World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid (WLA-CdM) is the largest worldwide assembly of political leaders working to strengthen democratic values, good governance and the well-being of citizens across the globe.

As a non-profit, non-partisan, international organisation, its network is composed of more than 100 democratic former Presidents and Prime Ministers from over 70 countries, together with a global body of advisors and expert practitioners, who offer their voice and agency on a pro bono basis, to today’s political, civil society leaders and policymakers. WLA-CdM responds to a growing demand for trusted advice in addressing the challenges involved in achieving democracy that delivers, building bridges, bringing down silos and promoting dialogue for the design of better policies for all.

This alliance, providing the experience, access and convening power of its Members, represents an independent effort towards sustainable development, inclusion and peace, not bound by the interest or pressures of institutions and governments.
It is with enormous satisfaction that I can report to our Members, partners and friends that World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid has had another good year in 2019. As a collective body, we have energetically pursued the long-term projects for which we are justly known, we have organised successful events with new partners of great distinction, and we have been represented by small groups of Members and staff in important events organised by other like-minded entities.

Following a long-established tradition, our missions to regions where democracy was under stress or danger have continued, and we have done what we could to encourage those who have to struggle daily against overwhelming odds in order to improve the situation in their countries.

Our motto is “Democracy that Delivers”, a commitment that both sets and aims at the highest of standards for all countries, including those in the developed world. The levels of social justice and the rule of law achieved vary greatly across our planet, but no country may boast as yet of having reached perfection. That is why it is so important for us to continue taking steps in the right direction and to spread the conviction that – for all its imperfections – democracy still remains the best form of government that has yet been invented.

It has been an honour for me to serve as President of the World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid for the past six years and it has been a rare privilege to work closely with the remarkable personalities who make up our Membership. I look forward to our organisation continuing to grow and to develop as we enter a new decade under the leadership of our new president, my friend and colleague Danilo Türk. We are truly fortunate to have a man of his great international experience, skills and energy taking the helm of our organisation, and he does so accompanied by the warm congratulations and best wishes of us all.

Last, but not least, my deep-felt thanks as well as that of all our Members go to our faithful supporters, our collaborators and the Secretariat. With your support, we make a great team!
In an era of disruption, the year 2019 has been yet another reminder that multiple global trends are having a profound impact on the way societies are organised. Humankind has managed disruption before and there is no reason to think that this time will be any different. Yet the vision and audacity that have steered complex transformations in the past is still lacking in society. Members of WLA-CdM, former Heads of State and Government, act as loudspeakers of democratic values and good governance amid severe setbacks in the quality of democracy. Free from the constraints of office, WLA-CdM Members are in a unique position to advise current leaders and policymakers aiming to lead the complex processes needed to curb disruptive, global trends.

Held under the title 'Digital Transformation and the Future of Democracy: How Can Artificial Intelligence Drive Democratic Governance?', WLA-CdM’s 2019 Policy Dialogue explored a rights-based approach to digital disruption, formulating policy recommendations to instil democratic values in the wide-ranging transformations that technology brings about. WLA-CdM’s signature approach to fostering democracy, human rights and social inclusion is imprinted in all of the organisation’s programmatic lines. In countries as varied as Rwanda, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Dominican Republic, WLA-CdM continued to promote Shared Societies, a multi-dimensional approach to social inclusion. Thanks to over thirteen years of experience in crafting policy recommendations and good practices through Shared Societies, WLA-CdM has addressed many pressing governance challenges during 2019. Members have supported global processes such as Agenda 2030 and the Global Compact on Migration, and have also formulated policies to facilitate sustainable peace and economic inclusion at the national level, among other areas.

WLA-CdM has also embraced its fair share of internal transformation during 2019. It was Vaira Vike-Freiberga’s final year as President of WLA-CdM with the election of Danilo Turk as her successor. Coinciding with the change in leadership, WLA-CdM underwent a Strategy Review Process, adding a new programmatic pillar: Multilateralism and Global Cooperation. WLA-CdM Members from all regions have for years been engaging on issues central to the international agenda, as well as on a high-level dialogue with China’s leadership to facilitate mutual understanding on global issues. The 2020-2022 Strategy will set WLA-CdM work on a firm foundation and more structured platform from which to advocate for positive change in multilateralism, global cooperation and global governance. By implementing this cross-cutting strategy for the next three years, WLA-CdM will support political leaders navigating the complex and increasingly interdependent governance challenges of today.

At the time this document was sent to the printing, the world is immersed in the global pandemic COVID-19. The scale, speed and threat of this crisis are unprecedented, underscoring the importance of a reinvigorated and coordinated global response which leaves no one behind, aligned with WLA-CdM’s new programmatic pillar: Multilateralism and Global Cooperation.
Next Generation Democracy

Democracy Around the World

Democracy is the political system and goal that brings WLA-CdM Members together. As today’s leaders watch in disarray, a wave of citizen protests is sweeping across the globe, shaking autocratic and democratic regimes alike. WLA-CdM Members speak up to help them identify the root causes of discontent and lead the change that will rekindle citizen’s trust in democratic institutions and leadership.
Throughout 2019, WLA-CdM Members shared their views on the state of democracy at numerous global and regional fora, bringing out a sober assessment of the situation, together with a relentless call for faith in democracy – in a stronger and better democracy – as the best system of government to meet the aspirations of a changing ethos.

In October 2019, WLA-CdM also partnered with the Felipe González Foundation, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Embassy of Germany in Spain to host a commemorative event marking the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall – a paradigm-changing moment that symbolised the beginning of a period of global democratic expansion after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. On this occasion, WLA-CdM Members who held office during that period shared their experiences of democratic development and put the legacy of the last 30 years in perspective, in an inter-generational discussion on democracy with young leaders from the 1989 generation.

“The saving grace of democracy is that it gives people a voice. And you see people all over the world struggling to have this voice.”

Helen Clark WLA-CdM Member October 2019

World Government Summit, Dubai
Joyce Banda

Taking Stock of Democracy 30 Years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall, Madrid
Helen Clark, Tsakhiia Elbegdorj, Felipe González, Hanna Suchocka and Vaira Vike-Freiberga

Estoril Conferences
Joyce Banda, Jorge Fernando Quiroga, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Aminata Touré, Danilo Türk and Vaira Vike-Freiberga

Copenhagen Democracy Summit
Joyce Banda

Global Forum LAC, New York
Laura Chinchilla and Leonel Fernandez
Next Generation Democracy

Information Integrity and the Future of Democracy

Digital technologies are revolutionising societies all around the globe. WLA-CdM has been observing their interplay with democracy for nearly a decade, starting with the 2011 Annual Conference on Digital Technologies for 21st Century Democracy. Alongside leading global policy thinkers, WLA-CdM Members have been analysing the opportunities and threats that digital technologies, from social media to artificial intelligence, pose to political processes in democratic systems. Widespread concerns including disinformation, trust and electoral integrity, inter alia, are calling for urgent policy action to protect democracy from the potentially deleterious impact of information distortion in the digital world.

Building on previous reflections with stakeholders from academia, civil society and technological industries in two policy roundtables in San Francisco and Riga in 2018, WLA-CdM promoted a multi-stakeholder approach to digital governance throughout 2019. In March 2019, WLA-CdM co-organised with the global communications firm Edelman a roundtable on Trust and Democracy in London, in which WLA-CdM Members Vike-Freiberga, Campbell, Clark and Türk analysed the links between online information and declining trust in democratic institutions, based on the Edelman 2019 Trust Barometer.

Through the participation of Members in various global fora on Information Integrity and the Future of Democracy, WLA-CdM called upon public policy makers, technological industries and civil society actors to take urgent action, from their respective positions, to help realise the potential for digital technologies to contribute to, rather than hamper, a well-informed citizenry.

Trust and Democracy Roundtable, London
Kim Campbell, Helen Clark, Danilo Türk and Vaira Vike-Freiberga

CyFy Africa 2019, Tangier
José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

Roundtable on Artificial Intelligence and Democracy, Concordia Summit, New York
Laura Chinchilla, Tarja Halonen, Roza Otunbayeva, Danilo Türk and Vaira Vike-Freiberga
Building on the organisation’s engagement in global conversations on Information Integrity and the Future of Democracy, WLA-CdM has joined the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) and a handful of other European partners in “Virtual Insanity”, an 18-month project funded by the private philanthropic initiative Civitates. Using data collected during the May 2019 European Parliament elections, the project is assessing the tension between electoral integrity and online political advertising, which largely escapes the regulatory frameworks that typically apply to traditional off-line political advertising.

In November 2019, after months of research by project partners, WLA-CdM Member Danilo Türk visited Brussels to review current practices and put forward policy proposals. He then led the presentation of these policy proposals to EU policymakers, including EU Commissioner Vera Jourová. Continued engagement is expected in 2020 as the policy proposals are further refined and put forward.

"Today, a young person with a smartphone in her hand has access to more information than the US President had just 30 years ago."
José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero
WLA-CdM Member
June 2019
Within the complex interplay of digital technologies and democracy, the development of artificial intelligence (AI) brings about a specific set of risks and opportunities. Fundamental rights related to privacy and security, freedom and non-discrimination are challenged by the large-scale collection and use of personal data for AI-driven advertising, communication and decision-making. Algorithmic filters for content curation on digital media are distorting the information landscape. Changing economic dynamics in the data economy are demanding a redefinition of the social contract. But AI applications guided by adequate values can also improve public services and policy making, with enhanced transparency and accountability.

In 2019, WLA-CdM worked in partnership with the IE School of Global and Public Affairs to convene a global reflection on AI and its governance. Involving over 100 renowned experts, policy makers and industry leaders, organised into three Working Groups steered by The Future Society, the IE Center for the Governance of Change and Ipsos Global Affairs, WLA-CdM distilled the implications of digital transformation and AI for fundamental rights, the future of the social contract in the data economy, and trust and public debate in the face of disinformation.

Held in Madrid in October 2019, the WLA-CdM Annual Policy Dialogue on Digital Transformation and the Future of Democracy reaffirmed the urgency to adopt a democratic approach to AI governance, based on an inclusive, fair and rights-based legal, political and social framework. The engagement of leading technological players such as Google, Microsoft, Mozilla and Telefónica alongside civil society and government leaders in these discussions suggests that the policy landscape for digital governance is already shifting, albeit cautiously, towards a growing multi-stakeholder consensus.

One of WLA-CdM’s strategic priorities for the next few years, the democratic governance of the digital transformation will continue to feature prominently in the organisation’s activities in 2020, in an effort to broaden the coalition of partners willing to take decisive action to govern the digital before it governs us.
Democracy that Delivers

ALL AROUND THE WORLD, THE LAST YEAR HAS SEEN A GROWING WEDGE BETWEEN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND AN INCREASINGLY CONNECTED AND MOBILISED YOUTH. FROM NATIONAL YOUTH-LED PROTESTS IN CHILE, COLOMBIA, HONG KONG AND MANY OTHER PLACES TO GLOBAL STUDENT STRIKES SUCH AS FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE, YOUTH AROUND THE WORLD HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY CHANNELLING THEIR POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT OUTSIDE OF FORMAL POLITICS. EMPOWERING YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN POLICY-MAKING – TO SPEAK UP AND BE HEARD BY POLICY-MAKERS – IS EVER MORE PRESSING TO BRIDGE THAT GAP AND RECONCILE TOMORROW’S LEADERS WITH DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS.

THE ANNA LINDBH FOUNDATION HAS BEEN WORKING SINCE 2011 TO EMPOWER YOUNG LEADERS FROM THE ARAB REGION TO SPEAK UP AND BE HEARD. IN 2019, WLA-CdM MEMBERS JOINED FORCES WITH THE FOUNDATION’S YOUNG MEDITERRANEAN VOICES PROJECT, WHICH EMPOWERS YOUNG LEADERS FROM EUROPE AND THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN AREA TO ENHANCE A CULTURE OF DIALOGUE, CONTRIBUTE TO PUBLIC POLICY AND SHAPE MEDIA DISCOURSES.

ON THREE OCCASIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, WLA-CdM MEMBERS GEORGE PAPANDREOU, YVES LETERME AND ZLATKO LAGUMDZIJA JOINED YOUNG LEADERS SELECTED BY THE YOUNG MEDITERRANEAN VOICES PROJECT IN TWO REGIONAL LEADERSHIP SEMINARS AND ONE NATIONAL FORUM. IN ADDITION TO SHARING LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THEIR POLITICAL JOURNEY, THEY ROLLED UP THEIR SLEEVES TO HELP THESE YOUNG ACTIVISTS CRAFT EFFECTIVE MESSAGES AND PARTICIPATE IN POLICY DEBATES. THE TWO REGIONAL LEADERSHIP SEMINARS, HELD IN MALTA IN JANUARY AND NOVEMBER, HAD SOME 45 YOUNG LEADERS FROM THE WHOLE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN REGION DISCUSSING EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND MIGRATION POLICY, WHILE THE NATIONAL FORUM BROUGHT SOME 100 YOUNG LEADERS FROM ACROSS TUNISIA FOR DEBATES CENTRED AROUND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA.

MY PARTICIPATION WILL ENRICH MY EFFORTS OF BUILDING MUTUAL DIALOGUE PLATFORMS TO BRIDGE DIVISION IN TOPICS SUCH AS: RELIGION, PLURALISM, ETHNICITY AND RACE.”

ZINAB FROM EGYPT
YMV PARTICIPANT IN THE YMV LEADERSHIP SEMINAR IN MALTA
NOVEMBER 2019

IN THE YOUNG MEDITERRANEAN VOICES LEADERSHIP SEMINARS, WLA-CdM MEMBERS SHARED THEIR POLITICAL EXPERIENCE WITH YOUNG LEADERS ENGAGED IN POSITIVE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION ACROSS EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN. AMONG MANY OTHERS, SOME OF THE YOUNG LEADERS WERE:

- Burak Yusmak founder of the Transnational Diplomacy Association in London
- Samir Akacha Fellow of Coexister, a Marseille-based interfaith association
- Jasmine Farrugia Coordinator of the National Youth Parliament of Malta, officer at the National Youth Council, and founder of the National Youth Technology and Youth Fair
- Catarina Neves President and Founding Member of ‘Bringing Europeans Together Association Portugal’ and the Youth Delegate for Portugal at the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe
The protection of labour rights is an essential instrument for economic inclusion. While a signatory to UN and ILO conventions on labour rights, Georgia had a long history of deregulation that made the enforcement of such rights increasingly difficult. Starting in 2013, a series of legislative reforms sought to remedy that situation by introducing changes to the Labour Code, including the creation of a mediation mechanism for collective labour disputes. The agreements reached through mediation, however, were often not enforced, resulting in little improvement in the effective protection of workers’ rights.

Under the INSPIRED+ project, the Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC) – a national human rights NGO – convened a national dialogue on labour mediation in Georgia, inviting government officials, civil society and trade union representatives to participate in the formulation of policy recommendations for reforms that would make labour mediation mechanisms more effective. In February 2019, WLA-CdM Member Danilo Türk travelled to Georgia to enrich this dialogue with his perspectives based on Slovenia’s experience and UN policies, and also to help the EMC bring its main recommendations to the attention of senior government officials. Through bilateral meetings with the Deputy Minister of Health, Labour and Social Affairs and the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Health Care and Social Issues, inter alia, President Türk helped raise the profile of labour rights issues and give EMC access to senior policy makers – an access that outlasted the visit, as evidenced by the fact that the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Affairs continued to engage with EMC and invited them to comment on the National Strategy for Labour and Employment Policy 2019 - 2023.

Since the conclusion of the INSPIRED+ project, Georgian authorities have taken significant steps towards reinforcing labour mediation as an effective tool to protect workers’ rights. In August 2019, Georgia signed the Singapore Mediation Convention, and the following month Parliament adopted a new law on mediation.
Despite their high level of education, women in Armenia are severely under-represented in decision making processes, affecting the country’s economic development. In 2017, according to the World Economic Forum’s Gender Gap Index, Armenia ranked 97th among 144 countries. Although gender equality is addressed in policy documents, it is seldom covered by national socio-economic programmes, resulting in the entrenchment of practices and dynamics that limit women’s influence in the labour market.

Under the INSPIRED+ project, the Foundation for the Protection of Youth and Women Rights (OxYGen) convened a national dialogue on the rights of women in the labour market in Armenia. Participants included civil society organisations, trade unions, business associations and representatives from local and national government structures. In February 2019, WLA-CdM Member Danilo Türk visited Armenia to participate in a multi-stakeholder dialogue on “Equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the labour market in Armenia” and support OxYGen in taking its main conclusions to senior government officials. By sharing his experience of gender and labour rights protection in Slovenia and at the UN and helping OxYGen access senior officials, including through bilateral meetings with the Minister and Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and various Members of Parliament, President Türk helped OxYGen overcome the initial reticence government institutions had had in engaging with civil society on this issue.

A few months after the mission, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs invited OxYGen to join the Public Council, an advisory body to the ministry. This means that OxYGen will be kept aware of policy plans on labour issues and provides a sustainable platform to channel its input, including the policy recommendations crafted through the INSPIRED+ national dialogue, to ministerial decision-making processes.
Violent Extremism is a Global Issue

According to the Institute for Economics and Peace’s Global Terrorism Index 2019, 71 countries experienced at least one death from terrorism in 2018. While the majority of terrorist attacks continue to be perpetrated by Islamist or jihadist groups in conflict areas, the last five years have seen a worrying surge in far-right political terrorism across North America, Western Europe and Oceania. The rise in these politically motivated attacks comes at a time when Positive Peace – the Institute for Economics and Peace’s measure of the attitudes, institutions and structures which create and sustain peaceful societies – is declining across these regions.

Long aware of the benefits of inclusive societies to prevent radicalisation into violent extremism of all kinds, WLA-CdM made a strategic decision in 2019 to draw its work on preventing violent extremism (PVE) closer to its work on Shared Societies. Throughout the year, in their interactions with the global community, WLA-CdM Members and staff emphasised the importance of inclusion to prevent violent extremism – a message echoed by the UN Security Council and numerous global actors, yet insufficiently put into effective practice.

At the Estoril Conferences in May 2019, WLA-CdM President Vaira Vike-Freiberga and a delegation of WLA-CdM Members discussed practical approaches to inclusion for preventing violent extremism in a meeting with Ahmad Nawaz, an award-winning British-Pakistani young leader on peace and education engaged in preventing the radicalisation of youth in at-risk communities in the UK. In August 2019, the WLA-CdM Secretariat also discussed the need for inclusion as a crucial instrument to prevent the rise of violent extremism within democratic societies at the Observer Research Foundation’s Tackling Insurgent Ideologies 2.0, India’s flagship conference on PVE.
Shared Societies Project

The Project

Shared Societies are societies in which everyone has a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, free to express their differences in a common search for social cohesion.

WLA-CdM has been promoting Shared Societies for over 13 years, in partnership with the Alan B. Slifka Foundation, providing leaders with greater awareness of the benefits and means to advance social inclusion as an essential element in democratic development.

Throughout 2019, WLA-CdM Members continued to advocate for the importance of a Shared Societies approach to address the most pressing challenges of governance, from environmental sustainability to migration policy and sustainable peace. Drawing on their wealth of political experience, WLA-CdM Members offered reflections and advice to current political, civil society and business leaders on how to build inclusive democratic societies.

The following sections present a few thematic areas where WLA-CdM Members advocated for a Shared Societies approach in 2019 – but the list is not exhaustive. As a foundation for democratic culture, Shared Societies principles apply across all areas of public policymaking.

"Strengthening Shared Societies is not only a goal but a means and tool as well for weakening different dimensions of growing inequalities."

Zlatko Lagumdžija
WLA-CdM Member
Symi Symposium, July 2019
Through the Shared Societies Project, WLA-CdM Members have been advocating to mainstream an inclusive approach to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030. Over the last year, WLA-CdM Members participated in six major events focused on sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 2030: the SDG 16 Council in Dubai and the World Sustainable Development Summit in Delhi in February; the What Works Summit in Reykjavik in April; the Responsibility and Development conference in Warsaw in April; the Observer Research Foundation’s Kigali Global Dialogue in July; and the UN High-Level Political Forum in July.

"Progress on the SDGs will come from working with the people, and not just for the people.”

Laura Chinchilla
WLA-CdM Member
UN High-Level Political Forum
July 2019

At each of these events, WLA-CdM Members advocated in favour of an inclusive approach to the implementation of Agenda 2030, something that was also echoed on WLA-CdM’s website and social media. They called for broader inclusion in policy design, discussed challenges of inclusive implementation and highlighted the need to give ordinary citizens a sense of agency in development. Members also led bilateral consultations with relevant stakeholders to promote a Shared Societies approach to particular policies related to Agenda 2030, whether globally or nationally.

While there is broad support among the international development community around the need for inclusiveness in the implementation of Agenda 2030, the challenge remains to put in place the right mechanisms to allow a broad group of stakeholders to meaningfully engage in development policy making.

In 2019, WLA-CdM initiated a new partnership with Southern Voice, an open platform that brings over 50 think tanks from Africa, Asia and Latin America into the global dialogue on the Sustainable Development Goals. On the margins of the UN High-Level Political Forum in New York in July 2019, WLA-CdM Vice-President, Laura Chinchilla engaged with Southern Voice in a discussion around country experiences and progress on Agenda 2030. Going forward, this partnership will open doors for WLA-CdM to delve into national experiences and foster the transmission of good practices for inclusiveness in development policy.
The importance of inclusiveness in development policymaking takes its full bearing at national level, particularly in countries where multiple ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups coexist. In Nepal, post-conflict dynamics and the ongoing transition to a federal state make a Shared Societies approach imperative.

Building on WLA-CdM’s previous engagement in Nepal - with visits in 2014 and 2017 - WLA-CdM Member Aleksander Kwaśniewski and NetPLUS Member Teresita “Ging” Deles led a country mission to Nepal in January 2019, with the objective of reinforcing the commitment of key political leaders to adopt an inclusive, participatory approach to the planning, implementation and monitoring of Agenda 2030. Ongoing consultations by the National Development Commission towards the country’s 15th Five-Year National Plan provided a momentous opportunity.

Through meetings with most high-level stakeholders in Nepal’s development policy making, including President Bidya Devi Bhandari, Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, parliamentarians, civil society, young leaders and international partners, the WLA-CdM delegation discussed approaches to overcome the practical challenges of inclusive development in the country, from the lack of resources and capacity of local government structures to the need for better coordination among different administrative levels.

A few months after the visit, in April 2019, Nepalese leaders’ commitment to a Shared Societies approach was aptly reflected in the Approach Paper that the National Planning Commission, chaired by Prime Minister Sharma Oli, approved for Nepal’s new Five-Year National Plan for 2019-20 to 2023-24. The paper identifies gender and social inclusion as key elements in achieving Nepal’s objectives for sustainable development and poverty reduction, and calls for efficient collaboration between all administrative levels and private, cooperative and community groups.

Building Shared Societies requires individuals to embrace the value of inclusion and to have skills to partake in a collective search for social cohesion. Critical thinking, effective communication and the ability to rely on dialogue for problem solving are essential in this regard. Education is the foundation for these values and skills, and an essential lever to help citizens become engaged members of inclusive, democratic societies.

Throughout 2018, WLA-CdM worked with dozens of organizations from the global education community to formulate forward-looking proposals to power education as a tool for building inclusive and peaceful societies, particularly in the face of challenges posed by violent extremism, migration and the digital revolution. The resulting Global Agenda on Education for Shared Societies, published in early 2019, puts forward six goals for the education system and a series of recommendations for governments, education professionals and students and their communities.
The 2019 Easter Sunday bombings against Christian churches and the ensuing anti-Muslim riots that shook Sri Lanka in April and May 2019 were tragic reminders of the deep social divisions that afflict the country. Despite the commitment of many Sri Lankan leaders to the principles of Shared Societies, identity-driven inter-group tensions continue to cast a shadow over the nation’s efforts to foster national unity and reconciliation.

WLA-CdM Member Chandrika Kumaratunga, former President of Sri Lanka and Chairperson of the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation, supported a WLA-CdM intervention to help Sri Lanka do good on their commitment to Shared Societies in this difficult period where divisive voices were gaining ground among social and political actors. In July 2019, WLA-CdM Member Danilo Türk visited Sri Lanka’s capital and Northern Province to remind Sri Lankan leaders of the importance of an inclusive approach to development and to highlight possibilities to overcome inter-group divisions through education, building on WLA-CdM’s Global Agenda on Education for Shared Societies (2018).

Working in partnership with Hedayah, WLA-CdM also organised a workshop on Education for Preventing Violent Extremism, in which Presidents Türk and Kumaratunga engaged with educators and government officials from Sri Lanka as well as Bangladesh and Pakistan, promoting policy recommendations put forward in the Global Agenda on Education for Shared Societies (2018).

As the November 2019 presidential election brought sectarian nationalism to the fore of Sri Lankan politics, many feared that efforts to appease inter-group tensions will now spring mostly outside political leadership. The role of education – through formal schools and informal community groups – in promoting the values of Shared Societies becomes all the more important as a result.

The movement of people across national borders, whether migrants or refugees, and the challenges of their integration and inclusion in their host communities, have been entwined with the rise of voices that run counter to the principles of Shared Societies. Yet, a Shared Societies approach to migration management – one that focuses on addressing inter-group relations in origin and host countries and that seeks to countering discriminatory discourses towards migration in policy discussions – is arguably the best way forward to tackle these challenges and facilitate measured and nuanced debate.
The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, endorsed by the UN General Assembly in December 2018, marked the international community’s first attempt to define a common framework for migration policy. While the agreement itself reflects a broad alignment with the principles of Shared Societies, its non-binding nature and the vocal opposition of political leaders in numerous countries point to an enduring need to advocate for inclusive responses to migration’s challenges.

In 2019, WLA-CdM Members called for a positive public discourse around migration – one that values migrants’ contributions to society. In June, WLA-CdM Member Jigme Thinley, together with former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary Kinga Göncz, joined forces with Global Justice Now and Academics Stand Against Poverty to promote a new discourse around migration in London, as the ongoing Brexit negotiations continued to fan nationalist flames across the UK.

In Spain, where the April 2019 elections had given nationalist, anti-Muslim right-wing party Vox its first seats in Congress, WLA-CdM worked to support the development of a positive narrative about migrants in the media and in public opinion. Drawing from his own experiences and the expertise of Dr Florinda Rojas, a NetPLUSS Member and the Executive Director of the National Migration Institute of the Dominican Republic (INM), WLA-CdM Honorary Member Enrique Iglesias engaged with media professionals to discuss approaches to build alternative narratives around the topic of migration in the media – from debunking disinformation to going beyond collective depictions of migrants.

Finally, inclusive discourse on migration was also the focus of an event organized by WLA-CdM on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September 2019, where WLA-CdM Members Laura Chinchilla, Helen Clark and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf joined Dr Florinda Rojas to call on political leadership to build a narrative of inclusion and acceptance around migration.

Since the devastating earthquake that shook Haiti in 2010, significant changes in migration patterns have made migration management a prime issue of concern for its Hispaniola neighbour, the Dominican Republic. With migration flows reaching into previously unaffected urban areas and economic sectors, at the same time that socio-economic inequalities have increased within the Dominican Republic, a tide of intolerance had risen among certain social groups.

The INM, mandated to provide evidence-based insight into migration to national authorities, has been co-operating with WLA-CdM since 2015 in a joint effort to promote inclusive responses to the challenges of migration in the Dominican Republic. In June 2019, WLA-CdM Member Laura Chinchilla visited Santo Domingo to showcase at the highest political level the benefits of inclusive migration policies. In line with the INM’s recent initiative to train journalists in new narratives on migration-related topics, President Chinchilla underscored the fundamental role of the media in shaping public opinion and called on political leaders, including Foreign Minister Miguel Vargas, to promote inclusive public discourse around migrants.

“We, the leaders, have the obligation to carry a message of solidarity, tolerance and awareness to make sure that our citizens don’t get carried away by populist, nationalist and demagogic trends.”

Laura Chinchilla
Lecture on Comprehensive Migration Policy, Dominican Republic
Translated from Spanish, June 2019
Few would dispute the notion that inclusive economies – those in which all citizens can partake in economic policymaking and reap the benefits of economic development – are crucial to achieve stable and resilient societies. How to build inclusive economies, however, is more debated, both in national and global fora.

In 2019, WLA-CdM engaged with Members of Parliament and national stakeholders from the United Kingdom to develop and promote policy proposals for an inclusive economy in a national context dominated by the debate over Brexit, wherein questions of migration management and economic policy making were important fault lines. It was timely to bring influential politicians, policy thinkers, business leaders and experts together to rally support around the concept of an inclusive economy. In June 2019, in partnership with the Centre for Progressive Policy (CPP) and the All-Party Group on Inclusive Growth at the UK Parliament, WLA-CdM organised a Conference on the Future of Inclusive Economies in London. WLA-CdM Member Jigme Thinley was joined by OECD Chief of Staff and G20 Sherpa Gabriela Ramos to call for a change of paradigm to put social cohesion at the heart of economic policy.

In November 2019, WLA-CdM Members Mehdi Jomaa and Yves Leterme took this message to some thirty representatives of multilateral institutions at the Global Economic Governance Policy Dialogue organised jointly by the Stimson Center and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung at the World Bank in Washington. Building on their own experience of economic policymaking in Tunisia and Belgium, respectively, they emphasised the need for economic policy to be framed in a process of national dialogue that includes social sectors.

As the United Nations prepares to celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2020, civil society organisations, governments, businesses and intergovernmental institutions around the world are engaging in reflections on the future of multilateralism. Starting from a Shared Societies approach, WLA-CdM will leverage the partnerships developed in the last year to put forward and promote recommendations for multilateral reform that would make global economic governance more conducive to the development of inclusive economies.

"Inequality hinders growth. There is a talent pool that is not tapped when we do not invest in quality education for all; or when SMEs cannot access the technology or financial schemes to succeed. It also hinders growth because inequality in terms of health, crime, or dependency has a high fiscal cost.”

Gabriela Ramos
OECD Chief of Staff
Conference on the Future of Inclusive Economies, London
June 2019
"China has always maintained that people of various countries have the right to choose a development path that suits their own national conditions."

Xi Jinping
President of the People’s Republic of China
From his meeting with the delegation as reported by the Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the UN
December 2019

Agenda 2030 embodies the international community’s firm commitment to sustainable development. As countries around the world strive to achieve progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, many look to their international partners for policy inspiration and support. As a global economic leader and a primordial interlocutor for low and high-income countries alike, China has an opportunity to share its experience in galvanising economic modernisation.

Since its foundation in 2014, the Imperial Springs International Forum (ISIF) has been providing a window for the world to understand China through an open dialogue and exchange of views between Chinese and international leaders and experts. Co-hosted by WLA-CdM with the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the Australia China Friendship and Exchange Association and the People’s Government of Guangdong Province in December 2019, ISIF 2019 provided a timely opportunity for 260 prominent leaders and experts, including over 15 WLA-CdM Members, to discuss the potential for China to be a major driving force for Agenda 2030 implementation and to understand its approach to sustainable development beyond its borders.

Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan attended the Forum, highlighting in his address China’s staunch support for multilateralism as the guarantor of economic development, social progress and environmental protection.

Upon conclusion of the Forum, WLA-CdM President Vaira Vike-Freiberga and Chair of the WLA-CdM President’s Circle in Asia-Pacific, Dr Chau Chak Wing, led a delegation of international guests to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. President Xi acknowledged the ongoing historic transformation in China’s relations with the rest of the world and appealed to the international community to reform rather than reject the multilateral international order.

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Building on the discussions held at ISIF 2019, WLA-CdM partnered with the UN’s Beijing Office to convene a roundtable on the limits of the multilateral system and put forward proposals for reform, anchored in the global conversation surrounding the 75th anniversary of the UN. Fabrizio Hochschild, UN Under-Secretary-General, applauded the value of these discussions, particularly at a time when a growing number of challenges requiring global cooperation coincides with a retreat of this method to solve global problems.

"We appeal to all national governments, parliaments, civil society and citizens across the globe to engage in the dialogue and exchanges that will be advanced through the UN75 initiative and enthusiastically support the UN Secretariat in the establishment of an Open Working Group to boost the implementation and results of UN75, especially as they serve to enhance multilateralism and global cooperation, advance the achievement of a renewed international order and contribute to building and securing ‘The Future We Want’.”

Final Statement
Imperial Spring International Forum on Multilateralism and Sustainable Development
June 2019
INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS AND OUTREACH

WLA-CdM is a firm believer in partnerships. Solutions to the challenges democracy faces require thorough expertise, dialogue and collaboration by building bridges between distinct sectors of society and across the globe. This methodology is achieved through multi-stakeholder dialogues focused on the identification of feasible recommendations. Following which, WLA-CdM Members advocate through high-level engagement. Outreach and development activities are essential to crafting the programmatic work of the organisation as well as in identifying collaborations with like-minded international institutions as partners in action and a means of sharing key philosophies and maximising impact. This unique platform for the development of thought leadership, networking and advocacy between key political stakeholders, with direct access to leaders and the decision-making process, is increasingly valued amongst partners who seek impact in policy.

Throughout 2019, a great part of the organisation’s efforts focused on establishing partnerships and alliances towards work on the relationship between digital technologies and democracy, the theme of the 2019 Annual Policy Dialogue. At an institutional level, this has allowed the organisation to continue strengthening connections and supporting the work of the United Nations and the European Commission, but also engaging important private sector actors committed to a people-centred approach such as Telefonica, Microsoft, Google, IBM and Mozilla. These alliances will be critical as efforts continue on this front in the years to come. WLA-CdM Members are able to act as political sounding boards to explore analysis and potential policies through dialogue on the intersection between technology and democracy. An example of this was the roundtable discussion organised with Edelman in London, where the results of their 2019 Trust Barometer were shared with a curated group of Members and civil society representatives.

Following in the spirit of collaboration, the organisation has been approached by many institutions looking to engage or partner on their own initiatives by sharing WLA-CdM Members’ individual and collective experience and the key messages of their respective programmatic work. Examples of such recent collaboration include: the World Government Summit, World Law Congress, Astana Economic Forum, Estoril Conference, Concordia USA, Copenhagen Democracy Summit and the International Financial Forum amongst others.

Looking towards the future, WLA-CdM will continue working with both new and existing partners to strengthen efforts towards promoting democracy that delivers.
In a year which saw WLA-CdM’s Annual Policy Dialogue dedicated to digital transformation and artificial intelligence, the organisation has seen how the shifting digital arena is shaping global democracy today. Being connected is vital. Keeping WLA-CdM’s audience informed is key to promote its values, its goals and foster beneficial communication. The WLA-CdM Secretariat continues to maximise conversations and reach through WLA-CdM platforms, intended to consolidate the advocacy efforts on its website. Social media has become a significant lever tool throughout 2019, generating engagement and boosting interaction. While Twitter continues to have the largest social audience, user engagement is growing on both Facebook and LinkedIn, accelerated by an increased posting structure.

WLA-CdM’s Annual Policy Dialogue was an important activity from a communications perspective, involving a combined structure of pre-event publicity across various social media platforms including through specially curated graphics packages, media engagement actions, and live tweeting during the event. WLA-CdM forged alliances with other organisations and communications agencies that served to increase impact of different events. In line with these efforts, this year’s Policy Dialogue saw the production of a variety of videos about the event, video loops, and interviews, to be distributed through the corporate social media channels and those of the partnering agencies and organisations, maximising media engagement and its propagation in social networks.

Visual media has been a key area of focus this year, in particular through the official Google Photos account and the publication of over 50 new YouTube videos, many produced in-house. Throughout 2019, the design and distribution of relevant outreach material including press releases, media kits, and social media resources, together with a proactive collaboration with the communications industry, have enabled WLA-CdM to maintain a steady corporate voice and improve media engagement. Moreover, collaboration with a media clipping service has allowed WLA-CdM to better gauge its impact through traditional and online media, and to determine the public relations (PR) value of such coverage. Among other publications, the second quarter of 2019 also saw the first WLA-CdM Annual Report. WLA-CdM official Instagram account will be launched in 2020, giving its followers a chance to see ‘behind the scenes’ of the organisation. WLA-CdM will also be developing a corporate video and APP and a freshly redesigned website.
Beyond Numbers

In 2019, the total budget reached 1.9 million EUR, a level similar to that of previous years. WLA-CdM’s main financial partners continued their support during 2019, while four new donors engaged in contributing to the organisation’s activity or core funding for the first time. The Annual Policy Dialogue and meetings of WLA-CdM governing bodies, was a prime example of the combination of sponsorships, grants and in-kind contributions – nine financial partners in total – that made the main single activity of the year possible.

The net result was positive for the seventh consecutive year. Reserves are equivalent to total annual expenditure, a level of solvency rarely seen in organisations of WLA-CdM size. For 2020 and beyond, the objective will continue to be an increase of WLA-CdM global level of activities and the diversification of its funding base, through a revision and improvement of the organisation fundraising strategy to implement the new programmatic framework approved for the 2020-2022 period.

Finance and Administration

Corporations (45%)
Foundations and other non-profits (31%)
Individual donors (9%)
Government (8%)
Inter-Governmental (6%)
Financial and other (1%)

Total funding 2019
1,900,676 €
Members

Americas

Arias, Oscar  
President of Costa Rica  

Bachelet, Michelle  
President of Chile  

Calderón, Felipe  
President of Mexico  
(2006-2012)

Campbell, Kim  
Prime Minister of Canada  
(1993)

Cardoso, Fernando Henrique  
President of Brazil  

Chébibi, Jean  
Prime Minister of Canada  

Chinchilla, Laura  
President of Costa Rica  
(2010-2014)  
Vice-President of WLA-CdM

Clinton, William J.  
President of the United States of America  
(1993-2001)  
Honorary Co-Chair of WLA-CdM

Fernández, Leónel  
President of the Dominican Republic  

Figueres, José María  
President of Costa Rica  
(1994-1998)

Fox, Vicente  
President of Mexico  
(2000-2006)

Frei Ruiz-Tagle, Eduardo  
President of Chile  
(1994-2000)

Caviria, César  
President of Colombia  
(1990-1994)

Hurtado, Osvaldo  
President of Ecuador  
(1981-1984)

Lacalle Herrera, Luis Alberto  
President of Uruguay  
(1990-1995)

Lago, Ricardo  
President of Chile  
(2000-2006)

Mesa, Carlos  
President of Bolivia  
(2003-2005)

Pérez de Cuéllar, Javier  
President of the Council of Ministers of Peru  
(2000-2001)

Piñera, Sebastián  
(on leave)  
President of Chile  
(2010-2014)

Quiroga, Jorge  
President of Bolivia  

Sanguinetti, Julio María  
President of Uruguay  

Torríjos, Martín  
President of Panama  
(2004-2009)

Zedillo, Ernesto  
President of Mexico  
(1994-2000)

About WLA-CdM
Board of Directors

Türk, Danilo  
President of Slovenia  
(2007-2012)  
Vice-President of WLA - CdM

Aguero, María Elena  
Secretary General of Club de Madrid  
(2016-present)

Clark, Helen  
Prime Minister of New Zealand  
(1999-2008)

Manzano, Cristina  
Representative FRIDE

Chinchilla, Laura  
President of Costa Rica  
(2010-2014)  
Vice-President of WLA - CdM

Al Mahdi, Sadiq  
Prime Minister of Sudan  

Jones, T. Anthony  
Vice-President and Executive Director, GFNA

Ramos-Horta, José Manuel  
President of Timor-Leste  
(2007-2012)

Uteem, Cassam  
President of Mauritius  
Vice-President of WLA - CdM

Campbell, Kim  
Prime Minister of Canada  
(1993)

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In Memoriam

In 2019, WLA-CdM suffered the loss of one Member who had served the organization with distinction during many years. He will be remembered with affection for their relentless commitment to the principles of democracy and their personal engagement in the mission of WLA-CdM.

Habibie, Bacharuddin  
President of Indonesia  
(1998-1999)
Democracy that Delivers

ANNUAL REPORT

2019