



**Institute of Social Sciences**

**International Association of Centers for Federal Studies  
(IACFS)**

**Annual Conference**

**Hosted by Centre for Multilevel Federalism (CMF),  
Institute of Social Sciences (ISS)**

**16-18 November 2016  
Abdul Nazir Sab Hall, Institute of Social Sciences**

**“The Value of Comparative Federalism:  
The Legacy of Ronald L. Watts”**



*Participants of IACFS International Conference*



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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
CENTERS FOR FEDERAL STUDIES

**T**he Centre for Multilevel Federalism (CMF), Institute of Social Sciences, in collaboration with the International Association of Centers for Federal Studies (IACFS), organised the IACFS Annual Conference titled "The Value of Comparative Federalism: The Legacy of Ronald L. Watts" from 16-18 November.

Prof. Balveer Arora, Chairman, Centre for Multilevel Federalism, New Delhi and Prof. Nico Steytler, President, Dullah Omar Institute, University of Western Cape South Africa and the outgoing President of IACFS, were the conveners of this international conference. Prof. Francesco Palermo (EURAC Institute for Studies on Federalism and Regionalism, Bozen/Bolzano, Italy) was elected as the new President. The three-day conference revolved around key aspects of federalism - accommodating diversities, resource and fiscal federal governance, and asymmetrical federalism.

The annual conference paid tribute to the intellectual legacy of Prof. Ronald Watts, one of the founding fathers of the IACFS. Prof. Watts had served as Director of the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada and Senior Adviser to the federal government of Canada on constitutional affairs. He was consultant to governments all over the world. The 2016 IACFS conference in Delhi was a special occasion to commemorate Prof. Watts' pioneering works on the comparative study of federal political systems.

A special session was devoted to remembering Ronald Watts and the presentation of the Ronald L. Watts Award for Young Researcher. The participants were honoured by the presence of Prof. Watts' wife, Mrs. Donna Watts on the occasion. Prof. Gisela Färber (German Research Institute for Public Administration, Speyer, Germany) introduced this year's awardee, Alice Vakdesalici (EURAC Institute for Studies on Federalism and Regionalism, Bozen/Bolzano, Italy), for her outstanding work on "Measuring Fiscal Responsibility: From 'Law in Books' to 'Law in Action'". Mrs. Donna Watts presented the award to Alice Vakdesalici.

The practice of comparative federalism in scholarship was a key concern of this conference. Participants engaged in comparative research illustrating both methodological issues as well as the value of such research.



*Ronald L. Watts Young Researcher Award - Donna Watts presenting the 2016 Award to Alice Valdesalici. From L to R: Francesco Palermo, Nico Steytler, Gisela Färber & Kyle Hanniman*

Papers covering various dimensions of the broader theme were presented by eminent scholars and experts, among whom were Prof. Francesco Palermo, Prof. Nico Steytler, Prof. J. Wesley Leckrone (Widener University, USA), Dr. Maria Bertel (Institute of Federalism, Innsbruck University, Austria), Prof. John Wanna (Australian Centre for Federalism, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia), Prof. Jaap De Visser (Dullah Omar Institute, University of the Western Cape, South Africa), Prof. Stelio Mangiameli (Istituto di Studi sui Sistemi Regionali Federali e sulle Autonomie, Rome, Italy), and Prof. William Partlett (Centre for Comparative Constitutional Studies, University of Melbourne, Australia).

Case Studies were presented on recent trends in the United States, Germany, Switzerland, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canada and Italy. The session was presided over by Prof. Eva Maria Belser (Institute of Federalism, Fribourg University, Switzerland) and case studies were presented by Prof. Gisela Färber, Prof. Peter Hänni (Institute of



*Country case studies panelists from L to R: Gisela Färber, Peter Hanni, Eva Maria Belser, Radu Carciumaru, Felix Mathieu, Elisabeth Alber, Robert Williams & Wesley Leckrone.*

Federalism, Fribourg University, Switzerland), Dr. Elisabeth Alber (EURAC Institute for Studies of Federalism and Regionalism, Bolzano/Bozen, Italy), Dr. Felix Mathieu (Canada Research Chair, Quebec and Canadian Studies, Canada), Dr. Radu Carciumaru (Resident Representative, Heidelberg Center South Asia, New Delhi), and Prof. Robert Williams (Associate Director, Centre for State Constitutional Studies, State University of New Jersey, USA).

The Indian scholars who participated included Prof. Balveer Arora, Prof. Rekha Saxena (Vice-Chairperson, Centre for Multilevel Federalism), Dr. K.K. Kailash, (Central University, Hyderabad), Dr. Ajay Kumar Singh (Centre for Federal Studies, Hamdard University, New Delhi). Dr. George Mathew (Chairman, Institute of Social Sciences) inaugurated the conference with a presentation on the importance of local government in comparative federalism. The Conference was organised around the following major themes:

- \* Comparative Perspectives
- \* Federalism and Conflict Resolution
- \* Legal and Institutional Dimensions
- \* Fiscal Federalism and Local Government
- \* Federal Innovations and Trends



*Case Study – India: panelists from L to R: John Wanna, Balveer Arora, Rekha Saxena & Ajay Kumar Singh*



*Presentation of Mementos: From L to R: Balveer Arora, Nico Steytler, Donna Watts, Francesco Palermo & George Mathew*

The conference aimed at opening new avenues of research in comparative federal studies. Some presentations emphasised the need to critically re-examine the conceptual tool kits for comparing federal systems. The papers critically examined the role of comparative federalism in dissemination and implementation of federal concepts. They highlighted the influence of comparative federalism on constitution making as well as constitutional reform. Some scholars focused on how reform initiatives in the established federations could influence similar initiatives in the newer federal systems. Consequently they re-examined the underlying assumptions and methodologies used in comparative federal studies. During the conference the richness of possibilities and the varieties of adaptation of the federal idea that makes comparative federalism so exciting and rewarding became visible and gave this conference its driving force.

For detailed programme, see CMF page.

*Annual Conference*  
**International Association of Centres for Federal Studies (IACFS) 2016**  
*Supported by*

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**Forum of Federations**



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