

**ABUJA DECLARATION  
ON  
LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE COMMONWEALTH**

---

**Agreed by the CLGF Board, Abuja, 12-13 June 2014**

**The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, 12-13 June 2014, hosted by Hon Alhaji Kabiru Tanimu Turaki, Minister of Special Duties and Inter-Governmental Affairs, chaired by Mayor Lawrence Yule, attended by local government leaders, ministers, senior officials and other key stakeholders from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and the Pacific:**

**Celebrates** the 2014 *Year of Developmental Local Government*, endorsed by Heads of Government, highlighting local government's developmental role and its mandate to promote local democracy and development, especially economic development, throughout the Commonwealth.

**Recalls** the enshrinement of the *Aberdeen Principles on Local Democracy and Good Governance* in the 2013 *Commonwealth Charter* and the recognition by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their 2013 Meeting in Colombo of *'the role which local government in particular can play in enhancing the exercise of democratic governance and in the defining and delivery of essential services as well as promoting economic development'*.

**Welcomes** the endorsement by Commonwealth Heads of Government of the 2013 *Kampala Declaration on Developmental Local Government, the Munyonyo Statement on Local Government's Role in the post-2015 Development Agenda* and their strong support for the work of CLGF.

**Applauds** the growing international recognition by UNDP, the EU and other development partners of the strategic role of local government in the promotion of democratic local governance and development, and in particular the emphasis on localising the proposed new Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, in line with the *Munyonyo Statement* as well as the moves to agree a SDG dealing with building inclusive, safe and sustainable cities and human settlements with specific targets.

## COMMONWEALTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM



**Emphasises** the growing partnership between the CLGF and the Commonwealth Secretariat and other Commonwealth organisations in recognition of the 2011 CHOGM and Eminent Persons' Group recommendations and the 2013 Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan,

**Notes** the recommendations of the *CLGF/UNDP Conference on Local Government and Local Development in Nigeria: post 2015*, held 11 June, in the expectation that these and the afore-mentioned Commonwealth principles and practices, will be duly applied by the responsible policy-makers, including in respect of ensuring regular and timely local elections, intergovernmental fiscal transfers and adequate resourcing of local government and giving support to the role of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria, the National Union of Local Government Employees and other key local government stakeholders.

**Notes further** the outcomes of the *CLGF symposium: promoting regional cooperation and local economic development – West Africa*, held 10 June, and appreciative of the resources being made available for the CLGF's new regional programme by DFID (UK) and the hosting of the CLGF West Africa programme office in Accra by the Government of Ghana and the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana.

**Acknowledges** the opportunity to have met with HE ARC. Mohammed Namadi Sambo GCON, Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and his commitment to take forward the recommendations of the CLGF Abuja meetings.

Accordingly:

**Calls on** all Commonwealth Governments, notably Federal and State/Provincial Governments, to ensure that the spirit of the *Aberdeen Principles* and the 2013 decisions of Heads of Government regarding local government are fully reflected in the relevant constitutional provisions including the appropriate legislative and policy applications.

**Requests** CLGF members to facilitate the efforts to implement the 2013 Munyonyo Statement at the UN and through the Commonwealth and encourage their Foreign Ministers and UN Ambassadors to give active support, notably in incorporating the localising of SDGs in the post 2015 implementation mechanism;

**Urges** the UN, the Commonwealth and development partners to ensure that localisation of SDGs is accompanied by localisation of resources by enabling local governments, in partnership with central/state governments, to raise more local revenue, secure allocations of national budgets to local governments, especially in deprived or post-conflict areas.

**Calls for** agreement on innovative ways of channelling international development funds directly to local governments to build infrastructure including communications, sewage, waste management, recycling and other basic services, utilising both existing and proposed funds (eg Green Climate Fund, Financial Transactions Tax).

**Proposes** the establishment of potential new funding mechanisms, such as a post-2015 Global Fund to implement the SDGs.

**Mandates** the CLGF to develop programmes for 2016-20 which focus on supporting CLGF members to localise the SDGs and secure strategic resources for this task from key development partners.

**Seeks** to encourage the engagement of CLGF members in the preparatory consultations of Habitat III, including a focus on how cities and other local governments can meet the challenges of urbanisation and take forward the new SDGs.

**Looks to** Commonwealth Governments to give formal recognition to the role of CLGF and other Commonwealth Associated Organisations (AOs) as implementing agencies for Commonwealth technical and other support to Member States in their respective areas of competence, and to ensure their ability to interact with CHOGM, foreign ministers and other Commonwealth governance structures in time for the 2015 Malta CHOGM.

**Looks further to** Commonwealth Governments, especially larger countries, to provide regular resources to CLGF and other AOs, so that they are to be in a position to respond to requests from Member States for support, including resources for CLGF's work to promote local democracy and development in all regions of the Commonwealth.

**Approves** the recommendations of the CLGF West Africa Symposium, 10 June, to use existing CLGF structures and regional champions at the level of Heads of Government to implement decentralisation and the *Aberdeen Principles* in Nigeria and elsewhere and to mobilise Commonwealth support for this task.

**Endorses** the outcomes of CLGF regional and other meetings held since 2013, in particular the 2014 *Port Moresby Declaration on Pacific Futures: Building our Local Communities* and the importance of addressing the needs of small states, especially small island developing states, as well as the outcomes of the 2014 CLGF regional symposium on local economic development for southern Africa held in Lilongwe.

**Pledges** its full solidarity with the People and Government of Nigeria, including State and Local Governments, in facing up to, and combatting, terrorism and related criminal actions which have caused the loss of much innocent lives in the country and likewise solidarity with all other countries which have had to confront terrorism and insurgency including, most recently, Kenya and Pakistan.

**Associates** itself unequivocally with the call to '*bring back our girls*' and the efforts to ensure the liberty of the kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls, in the knowledge that no amount of misguided ideology can undermine fundamental human rights, including the universal and equal right to education for girls and boys.

**Commits** CLGF, working with UNDP and other partners, to assist its members in Nigeria and elsewhere, notably by sharing Commonwealth expertise of local government linking with federal and state governments in dealing with civic and emergencies responses, in national conflict resolution and peace-building efforts.

**Looks forward to** the 2015 CLGF 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference.

**Expresses** appreciation to the People and Government of Nigeria for the hosting the CLGF Board and related meetings and for their warm hospitality, and to UNDP, DFID and other partner organisations for the support and cooperation provided.

**2014** YEAR OF DEVELOPMENTAL  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT