



ANNUAL REPORT

2025–26

Building resilient, inclusive and effective
multilevel governance in a changing world

Contents

THE FORUM IN 2025–2026

Message from the Forum	04
Who we are	06
Delivering under pressure	07
The year in numbers	09
Geographic reach	10

PROGRAMS & IMPACT

Thematic programs	11
Country programs	12
Stories of change	13
Forum publications	15
Knowledge in numbers	16
Looking ahead	17

PEOPLE & PARTNERS

Funders & partners	18
Board of directors	19
Forum staff	20
Non-resident fellows	21

Message from the Forum

The past year has tested institutions and the people who work to strengthen them.

Across the world, governments have faced growing pressures: geopolitical uncertainty, fiscal constraints, climate disruption, technological change and renewed questions about how power should be organized and exercised. At the same time, the international environment for governance and development work has become considerably more difficult, with significant reductions in official development assistance and increasing pressure on organizations to demonstrate practical results.

It is in this environment that the Forum of Federations continued to deliver.

In 2025–26, we reached more than 650 agents of change across 18 countries and five regions, combining comparative research, dialogue, training and technical support. Five of our six principal outputs were delivered on or ahead of plan. Our knowledge products reached a global audience, generating more than 183,000 downloads and 232 academic citations. But numbers tell only part of the story. What matters most is whether knowledge is translated into greater capacity, stronger institutions and better outcomes.

This report highlights some of those results.

In Sri Lanka, young local councillors from different political parties turned relationships built through the Forum's youth programming into a practical network for coordinating relief when Cyclone Ditwah struck. In Jordan, women participating in climate-resilience programming moved from training to collective action in their communities. In Tunisia, a leadership programme for senior women leaders generated a commitment to build a cross-regional network for continued collaboration. In Indonesia, comparative expertise was brought directly to the challenges of metropolitan governance and intergovernmental coordination.

These experiences illustrate what we mean when we describe the Forum as a “think-and-do” organization. Our purpose is not simply to produce knowledge about federalism and multilevel governance. It is to connect knowledge to people, institutions and decisions.

That distinction is increasingly important.

The challenges confronting governments rarely fit neatly within the boundaries of a single level of government. Climate adaptation requires coordination across jurisdictions. Artificial intelligence is transforming public administration while raising questions about accountability and regulatory authority. Fragility requires institutions capable of managing diversity while maintaining sufficient national cohesion. Rapid urbanization is creating metropolitan challenges that traditional administrative boundaries often struggle to address. Fiscal pressures are making effective intergovernmental relations more important, not less.

In each of these areas, the Forum's comparative perspective has a particular contribution to make.

Our work on state fragility, new technologies and climate action during the past year reflects this evolving agenda. We have also continued to invest in the foundations of effective multilevel governance: fiscal institutions, local government, inclusive participation, women's leadership and the capacity of public institutions to work across levels of government.

FOREWORD

Looking ahead, we will build on this work. The launch of the Intergovernmental Fiscal Institutions Network, continued research on AI and federalism, renewed engagement with the Pakistan Senate, and expanded youth programming in Jordan are among the initiatives that will shape the coming year. Together, they reflect a broader ambition: to help governments and their partners find practical ways to govern more effectively in an increasingly complex world.

We are able to do this because of the strength of our partnerships. We are grateful to our country partners, funders, institutional partners, experts, fellows and, above all, the many public officials, elected representatives, researchers, civil-society leaders, women and young people who participate in our work. Their experience and commitment are what make comparative learning meaningful.

We are also grateful to the Forum's staff and field teams. Delivering under pressure requires more than adaptability. It requires judgment, persistence and a willingness to find solutions when circumstances change. This year's results are a reflection of those qualities.

The world in which we work will remain uncertain. But that makes effective multilevel governance more important, not less. Strong institutions are built not only through constitutional design or formal rules, but through the capacity of people and governments to work together, across jurisdictions and across differences, to solve problems.

That is the work of the Forum.



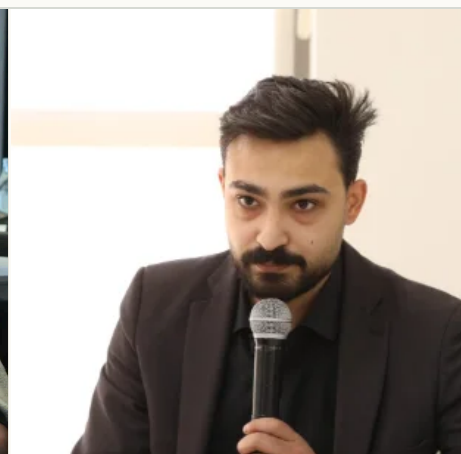
Rupak Chattopadhyay

President & Chief Executive Officer



Hans Altherr

Chair of the Board of Directors



The only international organization specializing in federal and multilevel governance

The Forum of Federations (the Forum) is a “think-and-do” organization that draws on an unparalleled international network of experts and partners to generate and mobilize comparative knowledge, helping stakeholders develop practical solutions to federal and multilevel governance challenges.

OUR MISSION

To strengthen democratic, inclusive, and gender-responsive governance in established and emerging federal and multilevel countries through knowledge creation and mobilization, capacity development, and support to inclusive policy implementation processes.

OUR VISION

Empower people in established and emerging federal and multilevel countries.

THE FORUM ADVANTAGE

A networking platform

Bringing together experts and officials from established and emerging federal and multilevel countries.

A think-tank

Developing knowledge and knowhow on a wide range of topics related to federalism and multilevel governance.

A change facilitator

Providing expertise and implementing programs to support federal and multilevel governance development and reform processes.

The Forum supports agents of change to develop solutions to governance challenges, offering innovative expertise on inclusive multilevel governance practice. The Forum’s method is based on in-house expertise, cutting edge comparative research, and a unique network of international experts in federalism and multilevel governance. It assists stakeholders to apply knowledge and develop the institutions and mechanisms necessary to create better societies.

Delivering under pressure

In 2025–26 the Forum continued to deliver impactful activities in a highly challenging environment for governance and democracy programming. In the face of unprecedented contractions in official development assistance, this year the Forum created cutting-edge knowledge, equipped actors with the skills they need to effect change, and supported its global stakeholders to develop solutions to their governance challenges.

With its flexible, partnership-driven, and coordinative approach, the Forum has adapted effectively in a context of global instability and limited resources.

IN 2025–26, THE FORUM:

Convened the Forum25 Conference: *The Relevance of the Federal Idea in a Changing World*, bringing international experts together with officials, diplomats, researchers and elected representatives to discuss the role of federalism in addressing critical governance issues of the 21st century: state fragility, artificial intelligence, climate action, and fiscal relations. This flagship event, held in Ottawa in November 2025, was anchored by a conversation on the future of Canadian federalism featuring three former Canadian Premiers.

Delivered the Women's Leadership Program, convening 38 senior women leaders from nine countries in Tunis to strengthen policymaking and coalition-building skills, with six participants committing to establish a cross-regional network for women's leadership;

Engaged young people through targeted youth programming in Jordan and Sri Lanka, grounding multilevel-governance training in beneficiaries' everyday realities;

Generated important knowledge capital across its three focus themes — state fragility, new technologies, and climate action — including an open-access handbook on digitalization in federal countries, and a report on fragility and federalism, a policy insights paper on power sharing in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Reached more than 650 agents of change across 18 countries — local elected officials, women leaders, youth representatives, public administrators, academics, civil society actors, constitutional experts, and senior policy actors — through comparative research, dialogue, training, and convening;

Renewed its partnership with Pakistan, engaging in discussions with key stakeholders on strategic priorities for country programming in 2026-27.



FORUM25 · OTTAWA · NOVEMBER 2025

“Quiet diplomacy at its very best”

“The greatest governance challenges today and in the future are conflict. They have everything to do with issues of identity, sharing of power, dealing with the scarcity of resources.

Being more creative about governance, and finding ways to allow people to live together, I think it's the most critical issue of our time.

This is where the Forum's approach comes in: being steady, fact-based, trying to find ways of defusing conflict, pointing the way to institutional innovation and change. It's quiet diplomacy at its very best.”

Bob Rae

Former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations

A year of measurable reach and impact

KEY FIGURES

650+

Agents of change reached directly

19

Countries across five regions

55

Activities delivered in 2025–26

183,876

Knowledge-product downloads in-year

232

Citations of Forum publications

104

Experts deployed

22

Partner organisations engaged in Forum programming

20

Comparative knowledge products published

OUTPUTS DELIVERED

27

Public engagement & awareness activities

20

Comparative knowledge products

5

Training & networking for agents of change

3

Training for women & youth

2

Dialogue & consensus-building

1

Technical assistance

19 countries. Global impact

Forum programming reached agents of change across established and emerging federal systems, from post-conflict transitions to rapidly urbanising economies.



Programming rooted in **15 countries** brought together agents of change from **19 countries** across five regions — because the hardest governance problems are never solved in isolation.

AMERICAS

Argentina

Brazil

Canada

Mexico

United States

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Ethiopia

Kenya

Seychelles

South Africa

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

Jordan

Syria

Tunisia

ASIA & THE PACIFIC

India

Indonesia

Japan

Myanmar

Pakistan

Sri Lanka

Thailand

Insights on three critical governance issues

This year, the Forum focused on three pressing global governance issues — examining where multilevel governance may have practical answers to offer.

01 State Fragility

A new research stream on federalism in fragile settings launched with the *Federalism and Fragility: Rethinking Multilevel Governance* workshop in partnership with the World Bank's Global Governance Practice. Convened in October 2025 in Washington DC, the event convened **55 practitioners and researchers** to explore key dynamics and international case studies, with an insights report on the discussions published in February 2026. Syria was a key focus of this work in 2025-26. The *Pathways to Inclusive Governance in Syria — Balancing Unity and Diversity* report combined an actor mapping of the post-Assad landscape with an assessment of institutional options drawing on Northern Ireland, Cyprus, and Burundi. It anchored a dialogue bringing **65 participants**, including Arab, Kurdish and Druze representatives, into discussion on inclusive governance for Syria.

02 New Technologies

The *Forum of Federations Handbook on Digitalization in Public Administration of Federal Countries* was published open access by Palgrave Macmillan in February 2026. Including international cases and lessons for practices, the book has been accessed over **20,000 times**, and was complemented by a Forum digitalization podcast series released in March 2026. This work fed directly into a new AI and Federalism project. A scoping study examining AI, development and federalism in Brazil, India, Nepal and Ethiopia developed a typology of AI applications across federations and identified stakeholder needs for improved outcomes.

03 Climate Action

The Forum's cutting-edge comparative research on inclusive climate governance in conflict-affected states compared four cases — Ethiopia, Myanmar, Pakistan and the Philippines — with findings presented to climate security experts in London and Berlin. Recommendations for action for policy makers, donors, practitioners and country specific stakeholders are coming in 2026.

Facilitating practical solutions

In 2025–26, Country Programs equipped change agents with the knowledge, skills and tools to develop solutions to their governance challenges.



TUNISIA

Building Women's Leadership

In February 2026, the Forum convened 38 senior women leaders from nine countries across Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas in Tunis for a three-day leadership programme built around a single premise: that gender-responsive governance requires women with the capacity to lead and build coalitions to drive positive change.



SRI LANKA

Raising Youth Voices in Local Government

The Youth in Local Governance (YoLoGo) initiative established itself as a practical, inclusive and institutionally anchored mechanism for youth participation in local governance in Western, Northern and Eastern Provinces. In Western Province, **40 Youth Advisory Councils** (YACs) comprised of community youth volunteers were established across **46 local authorities**, creating a structured interface between local authorities and young citizens through the YACs and Youth Focal Points drawn from elected councillors. YoLoGo meaningfully brought youth voices and priorities into both province and local level government in Sri Lanka.



JORDAN

Enhancing Climate Adaptation Resilience

In an acutely vulnerable climate context, the Forum empowered **almost 300 women** across Jordan in Irbid, Mafrq and Aqaba/AI-Quwayrah governorates with the knowledge, confidence and agency to lead climate adaptation in their communities. Policy recommendations were provided to the Ministry of Environment focused on climate change resilience, and women's leadership in local climate adaptation.



INDONESIA

Improving Megacity Metropolitan Governance

At the forefront of the West Java economic development plan, the Forum provided technical assistance to the Rebana Metropolitan Management Authority. Expertise shared at the Asia-Pacific Metropolitan Planning Caucus and recommendations from the Forum's comparative report on urban governance in **14 metropolitan areas**, informed decision making on critical issues of intergovernmental coordination and fiscal management.



MYANMAR

Supporting Democratic Federal Governance

In Myanmar, the Forum aims to strengthen cohesion and consensus among democratic actors in the Bamar-majority regions, including women and minority groups, to advance inclusive interim governance arrangements that contribute to peacebuilding. We also facilitate political negotiations at the regional level and strengthening coordination between regional and Union-level stakeholders about the country's future governance system.

Stories of change

Fostering positive, long-term change requires empowering stakeholders in multiple areas of the governance ecosystem — from the local to the national. And this year the Forum reached agents of change that matter: local officials, women leaders, youth representatives, public administrators, academics, civil-society actors, constitutional experts and senior policymakers.

Four stories from 2025-26 show how the Forum supports participants to tackle the challenges that matter — in their homes, communities, and institutions.

MAFRAQ, JORDAN

Fostering Community-led Solutions to Local Challenges

Mafrq faces some of the highest heat and water stress in Jordan, and many of the **120 women** who joined the four-day Forum training arrived doubting they could do anything about it. After a field visit to a model farm at Umm Al-Jimal, several began applying drip irrigation at household level. The larger shift was collective: participants opened discussions in their communities about forming women-led knowledge-sharing groups — moving from isolated learners to local advocates for water-efficient practice.

TUNIS, TUNISIA

From Individual Capability to Collective Power

The **38 senior women leaders** who attended the Women's Leadership Program in Tunis expecting to sharpen their own skills. All 38 left reporting new insights and confidence to apply them within their institutions. But six Tunisian participants went further, committing to establish a cross-regional network to advance women's leadership and gender equality — a standing structure for knowledge exchange, peer support and coordinated action. The program was designed to strengthen individual leaders but resulted in more: a collective commitment to work together for women's empowerment.

SRI LANKA

From Dialogue to Action in a Crisis

From November 11-12 2025, young councillors from across Sri Lanka's political parties met for the first time at a residential YoLoGo workshop — many had never engaged with peers outside their own party. When Cyclone Ditwah struck in November 2025, they used the network they had built to create a real-time WhatsApp coordination platform, sharing information on affected areas and urgent needs. Through it they distributed food, water and medical supplies, organised community kitchens, and pooled boats to reach isolated communities, working across party lines.

AQABA, JORDAN

Women Leading Climate Adaptation

In Al-Quwayrah, women had traditionally responded to climate stress reactively, with little access to knowledge or platforms for collective action. But after **77 women** took part in Forum climate-smart agriculture and resilience training everything changed. Participants began holding informal meetings on shared water challenges, one piloted a household water-saving practice, and the group proposed a women-led advocacy network to engage local stakeholders directly.



FORUM IMPACT · YOLOGO · SRI LANKA

“It challenged us to start supporting youth as active community leaders”

“As local governance leaders, we often assume we know what our young people need, but the YoLoGo Youth Barometer findings were a true eye-opener for us at the Manthai East Pradeshiya Sabha.

This research didn't just present data; it challenged us to stop treating youth as passive petitioners and start supporting them as active community leaders.

Moving forward, our council is committed to closing the feedback loop and co-creating accessible, safe spaces so that the young women and youth of the Northern Province aren't just invited to sit in the room, but are actually empowered to shape local decisions.”

Rasaiya Nalini

Chairman, Manthai East Pradeshiya Sabha, Kilinochchi District

Forum publications in 2025–26

A range of publications making a meaningful contribution to the body of knowledge on federal and multilevel governance — available for free in the Forum online library.

9

Policy briefs

3

Occasional papers

7

Podcast episodes

1

Bilingual knowledge platform

BOOKS

The Forum of Federations [*Handbook on Digitalization in Public Administration of Federal Countries*](#) — open access, Palgrave Macmillan.

POLICY BRIEFS

[Federalism, Power Sharing and Citizen Inclusion: Evaluating the Dayton Agreement at 30 Series](#) (seven briefs); [30 Years of Dayton: Insights for Peacebuilding From Bosnia and Herzegovina](#); and [Voter Turnout: Does Federalism Make a Difference?](#)

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

[Government with Algorithms: Managing AI in India's Federal System](#); [Federalism Under Construction — Proposed Tools for Intergovernmental Relations in Canadian Housing Policy](#); and [Disaster Governance, Uncertainty and the Reproduction of Fragility — The Case of Morocco](#).

PODCASTS

[ForumFedCast: Federalism & Digitalization Series](#) — seven episodes.

FORUM BLOG

[Diverse topics](#) including vaccine governance in Sri Lanka, federalism in an era of globalization, the future of power-sharing in Yemen, and intergovernmental relations in Canadian housing policy.

BILINGUAL KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM — JORDAN

An Arabic/English [knowledge-sharing platform](#) developed for the Jordan climate-resilience program, supporting the 297 women trained during the year — hosting training materials, climate-adaptation resources and a peer-to-peer exchange.

Reach and relevance of Forum knowledge

120,946

Website users

183,876

Downloads of Forum knowledge
products

8,211

Views of new blogs

INFLUENCING GOVERNANCE RESEARCH

232

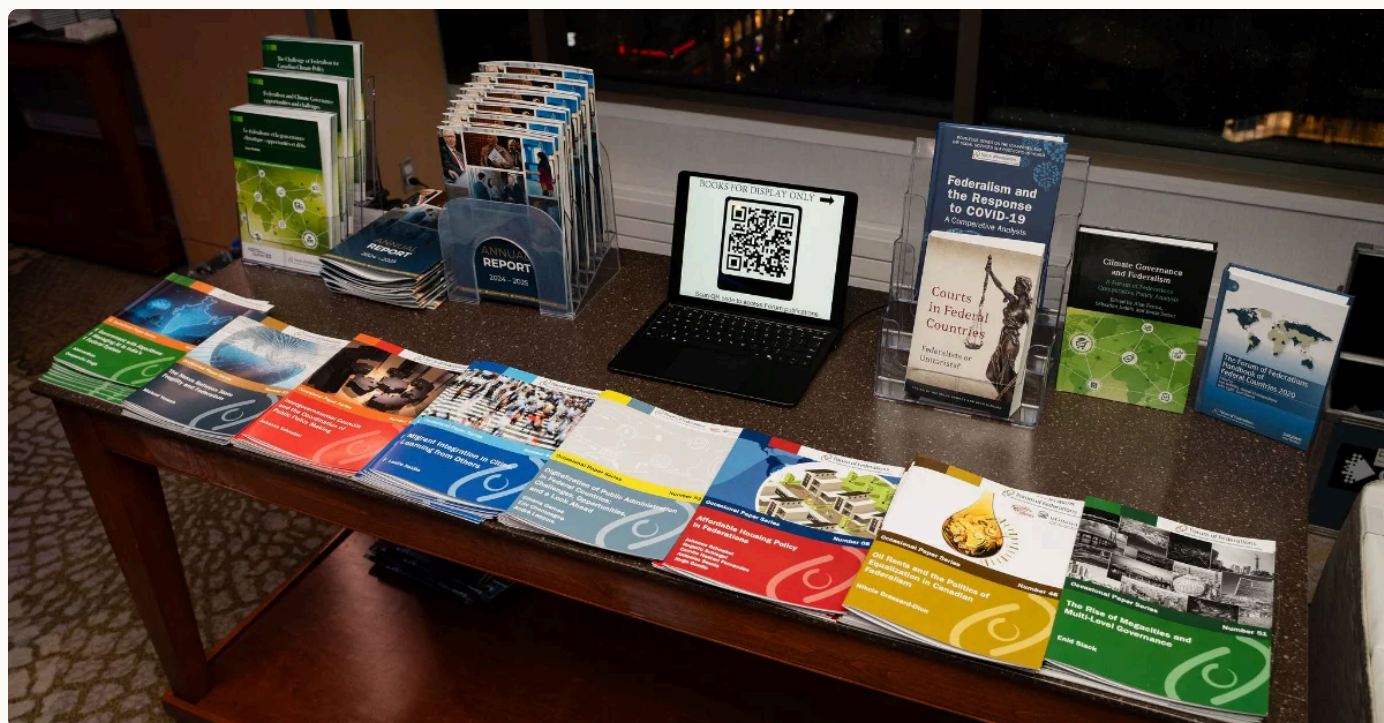
Citations of Forum publications

174

Journals & publications citing Forum work

73

Distinct Forum publications cited



Looking ahead

Building on this year's achievements, work is already underway on activities to empower stakeholders and provide solutions to governance challenges.

Intergovernmental Fiscal Institutions Network (IGFIN)

In cooperation with the World Bank, the Philippine Department of Budget and Management, and with input of the OECD, the Forum is launching a new global initiative to strengthen intergovernmental fiscal relations by convening leaders of independent fiscal institutions, finance commissions and similar bodies from established and emerging multilevel systems. This will support evidence-based fiscal governance, promote transparency and equity, and lay the foundation for the Intergovernmental Fiscal Institutions Network to foster ongoing cooperation and capacity building.

AI & Federalism Research

In 2026 the Forum will convene an international research workshop on AI and federalism in collaboration with *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*. Building on the Forum's work this year in digitalization and in AI, federalism and development, the event will gather **17 experts from nine federal countries** to identify key learning from international practices in AI governance. The workshop will be held at the Les Aspin Center for Government in Washington DC, with the support of the James Madison Charitable Trust.

Supporting Fiscal Institutional Capacity of the Pakistan Senate

The Senate of Pakistan has identified strengthening fiscal management, fiscal decentralization, and parliamentary oversight as priority areas for deepening its role in Pakistan's federal governance system. Under its renewed partnership with the Senate, the Forum will work to strengthen the Senate's capacity in fiscal matters, including supporting the development of improved technical skills in budget scrutiny and oversight practice, and providing access to comparative international approaches relevant to the Pakistan context.

Youth Participation in Jordan

Next year the Forum's work to empower youth in political participation, local development and advancing the green economy will accelerate. Engaging **300 young men and women** from across the country, a training program implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs will focus on enhancing awareness of the upcoming 2027 local elections, the new Local Administration Law, and the vital role that youth have to play in local political and development processes in Jordan.

Funders & partners

The Forum thanks its country partners, funders and program partners for their support and continued collaboration.

COUNTRY PARTNERS



Australia



Brazil



Canada



Ethiopia



Germany



India



Mexico



Nigeria



Pakistan



Switzerland

FUNDERS



Global Affairs Canada
Affaires mondiales Canada

Canada — Global Affairs Canada



Ethiopia — House of Federation



Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung

Germany — Federal Ministry of the Interior



Pakistan — Senate of Pakistan



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Switzerland — Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

PROGRAM PARTNERS



THE WORLD BANK

The World Bank



The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and
Development (OECD)

ANZSOG

The Australia and New Zealand School of
Government (ANZSOG)



Publius: The Journal of Federalism



The James Madison Charitable Trust

Board of Directors

Hans Altherr

Former President of the Senate of Switzerland

CHAIR

Salma Siddiqui

Entrepreneur & Community Activist, Canada

VICE-CHAIR

Christian Paradis

Former Minister of International Development, Canada

TREASURER

Birtukan Ayanodadi

State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia

DIRECTOR

Rafael Bruxellas Parra

Executive Secretary, Council of Federation, Brazil

DIRECTOR

Julius Ihonvbere

Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, Nigeria

DIRECTOR

Saleem Mandviwalla

Deputy Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan

DIRECTOR

Carsten Sieling

Former Member of the Bremen State Parliament, former President of the Senate and Mayor of Bremen, Germany

DIRECTOR

Kevin Bosch

Managing partner and co-founder of Sandstone Group, Canada

DIRECTOR

OUR PEOPLE

Forum staff

HEADQUARTERS · OTTAWA

Rupak Chattopadhyay President & CEO	Felix Knüpling Vice President, Programs	Diana Chebenova Vice President, Partnerships
Charles Cloutier Advisor, Finance and Audit	Sheela Embounou Advisor, Corporate Affairs	Shawn Houlihan Senior Advisor
Phillip Gonzalez Senior Director	Liam Whittington Senior Program Manager	Olakunle Adeniran Program Manager
Jamie Thomas Program Manager	Donna Duffett Contracts Manager	Driss Boutakhoust Finance Manager
Elizabeth Lisa Nganwa Executive Assistant and Office Administrator	Mohamed Islam Ounalli Social Media and Communications Officer	Julia Clinch Research Support Officer (Intern)
Sparscho Chakraborty Summer Student		

FIELD STAFF

Constantino Cronemberger Mendes Country Representative 	Yakob Bekele Country Representative 	Medhanit Teklu Dibaba Administration and Financial Officer 
Fikirt Debebe Office Attendant 	Endale Girma Facilitator 	Vikas Kumar Choudhary Senior Program Manager 
Tala Khrais Country Representative 	Win Min Country Director 	Other Forum Myanmar staff Not identified for security reasons 
Sagar Manandhar Senior Program Manager 	Saman Rizvi Program Assistant 	Azairah Mortel Program Assistant 
Erwin Bulang Program Assistant 	Fatima Dianne T. Alih Program Assistant 	Yasodhara Kapuge Program Assistant 
Namini Panditha Program Assistant 	Inès Dhifallah Country Representative 	Muaamar Batawil Senior Advisor 

Non-Resident Fellows

A global community of scholars and practitioners who extend the Forum’s comparative expertise across every region in which it works.

George Anderson	Jaap de Visser
Eric Champagne	Alan Fenna
Christine Forster	Laurenne Garneau
Amit Gupta	John Kincaid
Mario Kölling	Sabine Kropp
André Lecours	Francis Kok-Wah Loh
Neophytos Loizides	Rekha Saxena
Johanna Schnabel	Sean Mueller
Leslie Seidle	Sandeep Shastri
Enid Slack	Jason Tabarias
Zemelak Ayele	



FORUM OF FEDERATIONS

forum@forumfed.org

75 Albert Street, Suite 411

Ottawa, Ontario · Canada K1P 5E7

FORUMFED.ORG