Round Table 4: Do MDGs reflect what is essential in the development process?

Speakers:
- Mr. Jan Vandemoortele (former UN)
- Mrs. Amina Az Zubair (Nigeria)
- Mrs. Sally-Ann Way (CSER)
- Mr. Sandeep Chachra (action aid)

Moderator: Mr. Paul Verlé

Notwithstanding several critical comments, globally **MDGs are still received positively**: as a tangible, worldwide agreed agenda for basic poverty reduction and at least as an instrument for promoting development issues and for generating political will.

Notwithstanding the warm welcome, **several critical views** continue to exist, some are growing:
- A human rights approach is missing: the obligation to respect, to protect and to fulfill requires resp. new trade-offs, regulation and redistribution.
- The idea of equality is lacking. This should and could be addressed, based on the growing number of (disaggregated) data.
- Unbalanced focus on health goals (3/8).
- Technical problems when translating to country level action (‘lousy indicators’, benchmarks, number of targets, focus on quantity rather than quality (education),…).
- What is difficult to measure (albeit essential) is not taken into consideration.
- ‘Essentials’ lacking to reach MDGs in a sustainable way: governance & accountability, human capacity, basic data and a system to make sense of it, …
- The underlying financial-economical model is not discussed even tough it is considered to be in crisis, unsustainable and producing poverty and inequality.

**For discussion:**
- Pay more attention to the ‘essentials’ underpinning the efforts for the MDGs: governance and accountability, institutional capacity, political leadership, peace building in fragile states, …
- Reinforce focus on collective responsibility and credibility. Aid flows are still marginal compared with, e.g., the financial flows to tackle the financial-economic crisis in developed countries.
- Short term (September):
  - Improve measurability
  - Keep the momentum going by focusing on achievements so far (and their analysis)
- Longer term (beyond 2015): time for a new design? To be based on deepened political debate.