Preface

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This volume is one of five books that cover the proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Federalism. This conference, entitled *Unity in Diversity: Learning from Each Other,* was held in New Delhi between 5 and 7 November 2007, and coincided with the Diamond Jubilee of India's independence in 1947. This was the fourth in a series of major international conferences organized in partnership between host governments and the Forum of Federations. The earlier conferences were held in Canada in 1999, Switzerland in 2002, and Belgium in 2005.

The Forum of Federations was established by the Government of Canada as the secretariat for the 1st International Conference on Federalism held at Mont Tremblant in October 1999. This event provided the first opportunity for experts and practitioners from around the world to ponder the relevance of *Federalism in an Age of Globalization*. Following the Mont Tremblant conference, the Swiss government invited the second conference to be held in Switzerland. A joint initiative by the federal and cantonal authorities, the 2nd International Conference was held in August 2002 at St. Gallen under the title *Federalism in a Changing World: Learning from Each Other*. At the conclusion of the Swiss event, the Belgian prime minister invited the next conference to Brussels. This third conference was held in March 2005 in Brussels under the title *Federalism: Turning Diversity into Harmony, Sharing Best Practices*. The conference was timed to coincide with a series of events aiming to celebrate the 175th anniversary of Belgium's independence, and the 25th anniversary of federalism in the country.

India announced its intention to host the 4th International Conference on Federalism at the conference in Brussels. The Inter-State Council Secretariat (ISCS), Government of India, was identified as the nodal agency to organize the 2007 conference in India, and the Forum of Federations as the permanent secretariat to the International Conferences on Federalism was invited to cooperate with the ISCS. The objective of the 4th International Conference on Federalism was to promote dialogue on the renewal and development of federalism and greater cooperation among practitioners in pursuit of better governance.

The 4th International Conference on Federalism was a two-and-a-half-day event based around four broad themes and twelve subthemes. Each theme was developed by a panel of Indian and international experts. Thematic papers were peer reviewed at a pre-conference held from 21 to 23 February 2007, before being published as background reading for the conference. These papers were not presented at the conference but were made available to practitioners sufficiently in advance to serve as input for informed discussions. These papers influenced the selection of issues and case studies for discussions at the conference work sessions. The rationale and relevance of the themes selected is discussed in the introductory essay by the co-editors of the post-conference publications, Ronald Watts and John Kincaid. The pieces published as part of this series include the revised background papers—revised in the light of discussions at the conference—and analytical summaries of the proceedings from the work sessions. The analytical summaries represent the authors' analysis of discussions at the work sessions that they participated in. Each volume is organized by theme—*Building on and Accommodating Diversities, Emerging Issues in Fiscal Federalism, Interaction in Federal Systems,* and *Local Government in Federal Systems.*

The organization and structure of the 4th International Conference was inspired by the example of International Conference in St. Gallen. The triennial conferences provide a unique forum where practitioners of federalism, academics, and members of NGOs are able to interact and learn from one another. The thematic work sessions are the core events of these conferences. Unlike inter-

governmental conferences, senior officials and ministers present did not present existing government positions from prepared texts. Rather, senior practitioners were expected to participate actively in the interactive work sessions, where colleagues from around the world were exposed to diverse points of view and new insights arising from the dialogue. Such a format allowed for maximum participation, while providing an opportunity for peers to draw inspiration from each others' experiences. The work sessions fed their conclusions to theme sessions on each day of the conference. The working days of the conference were capped by plenary sessions where participating heads of state and senior ministers were invited to share their observations on issues of federalism.

The integration of young professionals into the program of the main conference provided an additional international facet. Fifty young professionals from India and other countries were paired up to produce policy-relevant pieces on the conference themes and present their perspectives at the work sessions. The Forum intends to publish a selection of these papers in due course.

Because these conferences are designed to address the needs of all who share an interest in the practice of federalism, these volumes are meant to be accessible even to "non-experts". The volumes are meant to provide surveys of the themes and subthemes. However, each volume contains a select bibliography of suggested readings for anyone interested in pursuing any of the topics in greater depth.

The publication of these volumes constitutes the final step in a process that first began three years ago and would not have been possible without the support of a great many people. The conference would not have been possible without the support and generosity of the Government of India, particularly the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Honourable Prithviraj Chavan, Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office, at the initiative of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, invited the Forum of Federations to partner with the Indian Government in organizing the 4th International Conference on Federalism in New Delhi. The Honourable Shivraj V. Patil, the Home Minister of India, served as host and took great personal interest in ensuring the success of the conference.

Credit is due to the staff of the Inter-State Council Secretariat, the Forum's partner and co-organizer, who, against all odds, successfully organized the largest International Conference on Federalism to date with 1300 participants from more than 100 countries. The Forum could not have hoped for a better partner. In particular, we offer our thanks to Amitabha Pande and S. Lakshminarayanan, who, as Chairs of the Organizing Committee, oversaw management of the whole process. Thanks are also due to the Additional Secretaries, past and present—Ravi Dhingra, S.D. Sharma, Atul Gupta, and Veena Upadhyaya for their diligence and support. On the administrative side, Deputy Secretaries Sudhir Kumar and Amaresh Singh were instrumental in keeping the organizational machinery running and in good order. Raoul Blindenbacher, then Vice President of the Forum, based on his experience of St. Gallen, contributed immensely to the development of the conference design. The Young Professionals Programme was ably coordinated by Assefa Fiseha, Andrea Iff, Paul Morton, and Rekha Saxena. Arif Ali Khan, in addition to the many other hats he wore during the conference, and Libby Johnston helped with the copy-editing of the analytical summaries. Rod MacDonnell deserves special thanks for managing the entire publications process.

Following the tradition of past conferences, we had initially planned on producing a single volume post-conference publication. Significantly, it was George Anderson who first suggested a series of more accessible publications by theme, an idea embraced enthusiastically by Amitabha Pande and the Inter-State Council. Last but not the least, gratitude is due to both the authors of the papers and all those who actively participated in the conference, without whose inputs these volumes would have been difficult to produce.