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## **Roundtable: Government Innovation and Social Justice**

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There are few places in the world where everybody starts from a level playing field. On the contrary, concerns with social, economic, racial, ethnic, and gender inequalities, amongst others, are a constant theme and a constant challenge. For most of the second half of the twentieth century, it was felt that greater economic development and better government services would in time lead to a reduction in inequalities. Unfortunately, as report after report has pointed out, that has not proved to be the case. Increasingly, governments are being asked to “put people first.” The focus is on services in terms of their contribution to the construction of citizenship, and the guarantees of individual and collective rights. Social justice has become a transversal theme, a question to be asked of all areas of public policy provision. In this panel, members of the Liaison Group for Innovations in Governance and Public Action will take a critical look at the progress being made.

Through support from the Ford Foundation and contributions by the individual programs, the Liaison Group was established in 2002 as a means to enhance the collaboration among the programs for shared learning and global dissemination of our individual and collective knowledge and experiences. Liaison Group activities include workshops, research, and publications. The group consists of the following partner programs:

- American Indian Tribes in the United States of America: Honoring Nations Program
- Brazil: Public Management and Citizenship Program
- Chile: Citizen Participation and Public Politics Program
- China: The Innovations and Excellence in Chinese Local Governance Program
- East Africa: The Mashariki Innovations in Local Governance Awards Program
- Mexico: Government and Local Management Award
- Peru: Participation and Local Management Program
- Philippines: The Galing Pook Foundation Awards for Outstanding Local Government Programs
- South Africa: Impumelelo Innovations Award Trust
- United States of America: Innovations in American Government Awards Program

While each of these programs adapts its innovations approach to local concerns and priorities, they all share a strong allegiance to the core idea that government can be improved

through the identification and dissemination of samples of effective solutions to public sector problems.

**Discussants:**

**Rhoda Kadalie** is the Executive Director of the Impumelelo Innovations Award Trust. Prior to joining Impumelelo, she was a Human Rights Commissioner for the Western Cape and Northern Cape. Ms. Kadalie is also an academic, and the founder of the Gender Equity Unit at the University of the Western Cape. She has traveled extensively, presenting lectures and papers on human rights and gender politics in South Africa at conferences across the world. In 1999, Ms. Kadalie received an honorary doctorate in liberal arts from the University of Uppsala, Sweden.

**Cecilia Kinuthia-Njenga** is a Human Settlements officer at United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) in the fields of local development and governance. She has coordinated a range of regional and national technical cooperation projects, including research and advocacy work on numerous local and urban planning issues in Africa and Asia. Ms. Kinuthia-Njenga is the founder of the Mashariki Innovations in Local Governance Awards Program; and serves as the task manager of the Lake Victoria Region City Development Strategies Initiative, a program for improved environmental sustainability and poverty reduction. Before joining UN-HABITAT, Ms. Kinuthia-Njenga worked in the international nongovernmental organization sector and as a consultant in sectoral and macroeconomic policy areas. Her research interests include civil society involvement in governance, sustainable economic development, HIV/AIDS health and education, participatory planning, and small and microenterprise development.

**Gonzalo Portocarrero Maisch** is the Principal Professor of the Department of Social Sciences at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú) and Dean of the School of Sociologists of Peru. He is a Member of the Directive Committee of the Network for Social Scientific Development in Peru. Among Dr. Portocarrero's most recent publications are *Peru Through the School*, *Racism and Mestization*, and *Reasons of Blood and Face: Creole Culture and Transgression in Peruvian Society*. He holds a doctorate in Sociology from the University of Essex in England.

**Amy Besaw Medford** is Director of the Honoring Nations Program at the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. Ms. Medford is also currently a member of the Board of Directors for the Northwest Indian College Foundation. She has served as a Research Associate in family strengthening in Indian Country at the Harvard Project and as

an Administrative Fellow at the Harvard University Native American Program. Ms. Medford holds a bachelor's in Business Administration from the University of Washington, a master's in Organizational Leadership from Chapman University, and a master's in Education in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard University's Graduate School of Education.

**Peter Spink** is Director of the Center for Public Administration and Government (Programa Gestão Pública e Cidadania) in São Paulo, Brazil, and full Professor at the Getulio Vargas Foundation's São Paulo School of Business Administration. He was a Visiting Scholar at the Center for Latin American Studies and the Faculty for Social Science and Politics at Cambridge University in England in 1998; the Philips Visiting Professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin in 2001; and a visiting professor of Social Psychology at the Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona in 2004. Before moving to Brazil, Dr. Spink was a member of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in London from 1970 to 1980. He has published widely on topics including subnational governance, public policy, organizational change, and poverty reduction. He holds a doctorate in Organizational Psychology from Birkbeck College at the University of London.

**Yang Xuedong** is a Fellow and Deputy Director of the China Center for Comparative Politics and Economics. He is also Assistant Director of China Local Governance Innovations Program, an independent, nongovernmental research group focusing on reforms at the local level in China. He received a doctorate degree from Beijing University with major in Comparative Politics. He was a Visiting Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School from 2001 to 2002. Dr. Xuedong has authored or coauthored books and numerous articles about Chinese local politics and governance, globalization, risk society. His publications include *Globalization Theories and Risk Society and Reconstructing Order*. His doctoral dissertation, published in 2002, was *Market Development, Society Growth and State Building: Take the County as an Analytical Unit*.