

A GLOBAL DIALOGUE ON FEDERALISM

Forty per cent of the world's population lives in 25 federal countries. Within them, there are countries with more than a century of experience in the politics of federalism, and some that are just becoming federations, some that embody a range of religious, ethnic, and racial diversity, and others less so. A *Global Dialogue on Federalism* makes use of these differences by enabling the practitioners of federalism as well as scholars, students, and others, to learn from each other. The program enhances understanding of the prospects as well as the challenges of federalism as a mode of governance, especially in relation to democracy, freedom, prosperity, and peace and helps participants to create and share knowledge and ideas reflecting a diversity of viewpoints. These new perspectives are captured in comparative publications on each theme, helping to create future learning opportunities. The program is advised by an Editorial Board composed of ten prominent experts of federalism around the world, half of whom are members of the International Association of Centers for Federal Studies, who contribute their own international network as well as their theoretical expertise on federalism.

The themes of the program are particularly relevant to those with an interest in federal governance. Each theme is examined through a process of country roundtables, an international comparative roundtable, followed by the production of a booklet and book. The first several themes being explored are:

- Constitutional Origins, Structure, and Change in Federal Countries (2002)
- Distribution of Powers and Responsibilities in Federal Countries (2003)
- Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Governance in Federal Countries (2004)
- The Practice of Fiscal Federalism: Comparative Perspectives (2005)
- Foreign Relations in Federal Countries (2006)
- Local Governments and Metropolitan Regions in Federal Countries (2007)

In a period of four years, and with an investment of less than \$2 million Canadian, the Global Dialogue Program has greatly contributed to the Forum's reputation as a world leading network on federalism. **To date, the program has involved over one thousand high-level participants in 50 events held in nearly 20 countries around the world. Its seminal publications include three major books and four booklets.** The quality of the

I find it personally quite a paradox that federal states have been in existence for at least 200 years, but that as far as I know, it is only in the last few years that these states have decided to meet each other as federal states and to exchange knowledge and experience.

-Guy Verhofstadt, Prime Minister of Belgium

An important and extraordinary work...It is an excellent resource, both for those seeking to adopt a federal model and for those in search of practical, effective strategies for change in their own federal systems.
-Karen Fraser, State Senator, Washington, referring to Volume 2 of the Global Dialogue on Federalism Book Series

program and its products is due in large part to its unique theoretical method, which rests on the concept of selecting participants to ensure that as many points of view and experiences related to a given topic are represented as possible. By engaging in rigorous dialogue from all angles with a neutral set of questions, representatives are able to develop the most possible accurate picture of the subject and project real life trends on the practice of federalism. The roundtables create a space to generate new insights and build capacity, resulting in more effective governmental policies. The international roundtables ensure that authors are able to explore the theme from a global vantage point, resulting in truly comparative, state of the art publications, filling a much-needed gap in the literature.

To reach the number of individuals in as many countries as it does, the Global Dialogue program relies on the support of outside donors who recognize the program's potential in promoting dialogue on essential issues of governance. These include various governmental and multinational organizations, among them the governments of Canada, Brazil and Switzerland and the World Bank.