



CLGF Southern African Regional Conference

Local economic development: a framework for localising the sustainable development goals

Johannesburg, South Africa, 28-29 June, 2016

Opening Address

by Rev Mmachkga Mpho Moruakgomo, incoming Chairperson, CLGF and President, Botswana Association of Local Authorities

Director of Programmes

Hon Des Van Rooyen, Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, South Africa

Cllr Thabo Manyoni, Chairperson, SALGA and Chairperson of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa Southern African Office

Carl Wright, Secretary General of CLGF

Hon ministers responsible for local government from across the SADC region

Local government leaders

Senior officials

Development partners

Ladies, gentlemen, colleagues, friends

All protocols observed.....

It is a pleasure to be here at this important gathering of fellow local government practitioners from across our Southern African region. I'd like to start by thanking COGTA and SALGA for their tremendous help and support in the preparations for this meeting, but more importantly for their steadfast support and guidance to the regional programme since its inception in 2012.

We are meeting at a timely moment for local government. Since the timeframe for implementation of the millennium development goals expired in 2015, there has been a major consultation of stakeholders at all levels about what should succeed them. There is a renewed commitment at global level of the need to address inequality, and for a more holistic approach to social, economic and environmental development in our efforts to reduce poverty.

All our nations have now adopted the universal Sustainable Development Goals as part of the Agenda 2030. The 17 Goals and 169 targets will provide a framework as we seek to enable more economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable development. The post 2015 development agenda also incorporates a number of other inter-related agreements: The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030; Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development; the Paris Accord and shortly, Habitat III, which will adopt a New Urban Agenda for managing urbanisation as we move into an era of cities and rapid urban growth. Closer to home, the African Union Agenda 2063: *The Africa we Want* also focuses on priorities to ensure a more sustainable, inclusive and just future.

Local government has been a strong voice in many of the debates that have shaped the Agenda 2030. CLGF and our members have played an active role in that process, from using our biennial conferences in 2013 and 2015 to emphasise the role of local government in delivering the SDGs; to participation in many high level advocacy meetings, undertaking advocacy with our own governments, and participation in events to make a strong case for localisation. I, and many of my fellow mayors and leaders from across the region, have been actively making the case for localisation and also for Goal 11, which speaks specifically to cities and human settlements.

It is evident, thanks to local government's active engagement in the process, that there will be a strong role for local government in achieving the SDGs. Indeed the importance of all levels of government - including local government - working together with other stakeholders such as the private sector and civil society is clearly acknowledged in the Agenda 2030, as essential, if the targets are to be met and we are to *leave no one behind*.

The SDGs are extensive and interconnected in nature, which reflects both the complexities of the challenges that we are seeking to solve, but also the importance of a multi stakeholder partnership approach, between spheres of government, but also with other partners, such as civil society and the private sector if the SDGs are to be achieved.

This meeting is a chance for us to reflect on **how** we move towards localisation of the SDGs, **how** we build a strong national dialogue around alignment of our national development strategies and the SDGs, and within that, **how** we ensure that local

government has the necessary skills and capacities to take the framework of the SDGs and align the priorities of local communities with these important national and global commitments. We want to see not just a top-down approach to localising the SDGs, but one that is also bottom-up. The priorities set out in the Agenda 2030 are not new for local government - we are already actively involved in delivering many of the core services that will contribute to achieving them, such as water, sanitation and primary health care. We need to improve the way in which we deliver our core mandate, as well as how we measure and collect data to ensure that we are able to record progress at the local level to feed into national SDG monitoring processes.

Local economic development - already an important function for local government in the region - will be a key approach to enable us at the local level to play a strong role in achieving the SDGs. Many of the responsibilities of local government (such as provision of core services and public goods), together with our democratic legitimacy and role as a community leader and convener, position us well to integrate LED into our work. We should be looking at everything we do through a socio-economic lens in order to maximise the development outcomes for our citizens. LED involves us integrating economic development into our strategic plans, building partnerships with our communities and business leaders to support LED, and to create the enabling environment that is needed to promote investment and economic growth. But not everything that relates to LED is within the direct responsibility of the local authority, and local government is ideally positioned to also relate directly with other spheres of government to link local development with national priorities in, for example, issues such as electrification or major infrastructure development.

CLGF's programme in the region since 2012 has been focusing specifically on strengthening local government's role in delivering LED, and strengthening the enabling environment for effective LED. In my own country we have been piloting the LED approach in a number of councils and we will hear about that in more detail in a later session. Local government though does not work in a vacuum. As the local government association, BALA has also been working with the Ministry to develop a national LED policy to enable and support local government in LED, and we are now working together towards developing a decentralisation policy to ensure that councils are empowered, with the powers, capacity and resources, to deliver the development agenda in their local areas.

This regional event is an important opportunity for us to share and learn from each other but also to really position LED as an approach to be part of our strategy to localise the SDGs in the region. In this regard we must remember the wider regional dimension. One of SADC's key priorities is Economic Growth and Sustainable Development, and it is incumbent on us as local government to coordinate our efforts and to ensure that the role of local government is fully recognised and acknowledged by SADC in our moves towards closer integration. We need to continue to raise the profile of local government as a partner in the integration process and these gatherings offer us a valuable platform to develop a clear message to achieve that.

We are delighted to have DFID and the EU with us today. We are working together to strengthen the capacity of local government to deliver effectively, and we are very grateful for the support which they are providing. I hope that in our discussions we will reflect on the lessons that we have learnt over the last four years and recommend a clear strategy to build on and develop this, as we work towards localising the SDGs and strengthening LED as a means of delivery. We are committed to expanding and deepening the programme in Southern Africa, and to continue to work closely with our members and partners in the region to strengthen local government as a partner in development. I urge you to participate actively in the discussions, and help us to develop a clear strategy and direction to guide the work of **your** CLGF Southern African programme, to ensure that it continues to demonstrate results and impact, and responds to your needs and priorities.

I am looking forward to our discussions this week.