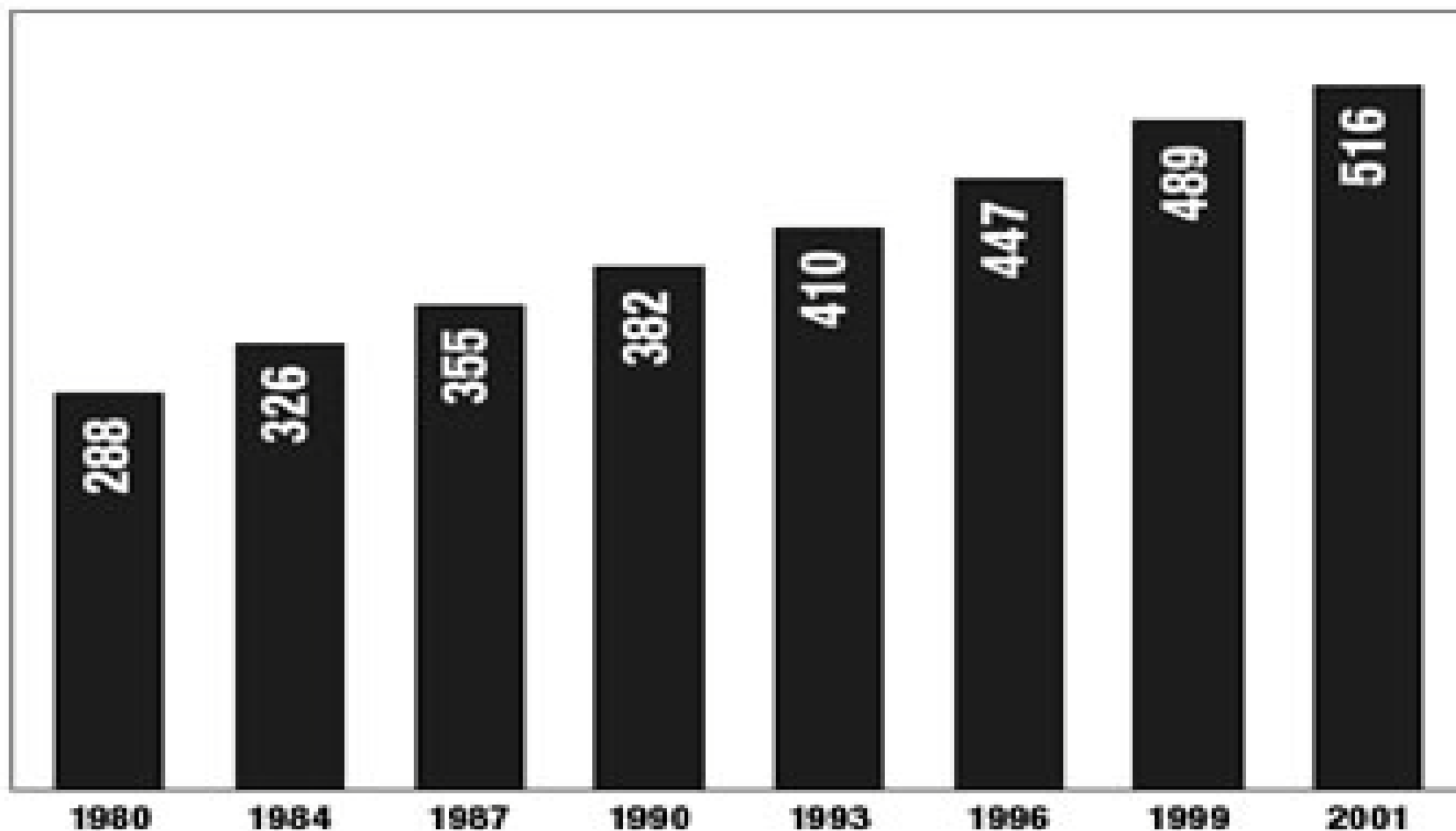
Source: United Nations Development Program, 1992, Human Development Report 1992 (New York: Oxford University Press for the United Nations Development Program).

**Inequality has risen in the last decades:**

- **Within countries**
- **Among countries**
  
- **The benefits of globalization, as it is managed/mismanaged, go to a few companies and individuals, in a few countries.**
  
- **This is a result of the choice of economic policies, combined with very limited investments in social development**

# Rising poverty in sub-Saharan Africa

Millions of people living on less than \$1 per day



Source: *UN Africa Renewal*, from data in *UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, The Inequality Predicament*, 2005.

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Thank you for your attention

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