



bulletin

COMMONWEALTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM

issue 1/04

■ Promoting democratic local government ■ Sharing good practice

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CHOGM backs legal status for local government

Commonwealth Heads of Government have endorsed giving constitutional and legal recognition to local government. This was a key proposal put to them by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum at their meeting in Abuja in December.

Heads of Government, meeting under the chairmanship of HE Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, also re-affirmed the value they attached to elected local government as an important foundation for democracy and commended its role in the implementation of the Commonwealth Harare Declaration.

They also welcomed the collaboration between the Commonwealth Secretariat and CLGF in promoting best democratic practice and emphasised the need to support CLGF programmes to consolidate local democracy, provide technical

assistance and undertake local elections monitoring.

CLGF Chair, Len Duvall OBE, Nigerian Board member Hon Esther Audu and CLGF Director Carl Wright represented CLGF under its new formal delegation status. As an associated Commonwealth organisation, CLGF representatives had full accreditation allowing them access to heads of government, ministers, senior officials and other meetings.

Speaking in Abuja, Len Duvall said: "The endorsement by over 50 Heads of Government of local democracy and their support for its constitutional and legal

recognition is a major turning point for elected local government throughout the Commonwealth."

CLGF Chair Len Duvall also spoke at the Commonwealth Business Forum symposium on Achieving Sustainable Development: challenges for businesses and governments. Other events attended by the CLGF delegation included the Committee of the Whole, the Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Small States and civil society meetings organised by the Commonwealth Foundation.

more news from CHOGM inside...

Handbook 2004

The latest edition of the Commonwealth Local Government Handbook - the Commonwealth Local Government Handbook 2004 - will be launched at the CLGF Board meeting in Jamaica in April 2004. This is a unique reference book on local government across the Commonwealth with the 2004 edition featuring profiles of local government systems in 26 countries. It also contains an article by Dr M Sohail on local government service partnerships, with case studies from across the Commonwealth following the CLGF Commonwealth Local Government Conference 2004.

CLGF members will receive a free copy (five for local government associations, three for ministries). Further copies, price £40 can be ordered by contacting CLGF or Commonwealth Publications, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX: tel: +44 (0)20 77476500; fax +44 (0)20 7930 0827; for further information and to order on-line go to: http://publications.thecommonwealth.org/html/new_publications.asp.

CLGF support for Nigeria

The CLGF, working with its Commonwealth partners and international development agencies, is set to provide technical and other assistance to support local government reform in Nigeria.

CLGF board representatives met with Hon Frank Nweke (Jnr) Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs and Special Duties and officials from the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria, ALGON, Abuja, on 8 December to hear about Nigeria's plans to reform and strengthen local government following the recommendations of the report of the Technical Committee on the Review of the Structure of Local Government Councils in Nigeria and its proposals to conduct local government elections early.

The CLGF delegation - comprising



CLGF Chair Len Duvall (right) discusses Nigerian reforms with Minister Hon Frank Nweke (Jnr)

Chair, Len Duvall OBE, Director Carl Wright, Nigerian Board member Hon Esther Audu, Ugandan Board member, Cpt John Otekat and the Hon Issah Kerekewu, Deputy Minister of Local Government and Rural Development of Ghana - briefed the Nigerian Minister about the important new mandate given to the CLGF by Heads

of Government in respect of election observation, provision of technical assistance and training and other activities in the promotion of best practice in local democracy.

The Federal Government of Nigeria confirmed its intention to continue to play a full and active role in CLGF.

Conference report



The report of the **Commonwealth Local Government Conference 2003: Local Government Service Partnerships** is available from CLGF. The report includes the text of President Mbeki's speech and a summary of other speeches and events. Available from CLGF on request (please send order and £10 towards postage and packing).

Commonwealth news in brief

Secretary General re-elected

Don McKinnon was elected for a second four-year term as Commonwealth Secretary General on 5 December by Commonwealth Heads of Government. CLGF has written to the Secretary General to congratulate him.

India to host 2010 Games

India will host the Commonwealth Games for the first time following a vote by the Commonwealth Games Federation's (CGF) in November 2003.

The final report from the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games was presented to the CGF by the former Chairman of M2002, Charles Allen, and Sir Howard Bernstein, Chief Executive Officer of Manchester City Council.

The next Commonwealth Games will be staged in Melbourne, Australia, in March 2006.

Zimbabwe leaves Commonwealth

The Government of Zimbabwe wrote to the Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon in December to confirm that Zimbabwe has ended its membership of the Commonwealth.

The Secretary General said that he was disappointed by this decision and hoped that Zimbabwe would return in due course.

"In line with the CHOGM statement on Zimbabwe, members of the Commonwealth will seek to engage Zimbabwe to promote national reconciliation and facilitate its return to the Commonwealth," he said.

Expert Group highlights local democracy

The Commonwealth Expert Group on Development and Democracy, strongly supported the role of local democracy, particularly the strengthening of elected local government, in its report to the 2003 CHOGM.

In its recommendations, the Group, which was chaired by Mr Manmohan Singh, and to which the CLGF submitted evidence, highlighted that local democracy is an important way to promote democratic values and deepen the democratic process. It pointed out that this can be achieved through decentralisation that devolves power to local government and emphasised that viable decentralisation requires the necessary financial resources. This would, it felt, also ensure that local government is able to contribute effectively to the realisation of the millennium development goals - where it has key responsibility for the delivery of services such as water and sanitation.

The report *Development and Democracy*, published on 3 November, can be seen at www.thecommonwealth.org or purchased from the Commonwealth Secretariat, price £5.

CHOGM strengthens CLGF mandate on democracy



CLGF was given important recognition in the main Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) Communiqué, significantly strengthening its previous mandate on election observation, provision of technical assistance and training and other activities to promote best democratic practices.

The Abuja communiqué, in respect of fundamental political values, states:

"Heads of Government ... expressed their continuing support for the Commonwealth's Secretariat's work for strengthening democratic institutions, processes and culture. They acknowledged the value of election observation, provision of technical assistance and training and other activities. They welcomed the Secretariat's collaboration with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Commonwealth Local

Government Forum and other relevant organisations to promote best democratic practice."

In the communiqué, Heads of Government also:

- re-affirmed the value of elected local government as an important foundation for democracy;
- supported constitutional and legal recognition for local government
- recognised local government's role in the implementation of the Commonwealth Harare declaration
- endorsed the recommendations of the

CLGF Commonwealth Local Government Conference 2003 on Local Government Service Partnerships

■ recognised that CLGF needs resources from member governments to support CLGF programmes on local democracy, providing technical assistance and local elections monitoring.

As well as the Abuja Communiqué, CHOGM agreed the following statements:

- Aso Rock Statement on Multilateral Trade
 - Statement on Zimbabwe
 - Commonwealth Ministerial group on Small States: Chairperson's report
 - Commonwealth Functional Cooperation Report of the Committee of the Whole.
- All the CHOGM documents are on the CHOGM website www.chogm2003.info

CLGF leads observer team for Mozambique local elections

CLGF Board member Hon Esther Audu led the Commonwealth expert team which observed the local elections in Mozambique on 19 November 2003.

The members of the expert team began work on 12 November 2003 and were asked to observe preparations for the elections, the polling, counting and results process, and the overall electoral environment. They remained in

Mozambique until 24 November 2003.

According to their report, the elections "credibly reflect the will of the Mozambican people".

The team also recommended that the Commonwealth provide technical assistance to Mozambique to help create an environment conducive to enhancing and improving the electoral machinery.

The decision to send the Commonwealth Expert Team followed an invitation from the President of Mozambique during discussions with the Commonwealth Secretary-General in early 2003.

The full report of the Expert Team can be located at www.thecommonwealth.org

Strong endorsement from CHOGM

Director's introduction



This Bulletin covers the important recognition given to local government and the CLGF at the December 2003 CHOGM. The support voiced in 2003 is the strongest yet and, significantly, entails endorsement of the constitutional and legal recognition of the sphere of local government. This will give much encouragement to CLGF members in countries where such recognition is currently under discussion, or is still to be achieved and provides our members with clear proof of what CLGF can achieve.

As significant is the re-affirmation by Heads of Government of the value they attach to elected local government and its role in the implementation of the Commonwealth Harare Declaration,

which deals with the respect of fundamental political principles. This is an area where CLGF has been increasingly involved, for example in advising its members on local government reform, including electoral processes, monitoring local elections and consolidating local democracy in countries under the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group mandate.

CLGF is also pleased that the CHOGM recognised the need for CLGF to obtain the necessary resources to undertake this work as without these its impact is limited. It will continue to work jointly with Commonwealth and other partners such as UN Habitat.

Much was made in the media about

the discussions on Zimbabwe and these were certainly serious. Other important decisions were made by the CHOGM, including those on local government and support for small states. On Zimbabwe, CLGF will respect the CHOGM decisions and in particular the importance of supporting and consolidating democracy and assisting national reconciliation.

There was a great deal that was positive at the 2003 CHOGM - for local government and for the Commonwealth as a whole. Certainly the depth of the discussions—and the occasional intensity—were a sign of the Commonwealth's vitality and the importance which its members continue to attach to it.

Carl Wright, Director, CLGF

The Good Practice Scheme

continues to grow with new projects in South Africa and India

Four new projects have started in South Africa as part of the CLGF Good Practice Scheme funded by the UK Department for International Development.

The four, all on the theme of local economic development, are:

- improving services to support the small business community in Kungwini, where the council is working in partnership with Croydon
- tourism support and development for Nkonkobe working with Oxfordshire
- a project between Leeds and Durban to explore how new approaches to local government procurement can support small and medium sized business development in the city, and

■ the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the UK Local Government International Bureau (LGIB) are working together to help improve the way in which international activities and policy are coordinated within the local government association.

In India, where the national theme is good governance and decentralisation, new projects are also underway.

The All India Council of Mayors and the All India Institute of Local Self

Government are working with the LGA/LGIB to look at how they can strengthen the voice of local government nationally in India. There are three states which are the focus for council to council projects: Gujarat, Kerala and Maharashtra.

If you are already working with a council in South Africa or in one of the target states in India and you are interested in taking forward a project on the themes indicated, please let us know. Also, if you have relevant expertise within your council and would like to link up with a council in India or South Africa on a project, please contact: rahima.begum@dgi.org.uk.

News in brief

Good local e-government

Good local e-government can bring improved efficiency in decision-making, service delivery, revenue collection and democracy according to CLGF Director Carl Wright.

Speaking at the Commonwealth Network Society Summit in London in October, he outlined the benefits of local e-government, some of the issues around connectivity and inclusiveness, and some of the innovative solutions and good practice happening in councils across the Commonwealth.

Alliance to increase awareness of international development

The UK Local Government Alliance for International Development launched a central-local government agreement on international development in December 2003. The collaboration between central and local government will increase local government awareness of international development issues and involvement in activities to reduce world poverty.

The Alliance comprises the CLGF, the UK Improvement and Development Agency, the Local Government International Bureau, the Society for Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

For further details contact: Rosalie Callway at the LGIB, t e l : + 4 4 (0) 2 0 7 6 6 4 3 1 1 7 ; e-mail Rosalie.callway@lgib.gov.uk.

Assisting reform in Sri Lanka

The CLGF Director visited Colombo in July for discussions with senior local government representatives including the Mayor of Colombo and the permanent secretary and officials at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government. The visit allowed an exchange of views about current political and other developments on the island and ways in which CLGF could assist the process of national reconciliation and local government reform.

Common concerns for local democracy

"As local representatives we are all here to serve our communities and deliver first class services. The powers and independence of local government, getting the public involved, techniques for consultation, increasing voter turnout, decentralisation, inclusiveness, councillor and management training and funding are common concerns for local democracy throughout the Commonwealth," said CLGF chair Len Duvall speaking at the CLGF European members conference in London in November.

The conference, hosted by the Greater London Authority at City Hall, heard about local government experience from across the Commonwealth including:

- e-government development in Malta where a strong e-government policy is increasing citizen participation and information and access to services, boosting the role



Guest speaker London Mayor Ken Livingstone of local government

- consulting the public and getting voters to turn out in New Zealand where there is universal postal voting, and

- local government reforms in Jamaica where local government powers were very limited but councils are now taking on much wider responsibilities with greater financial freedoms.

Keynote speaker Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, said:

"Effective consultation and involvement of the public and stakeholders is vital to good local governance and to building fair and just societies around the globe.

DFID Parliamentary Under Secretary Gareth Thomas MP said that The Millennium Development Goals can only be achieved if development agencies, developing countries, the private sector, local government and civil society all work together.

CLGF supports anglophone/francophone cooperation

CLGF has been working to secure greater EU support for local government, including local government capacity building in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. Working with other partners through the African, Caribbean and Pacific

Local Government Platform, CLGF has been at the forefront of work with the ACP and European Union institutions

On the initiative of CLGF, both Commonwealth Secretary-General HE Don McKinnon and Francophonie Secretary-

General Abou Diouf formally indicated their support to the ACP Secretary-General for a submission for funding such capacity building in different ACP regions. All ACP Ambassadors in Brussels have now endorsed the submission and have

forwarded it for implementation by the EU.

As an international local government body with extensive membership in ACP countries, CLGF is well placed to promote Anglophone-Francophone and Lusophone co-operation, and will continue to work towards greater co-operation.

What's on..

March 2004

8 **Commonwealth Day**

tbc **Workshop, Sierra Leone:** CLGF in partnership with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy

28 **Commonwealth Environment Ministers Conference,** Jeju, Korea

April 2004

19-21 **CLGF/ Commonwealth Secretariat Regional Symposium** on Local Democracy and Good Governance in the Caribbean, Montego Bay, Jamaica

22-23 **CLGF Board Meeting,** Kingston, Jamaica

May 2004

3 **UTO/IULA unification conference,** Paris, France

4 **Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting,** Geneva, Switzerland

30 **Commonwealth Womens' Affairs Ministerial Meeting,** Nadi, Fiji Islands

September 2004

26 **UN-Habitat World Urban Forum,** Barcelona, Spain

28-30 **Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting,** St Kitts & Nevis

October 2004

23-27 **CAPAM 2002 Conference on Networked Government,** Singapore, www.capam.comnet.my

March 2005

16-18 **Third Commonwealth Local Government Conference,** Aberdeen, UK

19 **CLGF General Meeting,** Aberdeen, UK

For further information check out the CLGF website at www.clgf.org.uk or contact CLGF on tel: +44 (0) 20 7934 9690, fax: +44 (0) 20 7934 9699; e-mail: info@clgf.org.uk.

Local democracy and good governance in the Caribbean

CLGF/Commonwealth Secretariat Regional Symposium

19 – 21 April 2004
Montego Bay, Jamaica

A two day symposium on promoting, sustaining and re-energising local democracy from the ballot box to decision-making.

An event for ministers, mayors, leaders of local authorities and senior officials from the Commonwealth Caribbean hosted by Hon Minister Portia Simpson-Miller, Minister for Local Government, Community Development and Sport, Jamaica.

Discussions will cover roles and responsibilities, partnership working, financial decentralisation, service delivery and regional cooperation.

Speakers include:

- Prime Minister of Jamaica Rt Hon P J Patterson ON PC, QC
- Winston Cox, Commonwealth Deputy Secretary General
- Hon Ponto's Sekatle, Minister of Local Government, Lesotho
- HE Edwin Carrington, Secretary General, CARICOM

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CLGF locks into key Commonwealth meetings

As part of its on-going mandate, CLGF makes representations to key Commonwealth meetings.

Cllr Graham Lane, Chair of the Local Government Association of England and Wales Education and Lifelong Learning Executive represented CLGF at the Commonwealth Education Ministers Meeting in Edinburgh in October.

CLGF Director Carl Wright attended the CHOGM Committee of the Whole in London

which met in London in November and presented a formal report on CLGF's work. He also attended an official Commonwealth sponsored meeting of Cameroon's international partners on decentralisation at Marlborough House in London in October 2003.

Other recent submissions include ones to the Commonwealth Finance Ministers in Brunei in September and the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group which met in New York in October.

The CLGF Board

Members:

Africa:

Hon Esther Audu, Association of Local Authorities of Nigeria, Nigeria

Capt John Emilly Otekat, President, Uganda Local Authorities Association, Uganda

Hon Kouambo Adrien, Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, Cameroon

Hon Ponto's Susan Matumelo Sekatle, Minister of Local Government, Lesotho*
Vice chairperson

Americas:

Mayor Robert Montague, Jamaica Local Government Association

Hon Matthew Walter, Minister of Community Development and Women's Affairs, Dominica
Hon Portia Simpson-Miller, Minister of Local Government, Community Development and Sport, Jamaica

Asia Pacific:

Mayor Basil Morrison, President, Local Government New Zealand*

Hon Chris Carter, Minister of Local Government, New Zealand

Europe:

Len Duvall OBE AM, Local Government Association, England and Wales, UK*
Chairperson

Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP, Minister for Local Government and Regions, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, UK

Members at large:

Cllr Jocelyne Guertin, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Canada

Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, President, South African Local Government Association
Cllr Dr Helen Nkandi-Shiimi, President, Association of Local Authorities of Namibia

Associate members:

Professor Michael Clarke, Vice Principal, University of Birmingham, UK

Dr Jatin V Modi, President, All India Institute of Local Self-Government, India

Co-opted members:

Hon Mataiasi V Ragigia MP, Minister of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlements and Environment, Fiji

Dr Bishnu Ragoonath, University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago

Alternates:

Africa:

Hon Sydney Mufamadi, Minister of Provincial and Local Government, South Africa

Americas:

Cllr Charles Gregoire, Chair, Dominica Association of Local Authorities, Dominica

Asia Pacific:

Cllr Peter Woods OAM, LGOW NSW, Australia
Mayor Ephraim Jubilee, Executive Chairman of PNG Urban LLG Association, Papua New Guinea

Senator Ian Campbell, Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government, Australia

Dato' Lokman Hikim bin Mohd.Jasan, Secretary General, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Malaysia

Europe:

Dr Ian Micallef LLD, President, Local Councils of Malta, Malta

Hon Andreas Christou, Minister of the Interior, Cyprus

Associates:

William Saunders, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), UK

Professor P S Reddy, University of Kwazulu Natal, South Africa

Michael Ashley, Director, Local Government International Bureau, *Honorary Treasurer**

Carl Wright, *Director**

*Member of CLGF Sub-Committee on Finances and Membership