



# bulletin

COMMONWEALTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM

Nov '01-Jan '02 issue 4/01 Promoting democratisation ■ Decentralisation ■ Empowerment

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## CLGF calls for fund for democracy

**Commonwealth local government leaders are calling for the Commonwealth to set up a fund for democracy as a major drive to safeguard, promote and support democracy and good governance.**

They are proposing such a fund as part of the modernisation of the Commonwealth and say that the Commonwealth should put greater emphasis on local, regional and provincial government's key role in promoting democracy and good governance.

CLGF Board members proposed lobbying for such a fund at their Board meeting in Brisbane and had an opportunity to present the idea to Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon at a special meeting between him and the Board in Brisbane. The Heads of Local Government conference and CLGF members endorsed the idea.

In a statement following the CLGF conference on Commonwealth Partnerships in the 21st century, local

government leaders said they want to see the Commonwealth play a stronger role in helping countries to restore and develop democratic government at all levels, particularly in the current international situation when the Commonwealth's shared aims and ideals can help bring about better international understanding and co-operation.

They are calling on the Commonwealth to set up a major Commonwealth Fund for Democracy and Good Governance to help develop and support democracy and good governance throughout the Commonwealth in the light of the events of 11 September.

CLGF Chair Len Duvall OBE said: "Democracy and good governance are a key part of the Commonwealth's shared values. And local government is at the heart of democracy and good governance.

"In the current international climate, following the events of 11 September, it is more important than ever to support democracy at all levels to develop greater international understanding and tolerance and to address some of the underlying problems.

"We must address the issue seriously. The CLGF would like to see the Commonwealth set up a major Fund for Democracy similar to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation. This Fund would help organisations to work at all levels providing technical expertise, observer missions and training, help with capacity building after elections, and help to support countries in strengthening and developing their institutions and good governance.

"Now that the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting has been postponed, this gives us more time to get our message across to the review group," said Mr Duvall.

### Len Duvall becomes CLGF chair

Greater London Assembly Member Len Duvall OBE was elected as the new Chair of CLGF at its Board meeting in October. Mr Duvall was acting chair from April this year after former chair Nomaindia Mfeketo stood down.

New Board members are: Father Mkhathswa, President of the South African Local Government Association; Basil Morrison, President, Local Government New Zealand; Cllr Dr Helen Nkandi-Shiimi, President, Association of Local Authorities of Namibia; and, The Hon Ananth Kumar, Minister for Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation, India.

### New CLGF members

CLGF welcomes two new members in South Africa and two in the UK this month: Gauteng Provincial Government (South Africa), the South African Municipal Demarcation Board, Croydon Borough Council (UK) and Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council (UK). Membership was approved at the CLGF Board meeting in Brisbane.



### Thanks for the hospitality

Dr Ramesh Chandra, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, India (left) presents Acting Lord Mayor of Brisbane City Council, Cllr John Campbell, with a gift of thanks watched by the Hon V Naidu, Indian Minister for Rural Development. Brisbane City Council hosted a reception at the CLGF Heads of Local Government conference in Brisbane.

### McKinnon meeting

Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon met with CLGF Board members in Brisbane on 2 October.

The Secretary General was only making a fleeting visit to Brisbane after the cancellation of the main Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) that had originally been

scheduled to be held there the following week.

CLGF Board members found the meeting very useful and positive. The Secretary General acknowledged CLGF's expanding work on promoting democracy, including election monitoring. He indicated that one of the outcomes of the High Level Review would be closer co-operation between the Commonwealth Secretariat and other Commonwealth

organisations, one of the thrusts of the CLGF's own submission to the High Level Review.

CLGF Board members were able to reiterate the case for a stronger role for local government within the Commonwealth, and put forward the idea of a Commonwealth Fund for Democracy.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting has now been rescheduled for 2-5 March 2002.

## Commonwealth news in brief

### No place for terrorists

The Commonwealth has called on the international community to put in place "firm deterrent measures" against terrorism and pledge to work towards the universal implementation of international conventions to address it.

In the Commonwealth Statement of Terrorism, issued in London on 25 October, it condemns "any nation which harbours, supports or provides assistance to terrorist activity. Any member country that aids, supports, instigates, finances or harbours terrorists or permits such activities within its jurisdiction, violates the fundamental values of our association and should have no place in it."

### New framework to tackle AIDS

A new framework developed by a Commonwealth think tank is the latest weapon in the battle against HIV/AIDS. Para 55, a group of Commonwealth NGOs created to put into effect paragraph 55 of the 1999 CHOGM communique, agreed the plan at a two-day meeting in London at the end of July. The strategy will focus on young people initially with Commonwealth organisations encouraging their members to participate in activities around the prevention and management of AIDS.

### Gap between rich and poor is greatest threat to democracy

Poverty, democracy and good governance, and the value of the Commonwealth's broad membership were key themes highlighted in Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon's first report to Heads of Government. The report *Continuity and Renewal in the New Millennium* was launched in September as a prelude to the now-postponed Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. The Secretary General describes the growing gap between rich and poor as "the most powerful destabilising force and the greatest threat to democracy." The report stresses that the benefits of globalisation are still not being shared equitably and the Commonwealth should be looking at how it can help tackle this fundamental structural flaw in the world economy. The report also reaffirms the Commonwealth's belief that promoting democracy and good governance is key to improving people's lives.

"Forums for international cooperation such as CLGF take on a new urgency as we resolve to join together in an as-yet untested new world alliance against terrorism."

Senator Ian Macdonald

"The Forum is one of the many important agencies and organisations that together give so much vitality to the Commonwealth of nations..."

"The Australian government considers the CLGF to be an important institution for strengthening action among Commonwealth member states on local government structures..."

"While good governance is vital to the effectiveness of

development assistance, development assistance itself can enhance governance in developing countries. Governance is now the largest of the Australian aid programme's five priority sectors."

Senator the Hon Kay Patterson, Australian Government

"The work which CLGF has done in enhancing recognition of the role of local government in forums such as CHOGM is of great importance. I believe we are now at the point where the Commonwealth recognises the fundamental role of local government in any democratic system of government."

Clr John Ross, President, Australian Local Government Association

## Local government unites in condemning terrorist attacks

Local government throughout the Commonwealth united in condemning the terrorist attacks of 11 September in the US. Local government leaders - senior councillors and ministers - issued a statement condemning the terrorists and highlighting the key role local government plays in both dealing with the aftermath of such an attack and in helping to prevent conflict in future at the CLGF conference in Brisbane on 3-5 October 2001.

"Local government throughout the

Commonwealth applauds the valiant action of the Mayors of New York and Washington DC and, in particular, New York's emergency services, especially its fire and police services, which lost so many of their workers in the rescue attempts on 11 September," said CLGF Chair Len Duvall OBE.

"Through both mediation and promoting democracy the CLGF, and local government generally, can help to promote peace, understanding and tolerance at a local level.

## "Best

CLGF would like to thank the Australian and UK Governments, Queensland State Government, the Australian and New South Wales Local Government Associations and Australian local governments, especially Brisbane City Council, for their support for the conference.

## Director's introduction

Despite the last-minute cancellation of CHOGM, CLGF was able to go ahead with its conference in Brisbane, 1-5 October. Attended by nearly all our Board members and some 100 delegates, the conference was a great success, achieving its threefold objectives of:

- formulating CLGF input into the Commonwealth High Level Review
- strengthening CLGF's practitioner network, especially in the Pacific region, and
- further development of CLGF technical assistance programmes, especially the Good Practice Scheme with the announcement of a new Australian Government contribution of A\$800,000.

Needless to say, the events of 11 September were a major talking point at both our Board meeting and the main conference.

We all recognise that local

government has a major role to play in response to such events; in the practicalities of responding on the day and in the longer-term not just rebuilding the infrastructure and communities but tackling the poverty, injustices and divides that lead to the resentment that helped fuel the tragedy in New York.

UK Prime Minister Tony Blair has given considerable emphasis to international cooperation since those events and Chancellor Gordon Brown has urged a major expansion of international development assistance to meet UN development targets on poverty reduction.

The CLGF believes that tackling poverty alone is not enough. It must go hand in hand with the need for proper governance structures and development of democracy, especially at the local level.

That is why the CLGF is calling on

governments to establish a Commonwealth Fund for Democracy, one of the key messages to come out of the conference.

The Commonwealth has a key role in the promotion and enhancement of fundamental political values and its particular strengths in capacity building and good governance. It is therefore the appropriate body to establish this Fund, but it must be accessible to all Commonwealth agencies, including CLGF, which can help to strengthen the Commonwealth's fundamental political values as set out in the High Level Review. This would meet the Reviews emphasis on greater co-ordination and pooling of resources, especially in post-conflict situations, where concerted efforts may be necessary to re-establish governance structures and restore basic services and infrastructure, notably for the reduction of poverty.

A Fund for Democracy has never been more urgent or essential.

Carl Wright Director CLGF

# t on Brisbane conference

Commonwealth heads of local government met in Brisbane at a highly successful three-day conference on partnerships in the 21st century. Despite the postponement of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), because of the events of 11 September, CLGF board members agreed to go ahead with the conference that provides a vital opportunity for senior local government people to meet, share ideas and develop networks.

The major conference brought together senior local government politicians and ministers from Africa, Asia, Canada, the Caribbean, the Pacific and the UK, with innovative work by Australian councils and their Pacific partners under the spotlight. Delegates also discussed local government's views on the current High Level Review of the Commonwealth. The Review was due to report to Commonwealth Heads of Government in Brisbane, now postponed until early 2002.

"We are meeting in difficult times with the cancellation of CHOGM," said newly elected Chair Len Duvall OBE, "However, we believed it was important to proceed with the conference as it is vital for local government." The conference was able to finalise a statement to the High Level Review, for when CHOGM reconvenes in March 2002, and also issued a statement on the terrorist attacks in the US. Australian Senator Ian Macdonald launched the next

phase of the Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme, announcing new funds for five projects for the Australian part of the Scheme.

The meetings included addresses by senior ministers from Australia, Ghana and India as well as by the Executive Director of UNCHS Habitat, Anna Tabajjuka, the Director of the Commonwealth Foundation, Colin Ball and the Premier of Queensland, Hon Peter Beattie.

# ever in local government"



Conference delegate Alderman Jane Dickenson from Launceston City Council in Tasmania reports back her very positive experience of the conference.

“My experiences at the recent CLGF conference in Brisbane were absolutely without doubt my best ever in local government! Very refreshing...

I am a young (27), female, newly-elected member in Launceston, which is the second largest city and largest municipal area on the island state of Tasmania (Australia). Unfortunately the traditional culture of my local council that focuses on infrastructure development in isolation to community development has until recently

dominated. My municipality is led by a majority that lacks vision consistent with contemporary thinking that often perpetuates a confused perception of isolation and stagnation. Recent proactive strategic planning processes that have increased community participation in council decision making and the hard work of a new 'set' of elected members has been instrumental in beginning the process toward positive change.

My positive experiences at the CLGF

conference in Brisbane make me realise that it is all worth it; we are on the right track.

I learned at an early age never to take life for granted and as a result I always manage to squeeze as much as I can out of every opportunity that comes my way. The chance to spend three days interacting with the Commonwealth's leaders in local government was always going to provide me with a set of invaluable experiences from which I would be able to strengthen my local government knowledge. The amazing thing about it was that I had never imagined (given my extremely challenging induction into local government) that I would actually be engaged in discussion at a strategic level that reflected and expanded my own beliefs.

I believe that the CLGF Good Practice scheme provides invaluable

opportunities for regions that look outside their physical boundaries and realise that they cannot exist in isolation and in fact benefit from a cross pollination of ideas and cultures. The twinning arrangements that have been developed between Australian councils and councils for instance in Papua New Guinea are amazing.

The amount of social capital that each region has the potential to develop far surpasses the intended benefits of infrastructure and professional development. Such insightful investments into the future of another region cannot be measured in purely economic terms.

Having returned to my hometown inspired and invigorated I can now be confident that I am heading in the right direction and continue to work toward affecting positive change to the culture in my own council. ”

## Good Practice Scheme gets A\$800,000 boost

The Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme received a big boost during the CLGF conference in Brisbane when the Australian government announced a further A\$800,000 (about £350,000) funding, following on the heels of the UK Government's recent announcement of £2 million for a second phase.

Announcing the new funds at a press conference, Senator Ian Macdonald, Australian Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government said:

"Local government representatives from most Commonwealth nations around the world have come to Brisbane in the interest of furthering democracy and good governance.

"There is much to be done and terrorist attacks do not lessen the need nor the commitment to help support governance and democracy in developing countries.

"I am proud of the recognition the CLGF has given to the work of the Australian government in supporting local

governance in the Pacific region under the Good Practice Scheme and through Australia's overseas aid program."

The Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme, run by CLGF, helps local government practitioners to share technical and practical experience and to work together on practical projects to improve services and help tackle poverty. So far, some 60 projects have benefited from partnerships between councils in the UK and elsewhere in the

Commonwealth, and five partnerships between Australian councils and Papua New Guinea and Fiji.

New projects will focus on key target areas such as the Pacific and South Africa.

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## What's on..

10 December 2001

London Caribbean Partnership Group seminar at ALG

26-28 February 2002 (provisional)

Fiji project workshop

2-5 March 2002

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Australia

11-12 March 2002

CLGF Finance sub-committee

12 March 2002

Launch of Commonwealth Local Government Handbook

22-26 April 2002 (provisional)

Southern African Regional Information Centre workshop



The next Commonwealth Local Government conference is to

be held in South Africa from 4-7 March 2003. CLGF is currently working with the South African Local Government Association and others in the area to identify a venue, plan the conference and raise sponsorship.

## CLGF meets Malaysian members

CLGF Chair Len Duvall, and Board Member Dr Jatin Modi from the All India Institute of Local Self Government in India, were invited to attend a meeting of local government representatives in Kuala Lumpur.

The meeting was an opportunity for members of the newly-formed

Malaysian Association of Local Authorities to meet and discuss future work.

The CLGF representatives were asked to be part of a panel session discussing Good Governance: the Role of a National Association of Local Government.

The meeting was one of a regular cycle of meetings, which brings together mayors and senior officers to share experiences. A major focus of the meeting was e-government and colleagues were keen to learn from techniques being used in Subang Jaya, the host municipality.

## Southern African Management Committee meets

The Management Committee and Technical Advisory Committee of the Regional Information Centre (Southern Africa) met in Harare, 29-31 October to review the work programme of the Centre and examine plans for its future development. The newly established Technical Advisory Committee

comprises representatives from CLGF, IULA, South Africa's Ministry, and local government representatives from each of the nine participating countries.

The information centre published its first information bulletin in August, which has been circulated to members by e-mail

## News in brief

### Good governance is key

"Ensuring good governance - in our municipalities as well as state or national level must be a key objective of the Global Campaign for Urban Governance," said CLGF Director Carl Wright speaking at the United Nations Committee on Human Settlements (UNCHS) Habitat campaign launch for India in Delhi in September. More than one thousand delegates attended the launch."

"I particularly commend UNCHS's efforts to draw up norms of good urban governance," he said.

"This is an initiative which the CLGF supports strongly and for which we will seek Commonwealth-wide endorsement."

### New LGIB website

The Local Government International Bureau (LGIB) has launched its new website which includes information about international co-operation and good practice projects:

[www.lgib.gov.uk](http://www.lgib.gov.uk)

## Local government's key role in tackling poverty and slums

Local government has a key role in tackling poverty, especially in cities where local government can be pivotal for getting rid of slums and providing access to basic services.

Speaking at the CLGF conference in Brisbane, Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director for the UN Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), emphasised the role of local government in improving the lives of people living in slums following this year's World Habitat Day in Japan whose theme was Cities Without Slums.

"Poverty reduction is the central challenge of our age," said Mrs Tibaijuka.

"I think I speak for both CLGF and Habitat when I say that good urban governance implies that city

governments respond to and are accountable to all urban residents, including the poor. It means empowering the poor and recognising their right to the city. It means ensuring that everyone, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged, has access to basic services such as potable water, sanitation and affordable transportation. It means recognising that urban poverty and slums are not inevitable."

## Jamaica reforms research

CLGF research officer Randal Smith recently visited Kingston, Jamaica, to undertake research on the local government system there and the forthcoming reforms as part of CLGF's research programme. The research will be published as part of a handbook on local government throughout the Commonwealth due to be published in March 2002.

## The CLGF Board

Leonard Duvall OBE, Greater London Authority (UK) Chair  
Cllr Norman Murray, President, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (UK) (Alternate)  
Father Smangaliso Mkhathwa, President, South African Local Government Association (South Africa)  
Cllr P S Siyovelwa, Chairman, Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania (Alternate)  
Cllr Joseph Jella, National President, Association of Local Governments of Nigeria  
Cllr Dr Helen Nkandi-Shiimi, President, Association of Local Authorities of Namibia (Alternate)  
Charles Katiza, Secretary General, International Union of Local Authorities, Africa Section (Zimbabwe)  
Col Max Ng'andwe, President, Local Government Association of Zambia (Alternate)  
Mayor Ross Risvold, Mayor of Hinton, Alberta (Canada)  
Cllr Jocelyn Guertin, Federation of Canadian Municipalities (Alternate)  
Deputy Mayor Larel Thomas, Association of Local Government Authorities, Jamaica  
Mayor Irving John, President, Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities (Alternate)  
Cllr Peter Woods, President, Local Government Association of New South Wales (Australia)  
Basil Morrison, President, Local Government New Zealand (Alternate)  
Nick Raynsford MP, Minister for Local

Government & Regions (UK)  
Senator the Hon Ian Macdonald, Minister for Regional Services, Territories & Local Government (Australia) (Alternate)  
The Hon Kwadwo Baah-Wiredu, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development (Ghana)  
The Hon Sydney Mufamadi, Minister of Provincial & Local Government (South Africa) (Alternate)  
The Hon Ananth Kumar, Minister for Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation (India)  
The Hon M Venkaiah Naidu, Minister for Rural Development (India)  
The Hon Arnold Bertram, Minister of Local Government, Youth & Community Development, (Jamaica)  
The Hon Matthew Walter, Minister of Community Development & Women's Affairs (Dominica)  
Dato Lokman Hikim bin Mohd. Jasan Secretary General, Ministry of Housing & Local Government (Malaysia)  
Dr Jatin V Modi, President, All India Institute of Local Self-Government (India)  
Professor P S Reddy, University of Durban-Westville (South Africa) (Alternate)  
Professor Michael Clarke, Pro-Vice Chancellor, The University of Birmingham (UK)  
Keith Sonnet, Head of Local Government Service Group, UNISON (UK) (Alternate)

Jeremy Smith, Director, Local Government International Bureau (UK) *Honorary treasurer*  
Carl Wright *Director*