

**Report on Global Dialogues on Democracy and Diversity
Barcelona, Spain
25 September 2004**

The Forum of Federations, together with Carles Pi i Sunyer Foundation for Local and Regional Studies, Self-governing Studies Institute, Jaume Bofill Foundation, Political and Social Sciences Institute, and Spanish Political Science and Public Administration Association organized a one-day international conference entitled “Global Dialogues on Democracy and Diversity”. This conference was held in the framework of the *Universal Forum of Cultures 2004*, a 141-day long undertaking organized by the Municipal Government of Barcelona, Government of Catalonia, and the Government of Spain, under the auspices of UNESCO. The “Dialogue” organized by the Forum and its partners was held during the last week of the Universal Forum of Cultures, within the section “Dialogues”, in the sub-section “Contributing to the Global Agenda”.

The sub-section “Contributing to the Global Agenda” addressed some of the most crucial issues on the global agenda of the 21st century, those which must be fully taken on board and implemented in order to move towards a better world. All these dialogues analyzed the new values, attitudes and actions which the Universal Forum of Cultures wished to promote as a legacy for the international community and humanity itself.

“Contributing to the Global Agenda” addressed three basic questions:

- What are the challenges that humankind must face at the beginning of the 21st century?
- Who are the key players who have to cope with them and what is the *growing* role of civil society?
- What new values, attitudes and behaviors are required to achieve change?

The “dialogue” organized by the Forum and its partners was part of a third block of dialogues that dealt with issues such as implementing democracy while respecting and integrating diversity, the fight against corruption in a globalized world, and the importance of respecting biodiversity and intangible heritage. Its overall goal was to contribute to the debate on governance methods, and to explore ways to strengthen and consolidate democratic systems from the point of view of federalism and other forms of political organization. It also strove to make a contribution to the debate about how to improve governance and deepen democratic political systems, mainly from the approach of federalist political theory.

The “dialogue” was divided into two panels: 1) Democracy, Federalism and Globalization, and 2) Identity, Diversity and Democracy. John Kincaid, President of the International Association of Centers for Federal Studies, delivered the opening speech. The first panel was composed of Josep M. Vallès, Minister of Justice, Government of Catalonia who chaired the session; Marco Aurelio García, Advisor on International Relations to President of Brazil Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva; Major Dalbir Singh, General Secretary for Public Relations, All Indian Congress

Committee, Indian National Congress Party; and Alex Ekwueme, Former Vice-President of Nigeria and Member of the Board of Directors of the Forum of Federations. The session's moderator was Fernando Vallespín, Professor of Political Science at the Autonomous University of Madrid.

The second session was chaired by Jordi Pujol, former President of the Government of Catalonia and the speakers included Jean-François Gaudreault-Desbiens, Constitutional Lawyer at the University of Toronto; Xóchitl Galvez, Director General of the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Mexico; and Dusan Sidjanski, Professor Emeritus of the Department of Political Science, University of Geneva and Professor Emeritus of the European Institute. Ferran Requejo, Professor of Political Science at the Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, moderated this session.

The speakers focused on a sociological and cultural description of their respective countries and explained the social and ethnic structures. They also described the history and political tradition of their countries and explained the institutional and political system, namely how the federal systems are structured and how they work. They also touched upon the current problems and challenges and outlined their view on future challenges at the political and internal level. Finally they provided their views on regional integration and relations with neighboring countries, and assessed their countries in a global context and from the perspective of the current international situation.