

LGSPs for leadership, innovation and better services

Local government service partnerships (LGSPs) can help local government provide leadership and find greater resources to meet community needs, according to the recent CLGF Asia-Pacific Regional Symposium on Improving Local Government Service Delivery through Innovation and Service Partnerships.

The symposium, hosted by the Malaysia Ministry of Housing and Local Government in Kuala Lumpur from 12-14 July 2005, involved local government leaders, ministers, and officials from Australia, Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka. Delegates discussed LGSPs and recent thinking on the changing role of local government, building on the policies developed by CLGF at the 2003 Commonwealth Local Government Conference.

Service partnerships are widely used in the Asia-Pacific region by national, provincial and local governments. The symposium looked at a range of public-private partnerships and partnerships with other agencies, highlighting a number of case studies including community waste management in Bangladesh, an i-community programme in India, Malaysia Safe City Programme, and the New Zealand experience with corporatisation and partnerships.



Delegates also visited a number of projects under way in Kuala Lumpur.

"LGSPs are not just a response to lack of resources but are a form of innovation," said CLGF Chairperson Cllr John Otekat.

The symposium called for CLGF to continue its work on LGSPs, developing case studies and discussion forums to exchange good practice and for joint activities with other regional networks.

"The rapid urbanisation, globalisation, information and communications revolution and the

increasing complexity of our societies are reshaping the roles and functions of our local government," said keynote speaker Dato' Seri Ong Ka Ting, Minister of Housing and Local Government in Malaysia.

"In Malaysia, the Malaysia Incorporated Policy has inspired many local governments to form joint-venture partnerships with the private sector or NGOs in housing and urban services. These partnerships have improved the quality of life and standard of living of its people and addressed social problems such as poverty and squatters."

CLGF tells G8 that local government has key role in Africa

Local government in Africa has direct responsibility for delivering the Millennium Development Goals, formulating poverty reduction strategies, and delivering basic services, CLGF has told G8 leaders after consultation with members in Africa.

Writing to UK Prime Minister Tony Blair in June in advance of the UK

Presidency of G8, CLGF Chairperson John Otekat supported the recommendations of the report of the Commission for Africa and emphasised local government's key role in taking forward the recommendations. He asked G8 leaders to act decisively on the recommendations, especially in building systems and staff in local government to boost its

capacity to deliver.

In his reply, UK PM Tony Blair said that the G8 deal was an important result for Africa. "But for this to translate into poverty reduction across the continent, it is important that Africa builds effective, accountable central and local governments. The UK is committed to working with African countries to do this."

Working with Africa

Welcoming the formation of the United Cities and Local Government Africa (UCLGA), CLGF Chairperson John Otekat said that CLGF had always worked closely with Africa and UCLGA will be an important partner.

Speaking at the launch of UCLGA in Tshwane, South Africa in May, Cllr Otekat described how CLGF has championed the interests of African local government across the continent and with international organisations including the Commonwealth, and the EU African-Caribbean-Pacific Partnership. He also described some of the recent CLGF capacity-building work in Ghana, Lesotho, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and South Africa.

Message of support to London

CLGF Chairperson Cllr John Otekat has sent a message of support to UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and London's Mayor Ken Livingstone following the terrorist attacks on London on 7 July.

"I wish to convey the heartfelt solidarity on behalf of myself and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum Board in response to this appalling terrorist outrage," he said.

"I wish to express our support and admiration for the work of those government departments and the local government and other workers involved in responding to this emergency swiftly and efficiently and express our sincere condolences to the people of London and in particular those whose families were directly affected."

Record rainfall puts strain on Indian councils

Mumbai in India is getting back to normal following record rainfall in July that has affected more than 20 million people. In other parts of Maharashtra the situation is still grave with train services suspended and road links disrupted. Many homes were flooded and some 60,000 villagers are still living in temporary camps.

CLGF Project Officer Anuya Kuwar, who is based in Mumbai said that the situation was very grave. "There have been unprecedented damages, loss of human lives and total disruption of the entire communication network," she said.

Commonwealth news in brief

Women are key to development

Women's equality is central to the successful development of any country and women are key engines of economic growth and social progress, according to Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon.

Speaking on 16 May 2005 at the official launch of a report on Women's Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap by the World Economic Forum at the Commonwealth Secretariat's headquarters in London, UK, he said:

"Women are the strongest link in the virtuous circle of growth and development: educating women, for example, leads to better health for the entire family, and better health means a stronger workforce and increased economic growth."

Gambia Action Plan to close gender gap

A new Gender Action Plan has been introduced in The Gambia to help close the gender gap. The initiative was drawn up at a three - day workshop in the country's capital, Banjul, from 13 to 15 May 2005, organised by the Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with the National Women's Bureau and Department of State for Women's Affairs of The Gambia.

The Gender Action Plan will establish a national gender bureau to assist men and women of The Gambia in playing more effective roles in their development. The bureau will work to promote gender equality by integrating this policy into development programmes in the country to improve the quality of life of all Gambians, particularly women, by eliminating gender inequalities.

Bougainville celebrates new government

An historic inauguration ceremony for Bougainville's new government took place on 15 June and was attended by the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Sir Michael Somare, and national and international representatives. The recent elections in Bougainville for an autonomous government took place earlier this year following the signing of a peace agreement with the national government of Papua New Guinea in 2001 to end more than ten years of civil conflict.

Lesotho local elections report

The first Lesotho local elections since independence took place in a peaceful atmosphere, but there was a 'breakdown of consensus and communication' amongst the main participants, according to the report of Commonwealth observers monitoring the elections.

The independent Commonwealth Expert Team, which was present for the Local Government Elections in Lesotho held on 30 April 2005, was organised jointly by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum.

The members of the Team were Councillor John E Otekat, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, President of the Uganda Local Government Association and Chairperson of Soroti District, Uganda; Councillor Leslie Lynch, Councillor on San Fernando City Council and Member of the Local Government Association Trinidad and Tobago; and Ms Angela Odah, National Co-ordinator, Transition Monitoring Group (NGO Coalition), Nigeria.

The Team highlighted a number of areas for improvement in the future. It specifically refers to the delimitation of constituencies, the voter registration process, voter education, and the need for

wider consultation prior to the elections.

The Report also sets out proposals to enhance the efficiency of the polling arrangements on Election Day, and suggests a number of areas in which technical assistance and capacity building might be provided.

During their visit, the team also met with CLGF Board member Hon Ponto's Sekatle, Minister for Local Government, who briefed them on the background to the elections and the government's plans for decentralisation.

■ The full Report of the Expert Team is available on the Commonwealth Secretariat website <http://www.thecommonwealth.org>.

UK partnerships with Sri Lanka

More than 30 UK local authorities are developing partnership programmes in Sri Lanka to help communities devastated by the Asian tsunami. Over the coming months, the UK Local Government Alliance for International Development - an umbrella group of organisations including CLGF - hopes that every affected district will benefit.

In partnership with Sri Lanka's Local Government Ministry, the UK Alliance has identified the worst affected districts and found long term consortia of groups of local authorities from the UK to support them in the enormous challenge of rebuilding their services and structures. Partnerships have been built with affected districts in southern,

eastern and north eastern provinces.

Visiting Sri Lanka to co-ordinate the projects, Matthew Wingate saw some of the work getting under way, including stronger social care and more robust waste management planning.

"Hundreds and thousands of lives were lost and many people were made homeless as a result of the tsunami.

One of the worst affected countries was Sri Lanka, where British local government is making efforts to respond," he said.

However, the delicate situation between the government and the Tamil Tigers is still a challenge. While the tsunami was seen by many as an opportunity to further the peace process, delays in the release and distribution of international donations had led to accusations of bias from all sides.

But despite the tensions, UK local government is committed to working with all communities affected by the tsunami.

Showing leadership in the face of adversity

Secretary-General's comment



CLGF's headquarters in London received many calls and messages of support following the terrorist attacks in London in July. As our colleagues with the Association of Local Government of Nigeria said: "We condemn in entirety such barbaric attack on innocent and peace-loving people and we join all others who wish to see the entire world rid of violence in saying that the world shall not and will never succumb to terrorism."

Soon after this, staff at our regional project office in India were affected by the unprecedented rainfall which brought terrible floods, many deaths and made many millions of people homeless, others unable to travel to work or to see their families as transport and other systems

were down for a number of days.

Fortunately none of our staff were directly affected, but our heartfelt condolences and support goes to those countries, councils and people who were affected by these tragedies, directly or indirectly and our thanks to all our members and partners who have sent us messages of support.

All this follows soon after the tsunami devastated several countries in Asia. CLGF, working closely with UK and other members, has been able to assist in organising a significant response to support local government reconstruction in Sri Lanka.

In the face of such adversity, we must admire the leadership that local

government is providing and the resolve our people are demonstrating in getting on with things. When such terrible things happen, people turn to their local councils for help - emergency services, social care and counselling, temporary housing, rebuilding communications systems - and for longer term planning to try to minimise the risk of such events in the future.

Strong, democratic local government is absolutely essential during such times of crisis. CLGF is working with local governments throughout the Commonwealth to help them create such strong and democratic structures to plan ahead and be prepared in the future.

Carl Wright, Secretary-General, CLGF

Good Practice projects get going in all target countries

The Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme projects are now up and running in all the current target countries: South Africa, Ghana, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea and India.

New projects now underway include:

■ Plymouth City Council, UK are working with Shama-Ahanta East Metropolitan Assembly, Ghana to develop and implement a sustainable tourism strategy

■ Newham Borough Council, UK and Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, India are looking at ways in which the council can use their GIS mapping system to target projects to reduce poverty

■ Uganda's Local Government Association is hosting a visit by the national association in Ghana (NALAG) to share their skills in strengthening structures to support its members.

The key officers who have been working with CLGF to develop the Scheme in Jamaica, Ghana, South Africa, India, UK and the Pacific are meeting in London in September to look at wider dissemination of the lessons emerging from the Scheme projects so that as many CLGF members as



Picture courtesy of the EU, 2002 ECF/Alabshere

possible can benefit from the Scheme's outcomes.

As part of the Good Practice Scheme, CLGF is also launching a process to select practitioners from local government who are interested in working on development projects to support local government across the Commonwealth. The database is starting with three pilot countries - South Africa, India and the UK. Practitioners from these three countries working in local government, with skills in local government management and change

management, strategic development, managing and developing national associations of local government, or other technical skills relating to local government should log on to the CLGF website and apply on-line to take part in one of the selection days.

Full details and an application form can be found on www.clgf.org.uk and selection days will be taking place in September and October. For more information on the database and accessing experts from it, please contact Lucy Slack at CLGF.

Support for Solomons

Honiara City Council in the Solomon Islands is getting support from CLGF to develop its institutional structures to help it to deliver local services more effectively.

Working with a range of experienced practitioners from New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Australia, the City has identified a number of key priorities and actions on governance, planning, public health and waste management services, transparency and accountability.

NZAID has supported the initial phase of the project. The next phase will see the focus on practical delivery of services.

Using the Good Practice Scheme model, Honiara City Council is working in partnership with other experienced councils in the region, including Maryborough City Council in Australia and Kapiti Coast in New Zealand.

A more substantive implementation phase, based on this systematic review of needs, is planned.

■ The Solomon Islands are partners in the CLGF regional Pacific Project and members of the Technical Advisory Panel that guides the work of the CLGF regional office. The panel also includes local government representatives from Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. At the Panel's recent meeting in Fiji, they agreed a programme for the region for training, capacity building and regular exchange of information and good practice. The work will be coordinated through the CLGF regional Pacific office

Strengthening local government in Sierra Leone

Hull City Council and other UK local councils will be sharing their experience and expertise with their counterparts in Sierra Leone's recently established local councils as part of a task group to support the re-establishment and strengthening of local government there.

Launched on 22 July by the Lord Mayor of Hull, the task group has been

set up by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and the UK Local Government International Bureau (LGIB) after a CLGF workshop in Sierra Leone in April for local government stakeholders, recommended that new local authorities should have opportunity to learn from and work alongside experienced local government

practitioners from other countries.

The work of the task group will include sharing information about activities within projects, funding opportunities and general developments in Sierra Leone and ensuring regular communication amongst task group members, including scheduled coordination meetings.

News in brief

Strengthening governance in the Caribbean

More than 50 senior leaders of governing and opposition political parties and civil society from the Caribbean discussed how they can contribute to strengthening democracy in the Caribbean at a workshop in Trinidad and Tobago at the end of July. The three-day meeting on 'Government and Opposition - Roles, Rights and Responsibilities' was held in the capital, Port of Spain.

Mayor Murchison Brown, Mayor of Port of Spain, attended the conference on behalf of CLGF.

The workshop was organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), in co-operation with the Citizens' Agenda Network, a Trinidad and Tobago non-governmental organisation.

Mkhatshwa new President of UCLGA

Former CLGF Board member Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, Executive Mayor of Tshwane, has been elected President of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA) the new pan-African local government association to shape the future of Local Government in Africa. The Founding Congress took place in Tshwane, South Africa, from 15-18 May 2005.

The Congress was addressed by several African leaders including the current Commonwealth Chairperson in Office and President of the African Union, Chief Obasanjo, President of Nigeria and CLGF Chairperson Cllr John Otekat.

Echoing the recent Commonwealth Local Government Conference in Aberdeen, mayors and local government representatives called for legal or constitutional recognition of local democracy, with a clear definition of the role and responsibilities of local government, and the promotion of real financial decentralisation. Members agreed to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals at the local level.

White banners to boost MDGs

Local governments throughout the world are being asked to attach white banners to local government buildings to highlight the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) when the UN meets to discuss progress in achieving them at the Millennium + 5 Summit in September.

Meeting in Beijing in June, local government members at the UCLG World Council backed an Action Plan to:

■ Invite all the local governments to adopt a Local Government Commitment to the MDGs, the signatories to which will be compiled and submitted to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan;

■ Attach a white banner to local government buildings in the first fortnight of September with the slogan 2015: no excuses to support the UN campaign.

■ Obtain support from the Heads of State Summit in September in New York for a local government Millennium Cities Campaign.

CLGF Secretary General Carl Wright attended the Council on behalf of CLGF.

Scheme goes green in Jamaica



St. Mary's visits Leeds recycling centre

The Good Practice Scheme is now fully underway in Jamaica with several projects up-and-running. The focus is on strategic planning for developing green spaces and parks. Links set up include:

- The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Jamaican Local Government Association who are working together to develop a work plan for the Association to improve its capacity to serve members' needs

- A link between St Mary Parish Council and Leeds City Council, applying the lessons learned from Leeds' work on their city vision

- A link between Stockport in the UK and Portmore in Jamaica on strategic planning.

CLGF Vice Chair Cllr Robert Montague, who is also Mayor of St Mary, one of the councils involved in a project, said that the projects will be of huge benefit to the councils in Jamaica.

"I am pleased to see that projects are now up-and-running. Developing strategic planning skills is very important for us in strengthening our councils' role in sustainable development."

Developing decentralisation in the Caribbean

Following the successful symposium in Montego Bay in Jamaica in 2004, CLGF is working with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Board member Hon Portia Simpson Miller, Minister of Local Government, Community Development and Sports in Jamaica to take forward some of the recommendations.

One of these was to establish the Caribbean Forum of ministers who are responsible for decentralisation, local government and community development. The Caribbean ministers will meet in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago at the end of August. The meeting of the network will take place during a Caribbean conference on Deepening Local Governance and Participation organised by the government of Trinidad and Tobago in association with the Organisation of American States (OAS) and Jamaica. This conference will start to develop a policy framework for decentralisation in the



Hon Portia Simpson Miller, Minister for Local Government, Community Development and Sports, Jamaica is a CLGF Board member and is chairing the Caribbean Forum of Ministers

region.

Local government representatives from the Caribbean Association of Local

Government Authorities (CALGA) will also be participating in the conference and holding their executive meeting.

Expert team for Pakistan elections

CLGF and the Commonwealth Secretariat have sent an eight-person expert team to monitor the first two rounds of local elections in Pakistan being held in August. This is a follow up to the CLGF/ Commonwealth Secretariat

teams that monitored the local elections in 2000/2001. CLGF is being represented by Cllr Arshad, Colombo City Council and supported by CLGF's Research and Policy Adviser Randal Smith.

The Expert Team will be reporting to the Government of Pakistan, the Commonwealth Secretary General and Commonwealth members more widely. This report will be available after 10 September.

What's on..

October 2005

4-5 **Commonwealth Committee of the Whole, London**

25-27 **CLGF Sub-committee on Finance and Membership meeting in Malta**

November 2005

25-27 **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Malta**

April 2006

24 **CLGF Board meeting, Kampala, Uganda**

25-27 **Regional symposium on local democracy**

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.

A date for your diary

The dates for the next Commonwealth Local Government Conference were announced at the annual meeting of Local Government New Zealand in July. The Commonwealth Local Government Conference 2007 and CLGF General Meeting 2007 will take place from

26-30 March 2007

at the

THE EDGE AUCKLAND CONVENTION CENTRE AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND.

Further details will be sent out in early 2006 and published in future editions of the CLGF Bulletin.

The CLGF Board

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Dr Ian Micallef LLD, President, Local Councils of Malta, Malta (*Alternate*)

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