

Bulletin



Sustainable urbanisation for the future



Comment

By Dr Greg Munro, Secretary-General, CLGF



The recent devastating fires in Australia have emphasised two important issues. The first is that the climate crisis and resultant rise in ambient temperatures will rapidly become a threat to life as we know it - with one Australian commentator stating that these fires could become the 'new norm' during dry spells. The second is how important it is for local government to be equipped and prepared to respond to major

incidents such as this. All CLGF members of course deal with the effects of the climate crisis, with the tragic consequences of high category cyclones in the Caribbean during 2019 coming to mind. Our Southern African members have also raised concerns about the multi-year lack of rainfall and ongoing desertification across the region, and the urgent need to reconsider national and local government responses to water management.

At the dawn of a new decade, CLGF will, with input and guidance from its members, review and refine its new multi-year strategy. It is already evident that the climate crisis, water management and disaster response readiness will need a greater emphasis; and we are already reviewing how to strengthen existing, and forge new partnerships, to respond to these critical areas.

A component of our revised strategy must also be how we strengthen our networks for the benefit of our members and I am pleased to state that our new strategic grant agreement with the European Commission provides additional funding for both our Commonwealth Women in Local Government network (ComWLG), as well as our Commonwealth Sustainable Cities network (CSCN).

Finally, members will be aware that the April 2019 bombs in Sri Lanka meant that, due to a resultant loss of planning time, our conference in Colombo in August had to be cancelled. We are discussing options for holding our conference in 2020 and will let all CLGF members know the moment we have a viable alternative.

It is my sincere wish that the new decade will bring local government to the forefront of global development and leadership and that CLGF will continue to add value to all of your endeavours.

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Commonwealth Local Government Forum
6th Floor Millbank Tower,
21-24 Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 8138 5840
Email: info@clgf.org.uk

 [@clgf_news](https://twitter.com/clgf_news)

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 www.clgf.org.uk

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Asia Pacific: planning for urbanisation



With so many people living in urban areas in the Asia Pacific region, cities are crucial focal points for the acceleration and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Already tasked with providing opportunities for livelihoods, education and poverty reduction, local government must now prepare for the increasing and inevitable demands on public services, infrastructure and the environment as a result of urban growth.

At the 7th Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF7) in Penang last October, CLGF committed to be part of the Penang Platform for Sustainable Urbanisation: an important new body which aims to tackle the rapid expansion of cities in the Asia Pacific region. It will use the strengths of cities and leading urban development organisations to support local, regional and national governments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda in Asia and the Pacific. The Penang Platform brings together an alliance of partners to address these multi-faceted issues.

One concrete action during phase one of the Platform from 2019 to 2023 is the Asia-Pacific Mayor's Academy, where newly appointed mayors will gain access to expertise, greater awareness of regional resources and a support network to assist in the acceleration of urban sustainability initiatives.

Announced during the closing event of APUF7, CLGF's Programme Manager for the Pacific Ms Karibaiti

Taoaba explained that CLGF has successfully ensured that sustainable urbanisation is on the agenda for the biennial summit of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in June 2020 and CLGF is currently developing a call to action on sustainable urbanisation, to be presented at the event.

This was preceded by the 5th Pacific Urban Forum, held in Nadi, Fiji in July: a three day event which concluded with a call for accelerated implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve the SDGs in the Pacific region. The

wide-ranging issues discussed included: national urban policies; human rights; challenges and tools in respective countries for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda; and urban-rural linkages. As well as recognising the role of urbanisation in achieving sustainable development, the need for long-term, national urbanisation planning through national sustainable development plans and urban policies was highlighted; as well as the need to adopt a regional approach to urbanisation and a renewed focus on sustainability and climate change awareness.



Southern Africa: regional approach



There was a strong focus at CLGF's Southern Africa Regional Conference in June on the importance of empowering local government to deliver development.

Held in Lusaka and opened by Zambia's Minister of Local Government, Hon Vincent Mwale, the theme of the event - *Promoting Local Governance and Local Economic Development (LED) in Southern Africa* - brought together a range of local government stakeholders from the region: mayors, councillors, central government ministers and officials, representatives of local government associations, development partners and the private sector.

It was a timely opportunity for the region to reflect on the importance of localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the context

of national development strategies now aligned, or being aligned to the SDGs. With case studies from different countries illustrating the power of LED, speakers emphasised the importance of:

- empowering local government with the necessary skills, capacities and resources to use LED as a tool to deliver the SDGs;
- relating these SDGs to the priorities of local communities; and
- measuring the progress made towards their achievement.

Deputy Secretary-General Lucy Slack said: "The regional meeting has

allowed an important exchange of views by local government and other stakeholders from Southern Africa with examples of the progress that is being made. It has been invaluable to welcome our development partners, Emeline Dicker from DFID and colleagues from the EU but, moreover, the event has also allowed us to make progress on a development strategy for the whole region."

Secretary-General Dr Munro said: "The event has produced some excellent outcomes and CLGF remains committed to creating a cross-sectoral knowledge base about partnership working and peer to peer support." Praising the work of Gender Links and CEO Colleen Lowe Morna, Dr Munro said: "We hope to work with our members to actively support gender equality and mainstreaming of gender into all activities."

Other speakers included Zambia's Permanent Secretary to Local Government, Mr Amos Malupenga; Mayor of Kitwe and President of the Zambia LGA (LGAZ) Cllr Christopher Kang'ombe and Cllr Rev Mpho Moruakgomo CLGF Chairperson and president of Botswana Association of Local Authorities (BALA).

Information about this meeting, including the Outcomes Statement can be found on the Southern Africa pages of the CLGF website.

CLGF secures EU funding

CLGF has just secured a second, significant amount of funding from the European Union in the form of Phase Two of the Strategic Grant Agreement (SGA).

Part of CLGF's strategy to implement the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the EU, this second phase of the SGA is being led by the CLGF Caribbean office. The grant will enable CLGF to implement the policy commitments that were agreed when the FPA with the EU was signed in 2015. This includes building

on CLGF's existing work to localise the Sustainable Development Goals; support Local Economic Development and decentralisation; and provide significant support for some of CLGF's core activities by strengthening the Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network (ComWLG) and the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network (CSCN).

The value of this grant is €2.4 million and it will support activities in Southern, West and East Africa, as well as the Pacific and the Caribbean.

It runs until June 2022 and comes at a relatively critical time. As EU policies and budgets are currently under review, this is an important opportunity for CLGF to demonstrate the importance of supporting the role of local government as a partner in development globally.

Sandra Singh, CLGF's Regional Manager for the Caribbean said: "CLGF is very proud of the achievements to date. We are delighted to be delivering this programme and look forward to working with CLGF members across the Commonwealth to ensure that we continue to enhance local government's role as a core partner in development."

Australian local government responds



Our inaugural *guest article* for the CLGF bulletin is by the President of the Australian Local Government Association, David O'Loughlin, who explains what local government has been doing to address the impact of the horrific bush fires in Australia.

The scale of destruction from Australia's bush fires has shocked we Australians and the rest of the world alike. The fires have raged for months in multiple locations across southern and eastern Australia, and many are still burning. They've claimed almost 30 human lives, about a billion animals, and thousands of homes, properties, and businesses.

It's been a bleak spring and summer and, while we're only part-way through Australia's bushfire season, one positive has been the size of the response from local government. And it's not just the response in helping the community. I've been inspired and humbled by the numerous examples of local governments helping their fellow councils. From running evacuation centres to firefighting, to driving machinery, holding fundraisers, or distributing goods: local councils and local government associations from across the country have led efforts to help.

For example, dozens of councils from my home state of South Australia have worked with the Local Government Association of South Australia to assist communities hurt by fires at Cudlee Creek and on Kangaroo

Island. Councils have sent machinery and equipment operators to clear roads or just be there to give their exhausted colleagues a rest after weeks of activity. CEO of Karoonda East Murray District Council Matthew Morgan said that, while his council comprised 15 staff and was more than three hours from Kangaroo Island, "there was no hesitation to help out the island community."

It's been a similar story in other states like Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales. We're also grateful for the kind thoughts from local government overseas. A local councillor from the Union of Municipalities of Turkey, Cemal Bas, contacted ALGA in early January to say that Turkish local government stood with their Australian counterparts and the general public.

The ALGA, our member associations, and local councils across the country have long pushed for locally-led responses to our natural disasters because, as the closest level of government to our communities, we know what is needed. We advocated this when floods devastated northern parts of Queensland in early 2019.

The locally-led recovery model that proved successful there has been literally replicated by the Australian Government in its response to our latest natural disaster.

We're pleased that the Australian Government has acknowledged the importance of a locally-led recovery effort, and also our position on ensuring that any new infrastructure is built better than that which it's replacing. After all, scientists and engineers have long-warned that climate change will make future natural disasters more frequent, and more intense. We have to get our communities prepared.

Today, council staff and elected representatives grieve with our fellow residents as they return to their damaged or destroyed homes. We're with our communities as we show resilience. And we're with them as we organise future activities that will bring us together and rebuild community spirit, such as concerts, festivals, or community sport. Australia's local councils are with our communities in this current tragedy, and we'll be building resilience for whatever challenges the future holds.

Pakistan: setting local priorities



CLGF's EU-funded project in Pakistan, which aims to strengthen the capacity of the local government associations, continues to yield tangible outcomes.

In July, CLGF's Project Officer delivered two weeks of training to 60 representatives from three councils in rural and urban areas of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, including the district mayors. The focus was

TALD - the *Territorial Approach to Local Development* - the EU's preferred way of delivering development, which centres on adopting a participatory and inclusive approach to involve all stakeholders in determining priorities to inform community developments. Using this method, three pilot projects have been selected which will see: a new road leading to the two primary schools in Maradan District, to improve accessibility and reduce interruptions to education in the event of heavy rain and mud slides; a new water filtration

system in Peshwar District, after years of neglect has resulted in poor water quality, often leading to disease; and better access to water in Malakand District, with the digging of a new well and addition of manual pumps. MOUs are being signed between all three districts and CLGF, with work starting soon, supported by the CLGF project team and the Provincial Local Councils Association (LCAP).

Extension to project

The project has been extended by mutual agreement between CLGF, the implementation partner, LCAP, and the EU Delegation to Pakistan and will now run to December 2020. This is an exciting opportunity to continue the work in the four provinces, with the addition of work on women's political empowerment. The extension will ensure that work can continue with the new councillors who have been elected after a break in the process.

ICT and women's political empowerment

While the number of women elected representatives is increasing in all levels of government across the Commonwealth, progress has been slow. If we continue at our current rate of change we will not meet the targets set out in Agenda 2030 to Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

The Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network (ComWLG) has undertaken some research on the potential of ICT to be a transformative tool in supporting women into local government. This research looked at the impact and opportunities ICT presents at the various steps of the political process: from becoming politically active, to choosing to be a candidate, to running a successful election campaign, to its impact on daily life as a councillor. Across these areas ICT was seen as an important new tool which in many areas levelled the playing field for women. Where women have less disposable time ICT makes information and decision-making processes more accessible. Where

women have on average significantly less money to run campaigns, social media provides women candidates with a low to no-cost platform to reach out to their electorate and new fund raising technology such as crowd sourcing provide new avenues to raise campaign funds. Once elected to council, ICT allows women councillors to stay in touch with the constituents and council staff, as Cllr Kenisha Gordon, Spanish Town Jamaica said: *"Information and Communication Technology has definitely helped and continues to help me in my delivery of service to my constituents. Outstandingly, ICT helps me to stay in touch with my constituents, executive team and municipal corporation, whether I am out of town or out of country.*

Because of ICT, I am able to travel and remain current with most of my work and pledges to my constituents."

ICT has also created new and serious challenges for female councillors, namely online hate and harassment. Social media significantly lowers the barriers for harassment and elected women are disproportionately affected, receiving on average more abusive messages and specifically negative to their gender. CLGF's ComWLG is working with existing and prospective women councillors to provide support as they serve, and as they seek to become councillors; and will continue to examine how ICT can best be used to share best practice and build communities of support.

Ghana: localising SDGs

Work in Ghana continues on localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through local economic development (LED). More than a hundred people took part in a recent workshop organised by Tema Metropolitan Assembly (TMA) to explain this topic.



Facilitated by GIZ, the German international development agency, and the Council for Scientific Research Institute (CSRI), participants included Assembly Members, managers, staff and representatives of organisations such as the Market Women Association, the Association of Hotels Owners, the Association of Small Scale Businesses and the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). They were given an explanation of the 17 SDGs and five principles guiding them. This was followed by a case study

about the new drying and processing technology for small fish that was being piloted as part of an LED project implemented by TMA with support from CLGF. The improvement to the quality and hygiene of the fish will add value to the final product and, as well as improving the economic gain to the fish producers, it will also contribute to the achievement of SDG goal 1 (No poverty), goal 2 (no hunger), goal 3 (good health and wellbeing) and goal 14 (life under water). CLGF has been working on a range of projects, as part of a wider initiative to publicise the SDGs and help people understand how they relate practically to daily lives. A rice planting project in Goaso, Ahago Region, is creating jobs and providing food for women and young people. This simple agricultural project which gives women the opportunity to farm their own area of land is making a real difference to families in the area, not least by training more than a hundred farmers in the modern techniques of rice farming.

Sierra Leone: delivering SDGs

Local government in Sierra Leone focused on procurement and Local Economic Development (LED) to help deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at a special event in January.

Procurement is a key entry point for LED and CLGF, in partnership with the Local Council Association of Sierra Leone (LOCASL), has been working on a DFID-funded project to review procurement policy and look at how this can be actively used to support economic development at council level. The meeting in Port Loko brought together senior leaders and officials from local and central government. Facilitated by LOCASL and CLGF, participants explored a new, simplified procurement guideline for councils. There was a presentation on CLGF's work on LED across the Commonwealth, including pilot projects with councils in Ghana to develop and implement LED strategies and build awareness

in the community of the SDGs. Participants were able to look at their council development priorities; the opportunities for supporting LED in their local areas; and the support they need from other organisations and the government to achieve these goals. Opening the meeting, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Hon Lamina, said: "The goal in Sierra Leone's decentralisation policy is to ensure that people and their communities are empowered and fully involved in political and socio-economic development processes and actually formulate and implement development plans."



What goes around, comes around

As part of the Circular Economy Week London, CLGF was invited to participate in a Commonwealth round table.

Convened by the Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network, the event brought together representatives from the Commonwealth Secretariat, London Waste and Recycling Board, The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the Bloomsbury Institute and the RSA; and provided an opportunity to share the work they are doing and reflect on the potential for partnership in achieving more sustainable patterns of consumption. CLGF was especially pleased to bring the perspective of Southern Hemisphere cities to the discussion, emphasising work that is being done in supporting local economies to strengthen the local sourcing of goods and services, and full life-cycle programmes working to recycle waste into new products. CLGF's Deputy Secretary General, Lucy Slack said: "Already 55% of the global population is living in urban areas, up from 30% in 1950. By 2050 it is predicted that 68% of the world's people will be living in urban areas. This shift is impacting lives everywhere and city/municipal governments are on the frontline of managing change to ensure that cities are planned and welcoming spaces in which people can live and work."

A global voice for local government

Local government advocacy on the global stage is crucial. This sphere of government that is closest to the citizen must be recognised for its role in delivering services; promoting democracy and good governance; and participating in the development agenda. This is why CLGF prioritises its advocacy work, partnering with a number of organisations to increase the influence of local government.

Key events attended by CLGF include the Fifth Pacific Urban Forum and the Tenth Asia Pacific Urban Forum, looking specifically at sustainable development in the region; with more details on page 3.

As an active member of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF), CLGF took part in The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York under the auspices of ECOSOC. It was an opportunity to assess progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. GTF and UCLG presented a report on the SDGs, which analysed the 47 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), showing a steady improvement in local and regional government's involvement in achieving the SDGs.

GTF convened several events to highlight the importance of localising the goals and supporting cities and local governments to deliver inclusive services to ensure that no-one is left behind. This also provided an opportunity to raise the importance of synergy with the Addis Ababa Action

Agenda, and the Paris Agreement, and the need for gender equality and the empowerment of women to transform our world.

Local and regional government adopted a statement at the HLPF confirming commitment to further localising the agenda, calling for greater cooperation between national and international coordination mechanisms as well as resources to make the achievement of the Agenda 2030 possible.

In February, CLGF joined several other organisations to play a key part in the tenth World Urban Forum (WUF10), organised by UN Habitat in Abu Dhabi. It featured a series of combined Commonwealth initiatives involving four organisations (CLGF, Prince's Foundation, Commonwealth Association of Architects, Commonwealth Association of planners) which emphasised the need for a multi-disciplinary, multi-sector partnership to help deliver the types of integrated responses required to both support and accelerate the delivery of sustainable urban development.

The event concluded with a statement about the need to ensure that cities and human settlements have the capacity, capability skills and resources to deal with the challenges of climate change and rapid urbanisation, reducing risk and vulnerability, and that they are well governed, well managed, well planned and well financed to provide inclusive centres of prosperity, social cohesion and wellbeing.

CLGF is championing a call to action for sustainable urbanisation which will be launched at CHOGLM 2010 In Rwanda, and fed into discussions.



Resilience in the Caribbean

Resilience was a key topic at the 9th Caribbean Urban Forum held in Trinidad and Tobago in the Summer. Challenges experienced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in relation to urban planning and natural disasters were top of the discussion list, with a focus on response mechanisms prior, during and after disasters, and how to strengthen current systems. The 50th anniversary of statutory town and country planning in Trinidad and Tobago provided an ideal opportunity to look at how institutional planning is evolving throughout the Caribbean,

particularly in light of the impact of climate change. Successful on many levels, the three day event brought together colleagues and agencies from across the Caribbean, allowing experiences to be shared in a regional context, and possible solutions to be found. The range of interests and specialities around resilience gave a broader understanding of what resilience means in practice. The event emphasised the importance of cooperation between agencies and countries to achieve resilience, and the need for new approaches. Responding

to the challenges of climate change requires new ways of thinking and working. Jointly organised by the Ministry of Planning & Development, the Trinidad and Tobago Society of Planners, the Caribbean Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank with co-hosts, the Caribbean Network for Urban and Land Management (CNULM) based at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, the event is an important opportunity for local, regional and international Planners to meet on common ground.