



**FORUM OF GLOBAL ASSOCIATIONS OF REGIONS
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FOGAR, THE VOICE OF THE REGIONS IN A GLOBAL WORLD

Globalisation and the issues it implies need to be addressed as much by regional authorities as national governments and international institutions. Regional governments and their different social and economic players must all contribute if they are to meet the challenges with which they are faced. The sub-national bodies that are regions and provinces therefore emerge as key actors in the development of the various economic, social and environmental aspects of globalisation, acting both within their own territory as well as through their international cooperation actions. In this regard, they also have an instrumental role to play in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

It is against this background that a number of transnational regional organisations began examining the question of regions and globalisation in partnership with various international bodies, including the UNDP and OECD, and with the backing of the European Commission. Two major events focusing on this issue have been organised, one in the Azores in 2006 and one in Marseille in March 2007 bringing together over 1200 international and national stakeholders, NGOs and regional representatives.

At the Marseille meeting, the *“Declaration of the Regions on their participation in the governance of globalisation”* was signed by a dozen major networks of Regions representing over 500 regional authorities from the 5 continents. These networks have come together as a Forum, named **FOGAR**: Forum of Global Associations of Regions. Its Chair for the 2008-2009 period is Mr Claudio Martini, President of Tuscany Region (Italy) and President of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR), with the CPMR taking on the role of General Secretariat.

FOGAR's objectives are:

- To ensure that the voice of the regions is heard in globalisation, by becoming the correspondent of the new international bodies in charge of global governance, and more particularly, to ultimately obtain the status of a United Nations approved Intergovernmental Organisation to voice the views of the regions;
- To organise new rules for strategic governance including sub-State tiers of government, by aiding the decentralisation of globalisation so that in the areas in which they live, citizens, supported by their regional authorities, can become stakeholders in equity-based globalisation;
- To promote working together among the various regions of the world, whether on development cooperation, exchanging best practices or tangible joint projects that are of interest at territorial level.

Concrete projects are in the process of being set up, helping regions from developing countries to cooperate with other regional and local authorities in a coordinated and collaborative way. This is already the case in Haiti, where regions are working on the prevention of natural disasters, in Morocco, where cooperation is being established to support the decentralisation process, and in Senegal where a project on this same issue is due to be launched shortly. These actions are being undertaken within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding between the UNDP and CPMR, with the support of the UNDP Hub for Innovative Partnerships based in Geneva which runs the ART programmes (Support to Territorial Networks, Local Governance and Development), and with the backing of the European Commission for external cooperation actions led by EU regions.

Globalisation has deeply changed the face of the world, and henceforth the regions can and must be active on the international stage in order to make known their concerns and promote their know-how. A global integration process, in which disparities between regions were to remain as they were or widen within each State or on a continent-wide and worldwide scale, would be unacceptable. *It is by adopting a territorial approach to development that we might ensure lasting peace and development across the globe.*

In the initial stages of its existence, FOGAR is also acting as an “amplifier” for the actions led by its different member networks in the interest of the regions and to assist their integration in a global context. The guide to international funding for regions, produced by the AIRF (International Association of French-speaking Regions) which includes a presentation of the United Nations system, has been translated and made available to all the regions of the Forum. Moreover, actions led by networks such as nrg4SD which focuses on sustainable development are brought to the knowledge of all members. Furthermore, the Northern Forum, through contacts established through FOGAR, has signed a MoU with the UNDP concerning the vulnerability of local communities in the light of climate change.

In order to broaden the debates on the place to be given to the regions within a multi-level governance system and to feed into the activities of the Forum, the CPMR and UNDP are jointly organising a Scientific Council meeting in Lisbon on 3 and 4 December 2007. This will bring together regional actors and world experts to discuss the issue of “Territories and Globalisation”. Work will continue through the preparation of the **“2nd Symposium for a Regional Approach to Governance and Development”**, to be held in partnership with the UNDP in Tangiers on 12-14 May 2008 as a follow-up to the Marseille meeting last March.

Sustainable development is a key issue, and so FOGAR also supports the actions led by nrg4SD, which is organising a regional summit on **“The Contribution of Regional Governments to the Fight against Climate Change”** in Saint-Malo (France) in October 2008. This event will look at the reasons why the issue of climate change is of direct concern to the regional sphere and how the regional level acts alongside other national and sub-regional government players. This issue will be addressed with emphasis on North-South solidarity, good governance and the mobilisation of local initiative networks.

The meetings in Tangiers and Saint-Malo will provide the opportunity to make some initial assessments of the progress the Regions have achieved on the world stage.

Member Networks: AIRF: Association Internationale des Régions Francophones, AEBR: Association of European Border Regions; CPMR: Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, CRECENEA: Comisión Regional de Comercio Exterior del NorEste Argentino, Norte Grande Argentino, IT4ALL: Network of local authorities for the information society, Northern Forum: International Association of Regional Governments from the Arctic Region, nrg4SD: Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development, OLAGI: Latin-American Organisation of Intermediate Governments, ZICOSUR: Integration Zone of West Central South America, Conference of Leaders of the EU’s Outermost Regions, Tanger-Tétouan Region, Brittany Region, CPMR Inter-Mediterranean Commission

