



bulletin

COMMONWEALTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM

issue 3/04

■ Promoting democratic local government ■ Sharing good practice

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Presidents top bill for democracy conference



President Kufor

President Obasanjo of Nigeria, the current Commonwealth Chairperson-in-Office, and President Kufuor of Ghana top the bill for the forthcoming Third Commonwealth Local Government Conference, on 15-17 March 2005. Other top speakers include: HE Rt Hon Don McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary-General; Dr Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN Habitat; and Jack McConnell, First Minister of Scotland. Many senior mayors, chief executives as well ministers and permanent secretaries from around the world will be attending.



President Obasanjo

The Deepening Local Democracy Conference will look at promoting, sustaining and re-energising local democracy from the ballot box to community planning and local decision making for better front line services. CLGF has commissioned research to review local democracy in the Commonwealth and consider how it fits into the theories on freedom and development that have been adopted by UNDP and other agencies.

The conference offers a unique opportunity for local government

stakeholders to meet, network and discuss key innovations and reform strategies. It will result in the development of policies and practical tools for use by local government everywhere and its outcomes will be formally presented for endorsement to Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Malta in November 2005. CLGF is seeking sponsorship for some local government participants, particularly from small states.

The conference will be held at the

Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre in Aberdeen, Scotland, an ideal backdrop given the recent decentralisation and local government reforms in Scotland and the dynamic development of the city of Aberdeen in recent years. Participants will be able to visit local projects promoting community involvement and citizen's empowerment in local decision-making. The conference will also provide an interesting social programme with a Scottish flavour, including a gala dinner.



Commonwealth Local Government Conference 2005

Deepening local democracy
15-17 March 2005
and
CLGF
GENERAL MEETING

18 March 2005

Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre
Bridge of Don, Aberdeen
Scotland, UK

For further information and booking contact Conference 2005,
CLGF tel +44 (0)20 7934 9690,
e-mail info@clgf.org.uk or look on the conference website at www.clgf2005.org.

Strengthening local government in the Pacific

In collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, CLGF is holding a regional symposium in the Pacific in December. This event will bring together ministers of local government, local government mayors and leaders, and officials from across the region. Other stakeholders, including NGOs, civil society, representatives of the academic community and traditional leaders will

also be attending.

Hon Mataiasia Ragigia, Minister for Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlements and Environment, Fiji will host the event. It will seek to enable participants to share information about local democracy and good governance arrangements in their respective countries and to continue to raise the profile of local government and decentralisation in the region.

The meeting will also look at the

challenge of urbanisation in the Pacific and the need to strengthen local governance arrangements to enable countries to meet the challenges of the Millennium Development Targets. Discussions will also look at the role of traditional leaders in local governance.

Practical recommendations from the event will continue to guide CLGF's future work, and that of its members in the region, in strengthening local governance and democracy.

New Zealand government backs Pacific work

The New Zealand government is giving financial backing to the development of CLGF's regional information/resource centre for local government in the Pacific, other capacity building activities and the continued development of a regional network of practitioners. CLGF has also secured resources from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation to fund the two-year appointment of Fiji-based local government expert, Terry Parker, who will also work with local government to develop CLGF's capacity-building work in the region.

Commonwealth news in brief

Ten-year plan for gender equality

Women's affairs ministers have agreed to a Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality, to take effect from 2005 to 2015. It will tackle gender discrimination and enhance democracy, peace, the rule of law and human rights. The Action Plan was released after the Seventh Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting in Nadi, Fiji Islands, held from 30 May to 2 June 2004. It also aims to eradicate poverty, address the HIV/AIDS pandemic and promote the economic empowerment of women.

The Commonwealth Secretariat launched the virtual International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS on 7 June 2004 in Johannesburg, South Africa, to strengthen practice, policy and research to enhance existing efforts on tackling issues of gender and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa and beyond. The project is a collaboration with the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, Dalhousie University, Canada; the Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS Research Alliance; and the AIDS and Rights Alliance of Southern Africa.

CMAG welcomes Pakistan's participation

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration (CMAG) met in New York on 24 and 25 September 2004. This was the Group's second meeting following its reconstitution by Commonwealth Heads of Government at Abuja in December 2003.

Reviewing reports on developments in Pakistan, the Group welcomed Pakistan's resolve to remain engaged with the Commonwealth and acknowledged Pakistan's participation in the Commonwealth since its reinstatement. Other Commonwealth countries are also encouraged to work with Pakistan.

Investment in small states

Commonwealth finance ministers discussed development policy in small states and investment in developing countries at their meeting in St Kitts and Nevis on 28-29 September 2004.

An issue of concern was progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Ministers were concerned that a significant number of Commonwealth countries are likely to fail to achieve the MDGs, including the goal for reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty. They called for a renewed sense of urgency, and urged all parties to the Monterrey Consensus to fulfil their obligations. In particular, they noted the key role that development assistance plays in financing MDG-related investments, and supporting policies and institution-building needed for growth and poverty reduction.

The importance of good governance Director's introduction



UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has said that 'Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development'.

The world's many troublespots, whether in Central Asia, in the Middle East or the growing number of African hotspots such as the Sudan or the Cote d'Ivoire, demonstrate that poor governance as well as lack of democracy are often the root cause of the lack of development. Establishing good governance is critical to conflict prevention and to rebuilding the social and political fabric of failed states with a view to tackling poverty and starting to meet the millennium development goals in those states.

Good governance and democracy is at the heart of the Commonwealth. We must ensure that any discussion about good governance and democracy and any

initiatives that support good governance and democracy must include all spheres of government, including local government. The state comprises local and provincial as well as central government; it is critical that any strategy to build effective states and effective democracy recognises the principle of subsidiarity, which aims to ensure that decisions are made at the most appropriate level of government. This may mean that the delivery of some targets, such as the millennium development goals (MDGs), is best undertaken by local councils rather than central government agencies.

This idea of subsidiarity is increasingly being recognised by key international development agencies such as UNDP and the EU. CLGF hopes that current initiatives, such as Tony Blair's Africa Commission will also recognise the critical importance of what UN Habitat

has called 'localising the millennium development goals' and the importance of local government as a delivery agent for development.

Good governance is at the top of the CLGF's agenda - in its technical work in support of its members, in helping to develop and test practical instruments such as the UN-Habitat Urban Governance Index, and in promoting policy discussion, for example at regional events in the Caribbean, the Pacific and at the forthcoming conference in Aberdeen. CLGF is both lobbying to ensure that local government is recognised as an important sphere of delivery and supporting local governments throughout the Commonwealth to help them deliver better services to tackle poverty and meet the MDGs.

Carl Wright, Director, CLGF

Practical support for local democracy

In response to a request from the Government of Nigeria and the Association of Local Government of Nigeria (ALGON), CLGF sent a technical assistance mission to Abuja, Nigeria. The mission comprised senior local government experts from Ghana, Uganda and the UK and helped to formulate policy recommendations on how the role of ALGON and local government in Nigeria could be strengthened.

CLGF has also been working with a

number of Commonwealth and other partners in providing support to local government in Zimbabwe. This work, which began in 2003, aims to strengthen the capacity of a number of urban councils and of the national association, UCAZ. Recent activities included a workshop hosted by the Mayor of eThekweni which brought together senior mayors from different political groupings in the country with a view to identifying key governance issues, benefiting from international

experiences and devising strategies to overcome existing difficulties. UN Habitat UGI workshops have been run in three major cities in collaboration with the CLGF-UCAZ programme, with the outcomes being incorporated into the development of a peer review process.

The work is part of CLGF's growing focus on local democracy, following the 2003 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting that strengthened CLGF's mandate to promote local democracy and good governance.

Measuring urban governance

One important session at the World Urban Forum in Barcelona in September was on the Urban Governance Index (UGI). The UGI has been developed to allow comparative measurement of the governance of cities in areas such as effective service delivery, accountability, transparency and participation. It provides a potentially powerful tool for identifying problems and taking the necessary action to effect improvements. CLGF is currently working with UN Habitat in seeking to pilot the UGI at a practical level.

CLGF Director Carl Wright attended the World Urban Forum, organised by UN Habitat, in Barcelona and spoke at several of the sessions including the UGI.

The Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements (CCGHS), also met informally in the wings of the World Urban Forum on 14 September 2004 chaired by Zambian Minister of Local Government and Housing, Sylvia Masebo. The meeting was to prepare for a full session of CCGHS in Nairobi, Kenya, next April where ministers and senior officials will examine the new workplan

for ComHabitat, the Commonwealth's mechanism for action on human settlements. The workplan includes research on indicators to help the Commonwealth assess its progress in achieving the United Nations' Habitat Agenda, relevant Millennium Development Goals and the Commonwealth's goal to "demonstrate progress towards adequate shelter for all with secure tenure and access to essential services in every community by 2015."

India GPS programme gathers momentum

The CLGF Good Practice Scheme is now underway in all three project States in India: Gujarat, Kerala and Maharashtra. The overall theme of the projects is good governance and decentralisation. New partners setting up projects include Birmingham City Council, UK with Vadodara Municipal Corporation; Leicester City Council UK with Rajkot Municipal Corporation; and St Mary in Jamaica with Surat Municipal Corporation.

Anuja Kunwar has been appointed as co-ordinator of the scheme in India to work with the projects that include exchanges with counterparts in Africa, the Caribbean and the UK. As well as council-to-council exchanges, the Good Practice Scheme is supporting a project between the All India Council of Mayors and the UK Local Government Association, through the Local Government International Bureau; following a recent visit of senior Indian mayors to the UK; a return visit by UK counterparts will take place to Mumbai in December.

Cochin and Thiruvananthapuram are currently seeking partners. Anyone who is interested in working with them should contact scheme project officer Rahima Begum at the CLGF offices in the UK.

CLGF Director Carl Wright visited India in October to discuss the scheme with the All India Institute for Local Self-Government and other project



Scheme workshop in Vadodara, Gujarat

partners and briefed Hon Kumari Selja, Minister of State for Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation on the Scheme and other CLGF activities.

Economic development theme for Ghana

In Ghana, the National Association in Ghana has established a partnership with the Ugandan Local Governments Association to enable them to work together on how the associations

support their members in promoting and strengthening local economic developments, and how they need to build their own capacity in order to do this successfully. A roundtable meeting and peer work shadowing will take place in December 2004.

Two other partnerships have already been set up: Tema Municipality with the London Borough of Greenwich, UK and Sekondi Tekoradi with Plymouth City Council, UK.

Pacific programme gets positive support

Those involved in the Pacific Good Practice Scheme gave the scheme the thumbs up at a review workshop held in Cairns, Australia in July. Participants attended the seminar to evaluate the CLGF Good Practice Scheme programme between Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG) and to give their views on this process.

All participants felt that the Scheme had helped their work and valued the fact that they were working within a supportive partnership arrangement. They recommended that the results and new approaches should be disseminated to other councils in PNG and Australia. CLGF, the PNG Urban Local Level Government Association (PNGULLGA) and the Local Government Association of New South Wales will take this

forward.

The projects have all delivered tangible results, strengthening governance and participatory approaches to service delivery including:

- A detailed waste management strategy and policy for moving the waste dump in Lae, PNG including facilitation of a series of local consultation processes, all done in partnership with Cairns;

- drawing up and consultation on a city plan for Mt Hagen, with the support of their partners Orange. A practical demonstration project was also completed – hard surfacing the bus station. This made the direct link for residents back to the need for and role

of the city plan. An innovative aspect of the work was that it was done partly by local prisoners.

- Townsville and Port Moresby have established a one-stop shop approach to licensing and planning for the capital city.

- The PNGULLGA and their partners the New South Wales Local Government and Shires Association have worked together with the executive and membership of PNGULLGA to complete a strategic plan, which is now guiding the work of the association in supporting its members.

All the partners in the Pacific scheme want to continue their work and bring on board new partners. CLGF is now seeking further support for this.

News in brief

Focus on South East Asia

CLGF was part of a high level panel at the Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) Conference, Singapore, October. During the conference, CLGF also held consultations about closer cooperation between CLGF and the Government of Singapore. On a separate visit to Kuala Lumpur for meeting with Malaysian members, CLGF confirmed arrangements for the forthcoming regional symposium on local government service partnerships, to be held in Malaysia in June 2005.

Submission to Africa Commission

Following consultation with and feed-back from its African members, and in collaboration with the UK Local Government Alliance for International Development, CLGF has made a formal submission to the Commission for Africa, established by Prime Minister Tony Blair. This submission emphasised the key role of local government in delivering the millennium development goals (MDGs) and the need to ensure that the MDGs are localised. The Commission will report in 2005.

North America Mission

CLGF Director Carl Wright visited North America in September for discussions with local, provincial and federal government officials in Canada about how CLGF could collaborate more closely with local partners; those met included Hon John Godfrey, federal minister, and senior provincial government officials in Manitoba and Ontario. Consultations are also underway with a number of other provinces, including Saskatchewan.

ACPLGP coordinator appointed

Working with its partners in the African, Caribbean and Pacific Local Government Platform (ACPLGP), CLGF has secured resources from the UK Department for International Development to allow the network to develop its capacity. A coordinator has been appointed, Ms Elisa Lala Rafamatantsoa, who will be based in Brussels. An appraisal is underway in the ACPLGP bid for intra-ACP funding which has the formal support of ACP ambassadors. The appraisal offers important opportunities to consolidate the role of local government and CLGF will be closely involved in the process. Euros 3 million have been earmarked for project implementation by the EU. A important recognition of ACPLGP objectives recently was received in correspondence from the responsible EU Commissioner Poul Nielson.

News in brief

Local government must be in touch internationally

Local government in the 21st century has to be in touch with international trends, with world events and with what is happening on the other side of the globe, as much as on the other side of the city or the local district, said CLGF Director Carl Wright addressing the annual conference of Local Government New Zealand in Auckland in July.

Outlining the importance of international links and the work of organisations such as CLGF, he said: "In today's global world, distances have shrunk. All of us are affected by what happens on the other side of the: we are truly interdependent. This is also why the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, and New Zealand's role in it matters."

Councillor training in Sierra Leone

Local government councillors in Sierra Leone attended their first training session in May 2004 following their election earlier this year. The workshop was run by CLGF in collaboration with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and the Government of Sierra Leone.

Almost 100 newly elected councillors, officers, government ministers and officials and other key stakeholders such as traditional leaders took part in the workshop and agreed on a strategy to guide the development of local government in the country. Vice President of Sierra Leone Hon Solomon Berewa was a key speaker and UK Deputy Prime Minister, Rt Hon John Prescott MP, whose Hull constituency has longstanding links with Freetown, sent a message of support.

Participants highlighted the importance of adequate local government financing and revenue raising powers, together with the need to strengthen local administrative capacity. CLGF is looking at how it can further help with future capacity building and institution strengthening for local government in Sierra Leone through initiatives such as helping to establish a local government association and skills exchange for councillors and officers.



What's on..

- December 2004**
- 4-8 **4-8 Pacific Regional Symposium on Democracy and Good Governance**, in Suva, Fiji
- January 2005**
- 21-23 **World Mayors' Conference 2005**, Cochin, India
- February 2005**
- tbc **Commonwealth consultative group on the environment**, New York
- 27 **Commonwealth Beijing + 10 meeting of ministers and heads of national women's machineries**, New York
- March 2005**
- 14 **CLGF Board meeting**, Aberdeen, UK
- 15-17 **Third Commonwealth Local Government Conference**, Aberdeen, UK
- 19 **CLGF Board meeting**, Aberdeen, UK
- April 2005**
- 22 **UN Habitat Governing Council and CCGHS meeting**, Nairobi, Kenya
- May 2005**
- tbc **CLGF Asia Pacific Symposium on Local Government Service Partnerships**, Putrajaya, Malaysia

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.



World Mayor's conference 2005

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND ROLE OF CITIES

21-23 January 2005, Kochi (Cochin), Kerala, India

A global platform to discuss the role of cities in the MDGs, share experiences, exchange ideas and set strategies for future co-operation

Organised by the All-India Institute of Local Self-Government and the Government of Kerala in association with the Kerala Institute of Local Administration and the Corporation of Cochin

For further information contact: Ranjit Chavan, Director General, AIIISG; e-mail dg@aiaisg.org; tel: +91 22 26206716; fax: +91 22 6288790

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

Alexander Williams, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Local Government, Bahamas

Alternates:

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