



International Research Seminar
**“CIVIL SOCIETY AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN AUTONOMOUS REGIONS:
 ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES”**
(United Nations, New York, 1st June 2015)

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations in New York is organising an international research seminar on the topic “Non-Governmental Organisations in Autonomous Regions: Role and Responsibilities” in New York on **June 1st, 2015**. Like previous ones organized in Morocco or in Geneva, this seminar will aim at promoting the importance of the Moroccan Initiative for a negotiation on the autonomy of the Sahara Region, in the light of the efforts made by Morocco in terms of economic, socio-cultural, environmental and human development of that region. This seminar will offer an opportunity to compare the practice followed in some states and/or already autonomous territories or regions or in view of their future autonomy regarding the specific role devoted to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) representing civil society. It is important to note that the international negotiations on the so-called conflict of Western Sahara are being conducted within the United Nations and that this seminar does not aim at substituting these negotiations but at facilitating their success.

Programme

Venue: UN Headquarters, Conference Room 6, First Avenue, New York, NY 10017

10.00 – 10.30	Mr Marc Finaud , Senior Advisor, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)	Introduction of the Chair: <i>Main Aspects of the Moroccan Initiative on the Autonomy of the Sahara Region Regarding the Role of Civil Society</i>
10.30 – 12.30	Presentations on Experiences of the Role of NGOs in Autonomous Regions, and Comparison with the Moroccan Initiative for Sahara	
- 10.30 – 11.00	Ms Rita Manchanda , Director of Research, South Asia Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR)	<i>India / Northeast</i>
- 11.00 – 11.30	Ms Socorro Woods Downs , Consultant	<i>Nicaragua / Autonomous Regions of the Atlantic Coast</i>
- 11.30 – 12.00	Ms Hedvig Morvai , Executive Director, European Fund for the Balkans (EFB)	<i>Serbia / Vojvodina</i>
- 12.00 – 12.30	Ms Angustias M. Hombrado Martos , Researcher, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Madrid	<i>Spain / Andalucia</i>
12.30 – 13.00	Mr Marc Finaud	<i>Concluding Remarks of the Chair</i>
13.00 – 14.00	Traditional Moroccan Buffet Lunch	



GUEST SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

Mr Marc FINAUD

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Marc Finaud is a former French career diplomat with experience in bilateral postings (Leningrad, Warsaw, Tel Aviv, Sydney) and multilateral responsibilities (in Madrid, Vienna, Geneva, New York) especially in human rights and arms control. Since 2004 he has been sharing this experience with junior diplomats and military officers from all countries trained at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) and has been conducting research on disarmament, the Middle East, and international humanitarian law. In 2013-2015, he was also a Senior Resident Fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). Among his publications are: "Can Autonomy Fulfil the Right to Self-determination?" (GCSP Geneva Paper, 2010); *Multilateralism and Transnational Security* (Slatkine, 2009); *Global Biosecurity* (Slatkine, 2008).

Ms Angustias M. HOMBRADO MARTOS

Researcher, PhD Candidate, Autonomous University of Madrid

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Angustias M. Hombrado Martos graduated in Law (1999) and Politics & Public Administration (2002) at the Autonomous University of Madrid (UNED). She also holds two Master's degrees (with distinction) in Politics and Government at UNED (2006) and in Comparative Federalism at the University of Kent in Canterbury, UK (2008). She has been visiting researcher at the University of Edinburgh (2005-2007) and at Concordia University in Montreal (2008-2009). Ms Hombrado has been assistant lecturer at the University of Kent (2009-2011); at UNED (2012) and at the National Autonomous University of Honduras (1999) and has also taught at other academic or training institutions such as the National Institute of Public Administration (INAP). She has been intern at the Spanish Institute for Women (2003-2004), worked as external consultant for several think-tanks and NGOs in Spain and Latin America and delivered about a dozen of invited presentations in various countries. She has participated in several research projects or collaborations funded by public or private institutions including the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (National Plan R+D), the European Commission, the Spanish Aid Agency (AECID), Fundación Alternativas, Barcelona Provincial Council, Forum of Federations, and the regional Governments of Asturias and Galicia. Her research and publications have appeared in publishers and journals in Spain and Canada, and have revolved around three broad fields: (1) federalism, decentralisation and diversity management, with a special focus on intergovernmental dynamics in processes of asymmetrical devolution in the Spanish, Canadian and British cases; (2) comparative public policy, in particular international aid policy of state and regional governments; and (3) democracy, citizen participation and gender mainstreaming. A selection of her publications on the above subjects includes:

- 2015. "Territorial Pluralism in Spain: Characteristics and Assessment", in Karlo Basta, John McGarry and Richard Simeon eds. *Territorial Pluralism. Managing Difference in Multinational States*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press (with C. Colino);
- 2014. "Responding to the new Europe and the Crisis: the Adaptation of Subnational Governments' Strategies and its Effects on Intergovernmental Relations in Spain", *Regional & Federal Studies*, Vol. 24, 3 (with C. Colino and I. Molina);
- 2013. "¿Cómo se negocian, gestionan, y coordinan las políticas europeas de cohesión en España? Capacidad de acción administrativa y colaboración intergubernamental", in Cesar Colino (coord.) *Las Comunidades Autónomas frente a los retos de la política de cohesión europea en la nueva Europa ampliada: capacidades y estrategias*, Oviedo: Publicaciones del Gobierno del Principado de Asturias;
- 2012. "El Estado Autonómico: Superando la resaca estatutaria y capeando la crisis", in Cesar Colino and Ramón Cotarelo eds. *España en crisis. Balance de la segunda legislatura de Rodríguez Zapatero*, Valencia: Tirant lo Blanch (with C. Colino);
- 2011. "Learning to Catch the Wave: Regional Demands for Constitutional Change in Contexts of Asymmetrical Arrangements", *Regional and Federal Studies* Vol. 21, 4;



- 2010. "La cooperación entre la Cooperación Oficial Descentralizada y la Cooperación de la Administración Central", in Rosa De La Fuente (coord.) Los Nuevos Actores en la Cooperación Internacional. El Papel de los Gobiernos Locales y Regionales, Madrid: Catarata.

Ms Rita MANCHANDA

Research Director, South Asia Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR)

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Rita Manchanda has just completed a multi-country research project on "Human Rights Audits of 'Partitions' as a Method of Resolving Ethno-nationalist conflicts in South Asia" which has resulted in a five-volume series of publications on *Human Rights Audits of Peace Processes in South Asia*: Sage 2015. She is editor of the Series and co-author of two volumes – *Making War, Making Peace: Conflict Resolution in South Asia and Bridging State and Nation: Peace Accords in India's Northeast*. Presently she is involved in developing a scoping study for a South Asia Tribunal on Women Peace and Security for the Women's Regional Network (WRN). Earlier she directed the SAFHR–UN Women & IDRC partnership programme on "Making Women Count for Peace" in South Asia. She also compiled the India civil society review report on Beijing +20. Earlier she was the Gender Expert, Commonwealth Technical Fund in Sri Lanka. Before that as Programme Executive in SAFHR she designed and actualised the Regional Dialogues on "Women Building Peace", and "Sensitizing Media Practitioners Reporting Conflicts in South Asia". She has been part of SAFHR's faculty for the Orientation Course on Human Rights & Peace Studies (2000-20008) and the EURO-SA network on Minority Rights - "Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination against Ethnic Minorities and Indigenous Peoples" (2004, 2006). She has extensive experience as a lecturer and trainer in conflict and peacebuilding with particular attention to gender perspectives, e.g. Chulalongkorn University: Rotary Centre for International Studies in Peace & Conflict Resolution, (Bangkok) in 2014. Among her other recent publications are: *States in Conflict with their Minorities* (ed.); *No Nonsense Guide to Minority Rights in South Asia, Women War and Peace South Asia* (ed.), *Women in the Naga Peace Process*, and co author *States Citizens and Outsiders: Uprooted Peoples of South Asia*. She has undertaken many consultancies including with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogues (Geneva) 2011-2013 for the Project "Women at the Peace Table" and co-authored "From Clause to Effect: Including Women's Rights and Gender in Peace Agreements" Dec 2012. She also worked with the Democratic Progress Institute UK (2012) and published a research paper - "Gender, Development and Conflict Resolution: Enhancing Rights & Equitable Practice" Democratic Progress Institute UK Sept 2012. She is a writer, researcher, lecturer and journalist and has written extensively on security and human rights issues. She has helped shape the women militarization and peacebuilding discourse in South Asia.

Ms Hedvig MORVAI

Executive Director of the European Fund for the Balkans

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Hedvig Morvai is since 2007 the Executive Director of the European Fund for the Balkans, an initiative aimed at strengthening democracy and fostering European integration of the Western Balkans. Prior to this, she served as director of the Citizens' Pact for South Eastern Europe, she was coordinating the Novi Sad office of Partnership for Democratic Changes and she was engaged in the EXIT Festival team. In 1997 she was founder and vice president of the Hungarian Student Association of Vojvodina. She serves on the boards of: the Center for Advanced Studies in Rijeka; Council of the Serbia-Germany Forum; the European Citizen Action Service; the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence and the Share Foundation. Moreover, she is member of the European Council on Foreign Relations, the Epos Network and the Serbian-American Women's Leadership Network. She studied law and communications in Novi Sad and Belgrade. In 2006 she was laureate of the Maja Marsicevic-Tasic Foundation's "Conquering Freedom Award" for her efforts and contribution towards the promotion of human rights, democracy and tolerance.



Ms Hortencia Socorro WOODS DOWNS
Consultant

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Ms Socorro Woods Downs was born on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua in a small community by the name Pearl Lagoon in 1964. She studied primary and secondary education at the Anglican school in Pearl Lagoon. She obtained a BA in Journalism at Juan Amos Comenius University, Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, and then a Postgraduate Diploma in International Indigenous History and Administration at Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC), University of Regina, Canada, in 1996, followed by an MA in Interdisciplinary Studies at York University, Toronto, Canada, in 2002. She is a teacher, a consultant and a promoter of popular education, women's issues and Indigenous and afro descendant's culture and rights. She issued various publications on women's struggle for justice in the Autonomous Regions of Nicaragua in the last 20 years. She lives in Bluefields with her family.