



bulletin

COMMONWEALTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM

Feb-April '02 issue 1/02 Promoting democratisation ■ Decentralisation ■ Empowerment

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CLGF launches first guide to Commonwealth local government

Everything you wanted to know about local government across the Commonwealth... and a lot more....

CLGF is launching the first ever Commonwealth Local Government Handbook, at Marlborough House in London on 12 March, in the presence of Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon and Commonwealth High Commissioners.

Commonwealth Local Government Handbook 2002 contains

- profiles detailing the local government system in Commonwealth countries
- case studies of innovative reforms in local government structures and services throughout the Commonwealth.

This is the first in what will be a series of annual handbooks to be published over the next five years. CLGF intends to build the Handbook to provide a comprehensive guide to local government in all Commonwealth countries. This is the first time that such information has been comprehensively collected and published. Local government structures and systems are described in detail in this first volume for: Australia, Ghana, India, Jamaica, New Zealand, South Africa, Uganda, UK, and Zimbabwe.

Modernisation of structures, including executive mayors and decentralisation,

performance measurement, partnership working, citizen participation, intergovernmental relations, postal voting and getting more women involved in local government are all issues addressed in case studies from local government in Commonwealth countries.

CLGF Research Officer Randal Smith spearheaded the project with the help of local government associations, ministries, research institutions, and councils throughout the Commonwealth and funding from the Canadian and UK governments and other organisations. KPL Publishing is publishing the Handbook for CLGF.

Commonwealth Secretary General His Excellency Don McKinnon says:

"National government cannot address issues of governance and poverty alone. Local and regional government are the spheres of government that are closest to our citizens and can often take a lead because they are used to dealing with day-to-day problems and issues."

"The Commonwealth Secretariat is working with the CLGF to ensure that the role of local government in promoting democracy and tackling poverty is fully recognised and has a platform within the Commonwealth."

Introducing the publication, CLGF Chair Len Duval (Greater London Authority) OBE says:

"As local government strives to improve and implement good practice, practitioners and policymakers in all spheres of government relating to local government require ideas. The Commonwealth Local Government Handbook 2002, our first major research publication, is aimed at bringing such new ideas to those practitioners and policymakers."



CLGF members will receive free copies of the *Commonwealth Local Government Handbook 2002*: ministries and national local government associations will receive five copies, individual local authority members 2, and associate members one copy. For details of how to obtain further copies or for further information please contact CLGF Publications, 59^{1/2} Southwark Street, London SE1 OAL tel: +44 (0)20 7934 9690; e-mail: info@clgf.org.uk. The Handbook will also be available through the CLGF website www.clgf.org.uk.

STOP PRESS... CHOGM recognises local government

Commonwealth Heads of Government acknowledged the role played by local governments in member states and welcomed the report of the Commonwealth Local Government Conference (London, 2000) in their official communique following their meeting in Coolumb, Australia on 2-4 March. They also noted the co-operation between the CLGF and the Commonwealth Secretariat in promoting democratic values and good governance, especially in the area of local government elections.

Looking at the future of the Commonwealth, Heads of Government place major emphasis on strengthening the Commonwealth's capacity to support its members' pursuit of democratic values and the rule of law and set out a number of actions. They also call for building closer Commonwealth 'family links'. Both proposals were called for in earlier CLGF submissions to the High Level Review Group.

The communique endorses the report of the CHOGM Committee of the Whole, which CLGF attended for the first time as an official delegation. The report also calls for funding contributions for the CLGF Good Practice Scheme and for resources to be provided for its regional information centres.

Zimbabwe observer

Mayor Serale Leeuw is joining the Commonwealth election monitoring team in Zimbabwe on behalf of CLGF. Mayor Leeuw, who was proposed by the South African Local Government Association, has been Mayor of Matjhabeng in South Africa since December 2000.

CLGF is working with the Commonwealth Secretariat to try to ensure local government is included in any election observer teams sent by the Commonwealth to monitor elections in member countries.

Commonwealth news in brief

Commonwealth Day celebrates diversity

The theme of this year's Commonwealth Day, to be celebrated on 11 March 2002, is Celebrating Diversity

Fiji suspension lifted

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action group which met in London on 20 December agreed to lift Fiji's suspension from the Commonwealth, following the report of the observer group which said that "conditions did exist for a free expression of will and that the elections could command the confidence of the people of Fiji

At its December 2001 meeting CMAG also concluded that the situation in Zimbabwe is a serious and persistent violation of the Commonwealth's fundamental political values and the rule of law as enshrined in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991. In January 2002, the Group condemned legislation which had the effect of curbing freedom of speech and of association in Zimbabwe, called for an immediate end to violence and intimidation, and called for the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure free and fair elections

Commonwealth Committee on Terrorism

The Commonwealth Committee on Terrorism held its first meeting in London on 29 January. The Committee, chaired by Australia's Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, endorsed a draft Commonwealth Plan of Action that will be submitted to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

The Plan of Action is designed to help members to comply with their obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 1373, and covers:

- legal assistance and capacity-building to Commonwealth members;
- assistance to members to ratify and implement the UN Anti-Terrorism Conventions;
- a review of Commonwealth Extradition and Mutual Assistance Schemes;
- other measures to increase law enforcement co-operation;
- an update of measures to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism; and
- promoting policies and strategies to continue to strengthen dialogue and understanding between different civilisations, cultures and faiths.

Director's introduction

At the time of going to print, Commonwealth Heads of Government are holding their re-convened meeting in Coolum, Australia.

Their agenda will cover a review of global developments, including the issue of terrorism; promotion of Commonwealth fundamental political values, global economic developments; Commonwealth Functional Co-operation; a special theme, The Commonwealth in the 21st Century: Continuity and Renewal and Small States. No doubt specific issues such as the current elections in Zimbabwe, being observed by a Commonwealth observer team, including a CLGF representative, will also be high on their agenda.

We are pleased that the CLGF has had an opportunity to make a direct input into the CHOGM through its participation, as official delegation, at the CHOGM Committee of the Whole,

held in London on 15 February, the report of which is to be endorsed by the CHOGM. This represents important new recognition for the role of local government. We further hope that Heads of Government will give active consideration to the CLGF's proposal for a new Commonwealth Initiative on Democracy and Good Governance. This Initiative has the support of other Commonwealth agencies active in an area which the High Level Review has identified as being one where the Commonwealth has a special role.

The CLGF looks forward to drawing on its wide resource basis of experienced mayors, councillors and officials in following up the decisions of Coolum, together with other

Commonwealth partners.

At the heart of the CLGF's work is the exchange of good practice and innovative experience in local government. The publication this month of our new Handbook marks an important milestone in services available to our members. Similarly the launch of phase two of our Good Practice Scheme will provide ample opportunity for CLGF members to come together and exchange technical skills and expertise. This and our other work services to re-enforce our focus on practical co-operation among practitioners designed to achieve real results: the CLGF will never be a mere talking shop, but a tangible membership body, responsive to the needs of its own constituency, namely democratic local government.

Carl Wright
Director, CLGF

Evolution in E-government integrates spheres of government

Governments at all levels in Australia agree that the time has come to move from the provision of information-based content to transaction-based content for their websites. In essence, it is the next phase in the evolution of online service delivery in the Australian public sector, says Richard Neves.

The majority of councils in Australia have some form of presence on the web. This ranges from simple web sites providing contact details to elaborate ones which provide services online to individuals and business 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Business and individuals are expecting more of government and seeking improved online services, they are seeking services that are integrated and interactive.

With assistance from the Federal

Government the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), in conjunction with private and public sector partners, is constructing an interoperability framework for local government. This framework will set technical standards allowing local councils to integrate their systems with those of local councils as

lodge one application online that will go to every relevant agency that requires to see it, regardless of which sphere of government they belong to. Businesses will still need to meet government criteria but they will spend less time doing it, and should be able to track the progress of their application.

"In an integrated and interactive world the business should be able to lodge one application online that will go to every relevant agency that requires to see it, regardless of which sphere of government they belong to."

well as State and Federal governments. What does this mean in practical terms? How will an individual or a business benefit from integrated and interactive online services?

One example is a business that may require a permit from the local council. In an integrated and interactive world the business should be able to

It is an ambitious and expensive endeavour, however it is a necessity of local government is to continue to strive to serve its community.

Richard Neves is a Policy Officer with the Australian Local Government Association and currently on secondment to IULA. He can be contacted at r.neves@iula.org.

We would like to hear from you about the latest developments in local government in your area or country; let us know what is happening by e-mailing us at bulletin@clgf.org.uk.

Initiative for Democracy put to CHOGM

CLGF's proposals for a Commonwealth Initiative for Democracy and Good Governance will be put to the Commonwealth High Level Review group and to the reconvened Heads of Government meeting in March

The Commonwealth Head of Government Meetings (CHOGM) was originally scheduled for October but postponed after the events of 11 September. The postponed 2001 CHOGM will now meet as CHOGM 2002 from 2 to 5 March in Coolool, Queensland and will consider the final report of the

High Level Review Group, chaired by President Mbeki.

The idea for a specific democracy and good governance initiative came out of the CLGF Heads of Local Government meeting in Brisbane in October. Following the terrorist attacks of 11 September, local government leaders and ministers discussed the implications and highlighted poverty, lack of basic services, bad governance and the absence of democratic structures as underlying causes of dissatisfaction and resort to violent means.

After the conference, CLGF put the proposal to the Commonwealth Secretary General, Don McKinnon, who

agreed to make it available to the High Level Review. The proposal outlines how different Commonwealth and other agencies could work more closely together to support democracy and good governance to share and maximise resources.

"This initiative is in line with the emphasis the High Level Review Group has placed on the Commonwealth's role in supporting member states' fundamental political values and the need to ensure effective co-ordination amongst Commonwealth agencies," said CLGF Chair Len Duvall.

It is hoped that CHOGM will back the idea in principle and the practical details worked out afterwards.

News in brief

Commonwealth networks boost sustainable development.

Commonwealth Environment Ministers have recognised the importance of local government and of Commonwealth networks, including CLGF, for implementing the outcomes of the Johannesburg Earth Summit this September.

At the Eighth Meeting of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment (CCGF) on 2 February 2002 in Colombia, Ministers focused on the World Summit due to take place in Johannesburg later this year from 26 August to 4 September. They highlighted poverty eradication and the integration of environmental, economic and social sustainable development as key areas and noted that the results of Johannesburg "could not be implemented by governments alone."

Ministers recognised that Commonwealth networks are an asset-base in building partnerships, including the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Business Council, the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth Local Government forum.

ACP-EU Local Government Platform to meet.

The African Caribbean and Pacific Local Government Platform is to meet with senior European Union and ACP officials in Brussels on 13-14 March 2002.

CLGF is a member of the executive committee alongside the African Union of Local Authorities and the Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities that help set up the Platform. The Platform aims to raise the profile of local government within the EU and is a network to help local government in ACP countries to be aware of and access EU development funds under the EU-ACP Cotonou convention.

African soccer star appointed UN AIDS Ambassador

Cameroonian soccer legend Roger Milla has been appointed Ambassador for the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to help fight the AIDS epidemic, especially among young men. Milla is UNAIDS' first international Ambassador from Africa and also the first from the Commonwealth.

Phase two Phase

The first phase of CLGF's highly praised Good Practice Scheme ends at the end of March. More than 30 projects have been funded during this phase backed by the UK government Department for International Development (DFID) and the Australian government's Ausaid programme.

The projects completed so far showed real tangible results for both partners involved as was highlighted in the evaluation report.

Phase two is now about to begin. It will concentrate on five target countries, the first two of which will be India and South Africa. Under the new guidelines there will be possibilities for



south-south partnerships as well as north-south partnerships, but projects will have to relate to the theme agreed with the country. For instance, projects with South Africa will focus on economic development.

Calls for projects will be sent out soon. If you would like further information or have an idea you wish to discuss, please contact Lucy Slack, Policy Advisor, CLGF on +44 (0)20 7934 9693, e-mail lucy@clgf.org.uk.

Graca highlights good governance to tackle poverty

"Greater participation of ordinary citizens can help towards solving problems of poverty, marginalisation and discrimination," says Graca Machel, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Foundation.

Speaking in London on 13 December, at the launch of the Foundation's new book *Reviving Democracy: Citizens at the Heart of Governance* at Marlborough House she

said: "In the strategies for poverty eradication and social development, good governance has acquired a central place".

The book is the result of a two-year research study carried out by the Commonwealth Foundation between 1997 and 1999. More than 10,000 citizens from 47 Commonwealth countries expressed their views on the society they wanted - views in many cases markedly

different from those of governments.

The authors believe that this goes a long way to explaining why citizens are withdrawing from the political process and from civic life in general.

Reviving Democracy: Citizens at the Heart of Governance, by Barry Knight, Rajesh Tandon and Hope Chigudu, can be ordered from: Earthscan, Freeport 1, 120 Pentonville Road, London N1 9BR, UK; tel: +44 (0)1903 828 800; fax: +44 (0)20 7278 1142; e-mail: earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk.

What's on..

12 March 2002
Launch of CLGF Commonwealth Local Government Handbook 2002

18-20 March 2002
CLGF Pacific Project, Pacific Roundtable, Lami, Fiji

22-24 April 2002
CLGF Southern African Project, Southern African Workshop, Maputo, Mozambique

29 May 2002 (provisional)
UN-Habitat Forum, Nairobi, Kenya

12 June 2002
UK and European Members' Meeting, Winchester, UK

26 August- 4 September 2002
Earth summit, Johannesburg

3 March 2003
CLGF Board Meeting, Tshwane, South Africa

4-7 March 2003
Commonwealth Local Government Conference 2003, Tshwane, South Africa

7 March 2003
CLGF Members meeting, Tshwane, South Africa

New Delhi hosts CLGF Board

The next full meeting of the CLGF Board will be in New Delhi, India on 21-22 October 2002, hosted by the Indian Ministry for Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation which includes local government.

CLGF Director Carl Wright visited India at the end of January to set up the arrangements and meet with Ministers and local government leaders as part of a drive to increase Indian authorities' awareness of CLGF's work. India's work with CLGF is developing through the Good Practice Scheme and other activities.

Mr Wright also met with representatives of the All India Institute of Local Self-Government, which is working with CLGF to promote CLGF's work in India, with the EU Asia-Urbs programme, and with agencies active in local government.

Details of the AsiaUrbs programme call for proposals and how to apply can be found on their website at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/asia-urbs/ps1.htm>.



Commonwealth Local Government Conference 2003: Local Government Service Partnerships

4-7 March 2003, South Africa

A CLGF Conference hosted by Tshwane City Council, South Africa in partnership with the South African Local Government Association and the South African Department of Provincial and Local Government

Run by CLGF, this is the second Commonwealth Local Government Conference. These bi-ennial conferences are becoming established as the big event in the Commonwealth and local government calendars - the only forum where local government leaders, ministers and senior officials can meet to exchange ideas and information and take the local government agenda forward.

The 2003 conference, which focuses on local government service partnerships, will also involve the private sector, and other organisations who work with local government.

The main theme of the conference is local government partnerships with the private and voluntary sectors: how they operate; what leads to success or failure; the benefits of international partnerships.

Keynote speakers include:

- Thabo Mbeki (invited), President of South Africa
 - His Excellency Don McKinnon, Secretary General of the Commonwealth
- The programme will offer
- a wide range of speakers from across the Commonwealth
 - case studies from South Africa and other countries and study visits to highlight key projects
 - trade exhibition to discover new products
 - social programme and entertainment.

And don't miss the opportunity to see the rich landscape and fascinating sights of South Africa once the conference closes: delegates will be offered a selection of add-on tours to experience this exciting country first hand.

For further information contact CLGF, 59^{1/2} Southwark Street, London SE1 OAL, tel: +44 20 7934 9690; fax +44 20 7934 9699; e-mail: info@clgf.org.uk. www.clgf.org.uk

Joining CLGF



Whether you are from an organisation involved in local government in a developing or developed country, a ministry, association or council seeking assistance, or a ministry, association or authority at the forefront of innovation with particular expertise, your members and staff will benefit from belonging to CLGF.

As a member of CLGF you will:

- receive a quarterly newsletter about CLGF activities and events and other relevant information and publications
- be able to attend CLGF conferences and events, including the bi-ennial Commonwealth Local Government Conference at the special members rate
- have access to CLGF's wide network of members and contacts in local government throughout the Commonwealth
- receive copies of CLGF research studies and other publications

- have access to CLGF's expert database, and be able to put your politicians and staff forward to be in the database if you have the necessary experience and skills
- be eligible to apply to join the Good Practice Scheme, to work with partners in other countries on particular technical and capacity building projects
- be part of an international network promoting local government and democracy throughout the Commonwealth.

Academic and research institutions and other related organisations working with local government can join as associate members. You must be based in a Commonwealth country to be eligible to join CLGF.

If you would like information about joining please contact Dzifa Tay, membership secretary, CLGF: tel: +44 (0)20 7934 9692; e-mail dzifa@clgf.org.uk or visit our website: www.clgf.org.uk.

The CLGF Board

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