

## Maastricht Debating Series

2006 – 2007

*International cooperation in our globalising world*

**Democracy, development and governance**

### Intro

The *Maastricht Debating Series (MDS)* aims to be a platform for debate and networking for and by Maastricht actors. At the same time it is explicitly seen as one activity within a larger programme of the Society of International Development (SID). SID aims to stimulate the public and political debate on international cooperation in the Netherlands and beyond, among others with its lecture series in Amsterdam and Utrecht.

For its 2006 – 2007 programme, SID has chosen ‘Democracy and development’ as central theme. The promotion of democracy within the broader framework of international cooperation has become a heavily disputed subject both in academic and policy-making circles. Many issues have been raised in relation to this topic and not few of them seem to point to *devilish policy dilemmas* that cause uneasiness amongst politicians and policy makers in the field of international relations.

### Focus

The MDS aims to fully insert its activities within the wider framework provided by SID and proposes to focus on ‘governance’ as the overarching theme for a series of lectures and discussions which will take place over a year’s time, starting in autumn 2006.

In current policy discussions on development, ‘good’ governance – or ‘good enough’ governance - is seen as the prerequisite for democratic development. It is a debatable term and therefore lends itself to stimulate political, public and academic debate encompassing aspects such as:

- Governance as a political concept with issues as accountability, legitimacy, elections, and pro and con’s of different political systems
- Governance seen from a policy and management perspective with issues such as effectiveness, authorising mechanisms, etc.
- Governance seen as cultural and situational embedded, hence with different, and possibly conflicting perspectives and interpretations (donor versus recipient)
- Governance seen as indicator or instrument in development aid, including the notion of ‘good enough governance’
- Governance seen in relation to the society to be governed, the governability. In order to be able to govern in any effective way, a government needs the acceptance of its authority and the recognition by at least a broad majority of the population, of its right to monopolize the use of force, to enforce its laws and to allocate values - if it is not to revert to large scale coercion. Furthermore, a democratic government needs to be able to count on citizens that are able and willing to respect democratic principles, to exercise their democratic rights and to fulfil the corresponding duties. In this context, the role of the media could be subject for debate.

Against this background, the proposal lays out a plan of work which would be held along a number of thematic blocks, such as (not complete):

- Concept – What is ‘governance’? How to understand it? What are the different meanings of governance internationally? Governance versus government ...
- Governance and Democracy – Is democracy a prerequisite for development? How relevant are varying forms of governance to stimulate development as compared to democracy? Is democracy still a valid concept to stimulate development?
- Governance and Accountability – Who are the relevant actors? What role do different actors have? Accountability to whom? How to ensure accountability?
- Governance and Performance – What to measure? How to measure? Do proper indicators exist? What practices do exist internationally in terms of measuring governance progress?
- Governance and international cooperation – Role of outside supporters and legitimacy of their assistance? Stimulating governance through (local) government and/ or complementary actors? How to work with the concept?
- Governance and European development cooperation – A new role for Europe in stimulating governance? European support to governance and development versus Chinese approaches to supporting development?
- Etc. ...

## Networking

Governance is of concern to many organisations and institutions in Maastricht who work in the academic field, on training and on policy issues. Several Maastricht-based knowledge organisations already focus on the theme, or are planning to do so – each approaching this cross-cutting issue from their respective mandate and/ or field of expertise. Organisations which have shown interest to join in this initiative are the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) and the Maastricht School of Management (MSM). Other organisations will be invited to join, or to link up with the MSD through other forms of cooperation, such as the European Journalism Centre (EJC), UNU-MERIT, the European Institute for Public Administration (EIPA) or Studium Generale.

The proposed theme will enable the MDS to draw upon the expertise and international networks of a wide variety of institutions in Maastricht and to reinforce knowledge networking among Maastricht-based actors, as well as networking from Maastricht with other knowledge communities in the Netherlands and potentially beyond.

## Approach

The MDS proposes to organise a variety type of debating activities, encompassing presentations by (high level) personalities combined with inputs from discussants; panel discussions; interactive discussion rounds following presentations, or lectures; etc. Where opportunities arise, the MDS should try to link up with complementary events, such as international conferences, exhibitions, or cultural events. The MDS will also liaise closely with the media, Studium Generale and the Mondiaal Centrum to ensure that this initiative is made known to a wider public.