



bulletin

COMMONWEALTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM

issue 2/09

■ Promoting democratic local government ■ Sharing good practice

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Ten years of improvement for local government

Local government must continue to improve to strengthen local democracy and empower local communities, according to delegates of the Commonwealth Local Government Conference 2009.

The *Freeport Declaration on Improving Local Government* which sets out action for a decade of continuous improvements for local governments in the Commonwealth, was the outcome of the 2009 Commonwealth Local Government conference held in Freeport, Grand Bahamas from 11-14 May 2009. More than 550 local government ministry, association and council representatives from 48 countries attended the conference.

The Declaration says that:

- Local governments have a variety of roles – providing services is important but they can also do a lot using their powers and administrative capacity;
- Local government operates on many scales from small island councils to mega cities;
- There is no one model for improved local government that will fit all situations.

It sets out strategies for local government improvement and recommendations for CLGF in how it can support local government to improve, including a Gender Action Plan.

The Declaration also highlights the need for development and training to ensure the high competence of councillors and staff and that roles and responsibilities are understood and respected.

Speakers at the conference included: Rt Hon Hubert Ingraham, Prime Minister of The Bahamas; Hon Bruce Golding, Prime Minister of Jamaica; HE Kamalsh Sharma, Commonwealth Secretary-General; Edwin Carrington, CARICOM Secretary-General; David Morrison, UNCDF Executive Secretary; and Linda Zecher, Microsoft Public Sector VP. Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Manning sent a video message to delegates.

CLGF members ratified the Declaration at the CLGF General Meeting of members on 14 May. CLGF will incorporate the action from the *Freeport Declaration* into its business plan and present it to Commonwealth Heads of Government for endorsement at their meeting in Trinidad and Tobago in November.

As a next step, CLGF will be attending the October 2009 CHOGM

(Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) Committee of the Whole in London, at which the CHOGM agenda is discussed by senior foreign affairs officials and a draft CHOGM communiqué is prepared. CLGF will be working hard to ensure that the Declaration is included in this communiqué. And as the Designated Commonwealth Organisation for local government, CLGF will be officially accredited to the CHOGM.

“Improving local government to better represent communities and enhance service delivery is essential to the Commonwealth vision for local government,” said CLGF Chairperson Mayor Moya-Flowers.

“Effective monitoring is essential to evaluate performance, demonstrate achievements and detect problems so that remedial action can be taken. Local performance indicators and peer reviews are useful tools to measure impact.”

The conference was held at the Our Lucaya Conference Centre in Freeport, Grand Bahama, hosted by the Government of the Bahamas and the island and councils of Grand Bahama.



PM Ingraham (centre) opening the trade exhibition with Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamalsh Sharma (left) and Basil Morrison (right)

Mayor Moya-Flowers new CLGF chair

Mayor Zenaida Moya-Flowers, Mayor of Belize City Council and a member of Belize Mayor's Association, is the new Chairperson of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF). She was elected at the meeting of the new CLGF Board on 15 May following the General Meeting of Members on 14 May which elected the representatives to the Board for the next two years.

Mayor Moya-Flowers' first official engagement as Chair was attending the annual conference of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) in June. Mayor Moya-Flowers also met with the Canadian government representatives and other stakeholders to discuss funding for enhancing democratic local governance in the Caribbean in order to advance regional harmonisation, cooperation and integration.

Hon Hazel Manning, Minister for Local Government, Trinidad and Tobago and Mayor Amos Masondo, Chairperson of the South African Local Government Association were elected as CLGF Board vice-chairs at the meeting. *A full list of the new CLGF Board for 2009-11 is on page 4.*

Cardiff to host 2011 conference

Cardiff, UK, has won the bid to host the next Commonwealth Local Government Conference in 2011 following a highly competitive bidding process. The selection of the host was agreed by the CLGF Board meeting in Freeport, The Bahamas on 11 May 2009.

New CLGF Chairperson Mayor Zenaida Moya-Flowers said, “This conference is CLGF's flagship event that brings together our members, including key players in local government from across the Commonwealth.

“We are looking forward to visiting Cardiff and hearing about some of the good practice there, including around devolution and the Cardiff vision 2033,” she said.

Strategic review of CLGF

Professor Michael Clarke (UK) and Professor Dinesh Mehta (India) have been commissioned to carry out a strategic review of CLGF.

The CLGF Board agreed the review at its meeting in May to look at how the organisation, the business plan and activities and its structures are serving its members' needs, and how CLGF can be strengthened and better resourced in future. One of the major catalysts for this review has been the need to further expand the operations of CLGF to include a strengthening of the work being done in different regions of the Commonwealth, building on its considerable successes and achievements to date.

SIGN UP FOR CLGF e-news

CLGF e-news was launched in July with a special conference 2009 edition. If you did not receive a copy and would like to in future, please sign up at <http://www.clgf.org.uk/index.cfm/pageid/324/e-news+signup>

Commonwealth news in brief

Fiji suspension

The Fiji Islands was fully suspended from membership of the Commonwealth on 1 September.

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) met on 31 July when it urged the Fiji military regime to reactivate immediately the President's Political Dialogue Forum (PPDF) process that would lead to credible elections in the country by October 2010. CMAG had sought a firm commitment from Fiji to these terms by no later than 1 September 2009.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma emphasised that the Commonwealth remains open to engaging with the Fiji Interim Government towards the restoration of constitutional democracy in the country and Sir Paul Reeves, Special Representative of Secretary-General to the Fiji Islands, made a two-day visit in September at the invitation of the Interim Government, to support the early restoration of constitutional democracy in the country, in line with Commonwealth principles.

CLGF's wider regional activities in the Pacific will not be directly affected. In line with Commonwealth policy, CLGF will reduce its work in Fiji, taking into account the dissolution of democratic local councils in January and will refocus activities on the restoration of local democracy.

Join the conversation

The Commonwealth Conversation was launched in London at the headquarters of the Royal Commonwealth Society on 20 July 2009. by David Miliband, UK Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The centrepiece of the Conversation is an open, interactive website that is inviting discussions and ideas to find out the key issues for the Commonwealth. The Conversation will also involve offline discussion groups, expert meetings and other events around the Commonwealth. Findings will be presented to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2009. A final report will be published in early 2010.

CLGF Secretary-General Carl Wright has launched a discussion about local government and the Commonwealth on the site with a contribution entitled *Local government matters in the Commonwealth*. Please join in to add your own comments at <http://www.thecommonwealthconversation.org/2009/08/local-government-matters-in-the-commonwealth/>.

Road map for improving local government

Secretary-General's introduction



This year's Commonwealth local Government Conference brought together 550 senior local government policy makers, practitioners and other stakeholders who reported that this was the most successful conference yet. Certainly, the theme — Improving local government: the Commonwealth vision — was timely as well as fundamental to all of us working in and with local government. The outcomes, including the *Freeport Declaration on Improving Local Government: The Commonwealth Vision*, will form the basis for an improvement agenda for local government for the next ten years.

The declaration will be widely disseminated to members and other stakeholders. In particular we hope that:

- our members will consider the Declaration as a guide in developing their own improvement agenda and reflect the strategies it sets out in their policies and work, and in helping them respond to the current economic climate with strategies

to improve their financial base, service delivery, community relations and their own governance structures;

- it will provide a road map for CLGF to develop activities to support a culture of improvement for local government in the Commonwealth, and that this will be backed by Commonwealth Heads of Government when they meet in Trinidad in November.

CLGF presented the *Freeport Declaration on Improving Local Government: The Commonwealth Vision* to the Rt Hon Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, in a meeting in London in May asking him to support its endorsement, and the work of CLGF. Prime Minister Manning is Chair of the 2009 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and will take over as Commonwealth Chairperson for two years.

The theme of this year's CHOGM is *Partnering for a more equitable and sustainable future* — a theme that is very

relevant to local government and to the local government improvement agenda. Partnering is important to local government — partnering with the community and local stakeholders to deliver services effectively; with other councils to learn and share experiences; partnering with regional and national organisations such as central government to ensure coordination and effective use of resources; partnering with councils in other parts of the world to share good practice and help solve problems; and partnering with international organisations such as CLGF who can provide support through expert networks, research and technical programmes.

The *Freeport Declaration* is another milestone in the work of CLGF. Now the hard work begins to support local governments in a decade of improvement and to ensure that the important role, successes and achievements of local government are fully recognised.

Carl Wright, Secretary General, CLGF



Stronger ties with UNDP

Former chairperson and Board member Basil Morrison and CLGF Secretary-General Carl Wright met with recently-appointed UNDP Administrator Rt Hon Helen Clark, UNCDF Executive Secretary David Morrison and senior UN officials in New York in June to look at closer working in a number of areas.

Following the meeting selected UNDP regional and country offices were asked to look at how they can work with CLGF and its members in their regions and a number

of follow-up meetings have been held including with offices in Southern and East Africa, Asia and the Pacific at which some potential joint activities were discussed.

Commonwealth support for Zimbabwe

A Roundtable on Zimbabwe was held in Johannesburg in July allowing Commonwealth organisations, including CLGF, to meet with civil society, local government and other counterparts from Zimbabwe and Southern African countries. They looked at how Zimbabwe can be supported to improve services and facilitate reconciliation and strengthening of institutions following the establishment of the inclusive government in Zimbabwe. CLGF Vice Chairperson Mayor Amos Masondo was one of the people who addressed the roundtable.

The roundtable resulted in an agreement to develop a Commonwealth Special Programme on Zimbabwe to help the country address the challenges it faces; local government will be at the heart of this programme.

- Following the roundtable and in consultation with CLGF's partners from Zimbabwe including the Urban Councils Association/Zimbabwe Local Government Association, CLGF Secretary-General Carl Wright paid a short visit to Harare to meet with the President of the ZILGA, the Minister of Regional Integration and International Cooperation, and the Minister of Local

Government, as well as representatives of key international agencies.

CLGF is working closely with UCAZ/ZILGA to take forward initiatives to help restore essential services, improve infrastructure and strengthen local government's role and capacity and seek resources for this work. CLGF is liaising with them to see what expertise and other support can be provided including city-to-city partnerships and will undertake this work in partnership with the Local Government Association of England and Wales, UK and other members.

Twelve cities form CLGF inclusive cities network

CLGF has launched a pilot Commonwealth network of inclusive cities to promote sharing good practice on inclusiveness, social cohesion and the local realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The network is being set up in cooperation with ComHabitat, which includes the Commonwealth Association of Planners, the Commonwealth Foundation, the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Birmingham City Council, one of the twelve cities, has agreed to take the lead and is providing Mike Murray as part-time coordinator for the network.

The purpose of the network is to share good practice between Commonwealth cities on how they are addressing issues such as inclusiveness, social cohesion and the MDGs. Some initial research work and case studies are being carried out by the cities and partners involved in conjunction with UN-Habitat.

The twelve cities invited to form the initial pilot network are: Ahmedabad, India; Birmingham, UK; Brisbane, Australia; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; eThekweni, South Africa; Freetown, Sierra Leone; Hyderabad, India; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Johannesburg, South



Port Moresby is one of the twelve pilot cities.

Africa; Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago; and Vancouver, Canada.

The launch took place during the 2009 Commonwealth Local Government Conference in Freeport, with a number of these cities present. The network was proposed following a conference on Inclusive Cities in New Delhi in May 2008 hosted by CLGF Board member Hon Kumari Selja, India's Minister for Housing and Poverty Alleviation.

Speaking at the launch in May,

Basil Morrison said:

"We hope to work with these cities to develop a means for measuring progress towards the Commonwealth goal of adequate shelter for all with secure tenure and access to services in every community by 2015. These twelve cities are involved in the pilot stage as we develop the mechanisms, but we hope to be able to invite more cities to join in the future."

The first meeting of the network will be held in India in January 2010.

News in brief

Supporting elected local government in Pakistan

Unless a local election is called, the current term of office of councillors in Pakistan will end shortly. The government and provincial governments are intending to appoint administrators to run the councils as an interim measure and responsibility for local government will, according to the Constitution of Pakistan, transfer to provincial governments at the end of December.

The Local Councils Association of Pakistan (LCAP) has been working with other stakeholders on a campaign to protect elected local government and a number of rallies have been held in major cities which have attracted considerable public support and media interest.

CLGF has called for elected councillors to remain in place until local elections are called, whether by national or provincial governments, and is supporting LCAP, a member of CLGF, in its public campaign for Pakistan to continue its commitment to the Aberdeen Agenda which underlines the principle of democratic local government.

Malawi local elections set

Malawi has announced that local elections will be held in mid 2010. This is the first time that councillors will have been democratically elected since 2005. CLGF has been urging the holding of local elections and has been providing support to the Malawi LGA and for the promoting of good local government-parliamentary relations. CLGF is organising a national seminar in Lilongwe in collaboration with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association on central-local government relations, following study visits for Malawian parliamentarians to Uganda and Zambia which CLGF is supporting.

ICT strategies for local government

CLGF has developed a partnership agreement with Australian ICT experts Know and Then who ran a special session on Local ICT at the 2009 Commonwealth Local Government Conference in Freeport. Know and Then have wide experience of working with government and local governments. In partnership with CLGF, they will run a number of regional forums for CLGF members and other stakeholders to build up a picture of current strategies in the use of ICT and look at how local governments can be assisted in developing strategic approaches to ICT to run their councils and services more efficiently and effectively.

New Good Practice projects under way

Phase three of CLGF's Good Practice Scheme is now underway with projects starting up in five focus countries: Ghana, Jamaica, India, Sierra Leone and South Africa in partnership with councils in the UK.

Projects so far approved under the Scheme include:

Ghana - Upper Denkyira/Hampshire: the key challenge this project is to help the District Assembly to develop skills, methods and techniques to maintain and create more employment opportunities in rural areas in the Upper Denkyira West District

thus retaining the rural workforce and slowing the rate of outward migration to the larger cities.

India - Rajkot/ Leicester: the project aims to develop a more sustainable approach to local development in poorer communities, with a strong emphasis on promoting partnership working, strengthening the authority's capacity to build relationships with poorer communities in the long term and enhancing the region's infrastructure.

Sierra Leone - Bo/Makeni/Warwickshire: the focus of this project is on

a need long identified by Bo and Makeni to develop the region's waste facilities, and address related health and pollution issues.

South Africa - eThekweni/Steve Tshwete/Leeds: the project will focus on the challenge of how the South African municipality can support and encourage small, micro and medium-sized enterprises to grow, thereby creating a more sustainable local economic base.

Other projects are in the planning stage. Overall, around 30 new projects are being funded by the Scheme under Phase 3 from 2008-2011.

New publications

Training modules on local democracy and good governance

CLGF, with funding from the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), conducted a programme in four South Asian countries – India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka – to look at issues of local democracy and good governance, and develop training modules for the region based on the four countries' experiences. The programme is guided by CLGF's *Aberdeen Agenda: Commonwealth principles on good practice for local democracy and good governance*.

The modules developed have now been published: *Local Democracy and Good Governance training Programme, South Asia*.

There are three parts:

- *Country papers* - which review Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in relation to the state of local democracy, capacity building for local government and areas where training can be improved;

- *Participants' handbook* - offers decision makers some practical solutions and specific tools for improving decentralisation, local democracy and citizen participation to consider when undergoing training; and

- *Trainers' manual* - to assist a pool of trainers to replicate training on local democracy and good local governance in south Asian countries.

This training programme focuses on the principles of the Aberdeen Agenda and the roles of individuals in charge of local government, especially elected councillors and officials.

The programme trained a pool of trainers to replicate training on local democracy and governance at local level among south Asian countries.

An evaluation of the modules undertaken by Prof Bhupathi Rav and Prof V K Dhar provides a strong endorsement of using these councillor training modules.

CLGF is continuing follow-up work with members in the region using the modules.

Commonwealth e-journal of local governance

Issue 3 of the *Commonwealth e-journal of local governance* was published in May. Topics covered include: 'Can international local government partnerships make a difference?'; 'From citizen participation to participatory governance'; 'Deepening local democracy in South Asia'; and 'A Canadian approach to municipal consolidation in major city-regions'. View the issue at <http://eprints.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/cjlg/index>.

Pacific programme pens partnership agreement

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum Pacific Project has signed a unique partnership agreement with AusAID's Pacific Leadership Programme (PLP) and NZAID's Pacific Programme for Strengthening Governance (PPSG).

The agreement was signed in Suva in August and will guide how the three organisations work together in future. Prior to the agreement being finalised, CLGF Secretary-General Carl Wright met with senior AusAID officials in Canberra and NZAID in Wellington in July to discuss the CLGF programme in the Pacific and the partnership working between the organisations. He also met with board members Geoff Lake, ALGA and Lawrence Yule, LGNZ as local government in Australia and New Zealand are key partners in the project.

CLGF Pacific Project has had an association with NZAID since 2002 and with AusAID since 2005. The setting up of the PLP in Suva in



April 2008 brought an opportunity for CLGF to offer its expertise in working with leaders at the local level in the Pacific, starting with a grant to support activities in three of PLP's focus countries. This relationship has now developed further with PLP involved in managing funding from Canberra allocated to CLGF and stronger

programme links.

AusAID and NZAID are both keen to support leadership development in the Pacific, as reflected in the PLP and PPSG programmes. The partnership agreement will allow a closer association between all three partners for joint programmes and improved understanding of policies and priorities in this area.

The CLGF Board

Members:

Africa

Mayor Amos Masondo, Chairperson, South African Local Government Association (*Vice-Chairperson*) +

Cllr Rosina Hoabes, President, Association of Local Authorities in Namibia, Namibia (*alternate*)

Cllr Leonard B Bihondo, Chairman, Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania

Cllr John Karazaarwe, President, Uganda Local Government Association, Uganda (*alternate*)

Hon Senator Lindiwe Dlamini, Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Swaziland

Hon Ambrose Masalila, Minister of Local Government, Botswana (*alternate*)

Hon. Adolf Mwesige, Minister of Local Government, Uganda +

Hon Celina Ompehli Kombani, Minister of State for Regional Administration and Local Government, Tanzania (*alternate*)

Hon Dauda S Kamara, Minister of Internal Affairs, Local Government and Rural Development, Sierra Leone (*alternate*)

Hon Ibrahim Jalo-Waziri, National President, ALGON, Nigeria

His Worship Cllr Herbert A George Williams, Mayor, Freetown City Council, Sierra Leone (*alternate*)

Americas

Mayor Ms Zenaida Moya-Flowers, Mayors Association, Belize (*Chairperson*) +

Mayor Murchison Brown, Chairman, Trinidad and Tobago Association of Local Government Authorities (*alternate*)

Cllr Marvin Hunt, Director, National Board of Directors Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Canada +

Mayor Milton Brown, Association of Local Government Authorities, Jamaica (*alternate*)

Hon Robert Montague, Minister of State for Local Government, Office of the Prime Minister, Jamaica +

Hon Bryan Woodside, Minister of State for Lands and Local Government, The Bahamas (*alternate*)

Hon Hazel Manning, Minister of Local Government, Trinidad and Tobago (*Vice-Chairperson*) +

Hon Senator Julian Francis, Minister of Housing, Informal Human Settlements, Physical Planning and Land Surveys, St Vincent and the Grenadines (*alternate*)

Asia-Pacific

Muhammed Ghazanfar, Finance Secretary, Local Councils Association of Punjab, Pakistan

Mayor Upul Nishantha, President, Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities, Sri Lanka (*alternate*)

Cllr Lawrence Yule, President, Local Government New Zealand +

Cllr Geoff Lake, President, Australian Local Government Association (*alternate*)

Dato' Ong Ka Chuan, Minister of Housing and Local Government, Malaysia

Hon Ahmed Mujthaba, Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs, Maldives (*alternate*)

Hon Amberoti Nikora, Minister of Internal and Social Affairs, Kiribati

Hon Anthony Albanese, Minister for Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, Australia (*alternate*)

Europe

Lord Hanningfield, Local Government Association of England and Wales, UK +

Dr Lazaros Savvides, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the Interior, Cyprus (*alternate*)

Members at large

Cllr Rodney Berman, Leader, Cardiff Council, UK

Cllr April Crowther-Gow, President, Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities

Mayor Irving John, Castries City Council, St Lucia (*alternate*)

Father Smangalis Mkhathshwa, President, United Cities and Local Government of Africa

Ratu Peni Volavola, former Mayor of City of Suva, Fiji (*alternate*)

Associates

Assoc Prof Graham Sansom, Centre for Local Government, University of Technology Sydney, Australia +

Dr Philip Amis, International Development Dept, University of Birmingham, UK (*alternate*)

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

Prof P S Reddy, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa (*alternate*)

Co-opted

Hon Dr James Burty David, Minister of Local Government, Mauritius

Hon Joseph Yiehe Chireh, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Ghana

Hon Kumari Selja, Minister for Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and for Tourism, India

Ex-officio

Basil Morrison, (*Immediate Past Chairperson*) +

Carl Wright, Secretary General +

Simon Baker, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, UK Hon Treasurer +

+ member, Policy and Resources Committee

What's on..

October 2009

28-29 CLGF Policy and Resources Committee, Mauritius

November 2009

23-26 Commonwealth Business Forum, Trinidad and Tobago

23-26 Commonwealth People's Forum, Trinidad and Tobago; www.commonwealthfoundation.com

27-29 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, *Partnering for a more equitable and sustainable future*, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago; www.chogm2009.org

tbc CLGF seminar, Malawi

January 2010

tbc CLGF Inclusive Cities Network meeting, Hyderabad, India

February 2010

25-27 CLGF Board meeting, Gaborone, Botswana

For further information visit www.clgf.org.uk or contact: info@clgf.org.uk