

# Bulletin



# Comment

By Dr Greg Munro, Secretary-General, CLGF



I write this, my last CLGF Bulletin introduction on a significant day. This year Commonwealth Day and International Women's Day both fall on 8 March, and so we are able to not only celebrate the Commonwealth, but also highlight the achievements of women in the Commonwealth. I leave CLGF with my admiration of the Commonwealth undiminished, a group of 54 nations working together to achieve a set of common principles

is a noble and just endeavour. We must always ensure that our communities are at the centre of our actions and that it is their lives which are improved by their nation's membership of the Commonwealth. We also need to remember that some of the greatest lessons and best practices can come from any member of the Commonwealth (and this is particularly true for local government).

On gender, I am very pleased that the Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network was established during my tenure and that the programmatic footprint on gender has also expanded over the recent years. The organisation has also expanded its programmes in Pakistan, Zambia and Zimbabwe and strengthened the Caribbean office to manage the CLGF Strategic Grant agreement with the EU. It has however, also been a challenging past year for all of us. Together, the CLGF team has adapted and responded to the pandemic and endeavoured to be best placed to support our members. The COVID recovery phase will hopefully be an opportunity for all of us to build back better in a more sustainable, innovative and "green" manner, and I am sure that CLGF will work with and support the network of CLGF members in this.

I have come to know and admire so many of you over the past few years – our members, partners and stakeholders. As most of you are aware, I will be joining Cities Alliance in Brussels next month, focussing on urban poverty. CLGF is a member of Cities Alliance and I am sure that the two organisations will grow closer in their shared endeavours to improve the lives of the urban poor.

Finally, on Women's Day, I am proud that CLGF has a global staff compliment which is two-thirds women. They are an immensely impressive team and I would have achieved nothing during my tenure without them. Lucy Slack, Deputy Secretary-General will be appointed as Acting Secretary-General in early April to ensure consistency, stability and delivery.

Please accept my gratitude to all of you for your past support and encouragement as well as the wonderful messages so many of you have recently sent regarding my career move. I leave you in good hands and I know the flag of local government will continue to fly high across the Commonwealth.

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# Acting Secretary-General Lucy Slack



It is a great honour and a challenge to be invited by the Board to take on the role of acting Secretary-General of CLGF, as Greg departs to head up Cities Alliance. It is a role I am proud to embrace.

The context in which local government is operating has changed significantly over the course of the last 12 months, with the Covid-19 pandemic touching every one of our member states. This has compounded many of the other very real challenges impacting on our sector, most notably climate change, rapid urbanisation and sustainable financing. Under my stewardship, we will continue to strive to work closely with our members and to deliver advocacy, technical assistance, networking, products and services, which support you in your day to day work.

As many of you will know, we are in the process of updating our strategic plan and I am looking forward to finalising that process. Having held regular meetings with our members in the different regions of the Commonwealth over recent months, we have listened to your experiences, and many of you have also completed our survey, letting us know your priorities, so that we can target our efforts going forward as a strong voice for local government in the Commonwealth.

The pandemic has only served to reinforce the importance of local resilience, local service delivery and local economic opportunities. I'm looking forward to working with you to strengthen our regional outreach,

to expand our portfolio of programmes, to enhance our networking, and to continue to develop new and exciting ways to ensure that local government is central to the post Covid-19 recovery, and the decade of action towards achieving the SDGs.

My heart is in CLGF and the work that we do. I am committed to working closely with our members and partners to position local government to meet the challenges we face with cooperation and collective action. We are stronger when we work together.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Women's Summit

CLGF Secretary-General opened a key session at the Commonwealth Women's Entrepreneurship Summit 21, held in May. The first of its kind, the event brought together women from across the Commonwealth to look at ways of supporting women in business. Ms Slack explained how cities and local governments can enable and support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, through core services, incubation centres, targeting local procurement or leveraging inward investment. An historic event, taking place in unprecedented times.

### UNACLA

CLGF Chairperson Rev Mpho Moruakgomo addressed the UNACLA (United National Advisory Committee of Local Authorities) meeting in May. UNACLA is an advisory body set up in 1995 to strengthen the dialogue with local authorities from all over the world involved in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (convened now through the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF), and CLGF is currently one of the vice presidents. He welcomed the progress that the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments has made in strengthening the voice of local government, and noted that the commitment to localisation is growing, with the SDGs seen as a framework for sustainable local development. He explained that it is clear that local government plays a key role in the achievement of global development targets, and he joined fellow speakers in calling for UN Habitat and other UN agencies to recognise that local government is different from civil society and to ensure a more meaningful partnership with cities and local government in implementing and monitoring the New Urban Agenda.

**CLGF Pacific** was recognised by Fiji's Minister for Local Government for a pilot project funded by the UN to improve waste management services in Nasinu. One of five cities and towns selected from 84 applicants to be part of the UN ESCAP pilot Sustainable Urban Resource Management (SURM) initiative in the Asia-Pacific region, the new waste plant was opened in March. This links into Sustainable Development Goal 11, which aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.



# CLGF Networks

This Bulletin heralds the start of a new, regular feature: an update on the work of CLGF's two networks. Established to support our members, this first feature introduces the networks, with some news in brief about recent activities.



WOMEN IN  
LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

## The Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network (ComWLG)

CLGF is committed to supporting women to play a full and active role in public life, particularly with regard to equal representation in local governance. This aligns to Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG): to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. In November 2017, the Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network (ComWLG) was launched as a mechanism to promote and drive gender equity and equality in local government, both within the organisation, and across CLGF's membership.

### Role of ComWLG

ComWLG operates as a 'Network of Networks', bringing together the activities and experiences of different Commonwealth countries and regions, providing an opportunity to share and learn. Its role includes:



[www.clgf.org.uk/what-we-do/women-in-local-government/](http://www.clgf.org.uk/what-we-do/women-in-local-government/)



1. Promoting, supporting and linking the work of member organisations.
2. Adding value by supporting and giving a voice to the individual country chapters of ComWLG, established by LGAs across the commonwealth.
3. Reinforcing and adding value to national level work.
4. Building on the dialogue and exchanges.
5. Identifying best practice from across the Commonwealth and sharing it with members.
6. Mainstreaming key principles into CLGF's wider work programme.

### Focal areas

The ComWLG Network was established to focus on four areas:

1. **Work with existing elected women:** building capacity of existing women leaders, helping them overcome barriers within local government systems to be more effective as leaders, representatives and decision-makers.
2. **Work with prospective elected women:** working at community level to increase understanding of the roles and responsibilities of local elected leaders and encourage women (with a focus on young women) to run for council.
3. **Work with political parties and Local Government Associations (LGAs):** removing barriers to women within political systems, increasing the inclusion of a gender perspective in all aspects of their work (legislation, oversight and representation) to improve gender sensitivity in local government and LGAs.

4. **Work at the Commonwealth and International level** to gather best practice and share and replicate successes. To advocate towards Commonwealth bodies; to monitor levels of elected women across the commonwealth and feed into the SDG monitoring process, ensuring CLGF meets its commitments on gender and inclusion.

### Steering committee to guide

In November 2020, the Interim Steering Committee for the ComWLG Network held its inaugural meeting. An opportunity to discuss core priorities and to welcome the interim Chairperson, Cllr Thembi Nkadameng, who is also President of the South Africa Local Government Association (SALGA) and a member of the CLGF Board.



Ms Thembi Nkadameng: first Chairperson of the Steering Group for the Commonwealth Women in Local Government network

### Recent activities (in brief)

More details can be found on the CLGF website

#### Research:

- CLGF conducted a membership survey on Women in Local Government (May to June 2020)

**Southern Africa: (working in partnership with Gender Links - Oct 2020)**

NETWORKS



Women in Local Government Forum, Eswatini: strategic development

- Four Women’s networks established and strengthened in Eswatini, Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe - targeting 200+ women councillors and focusing on formulating strategies for increased participation in local government.
- In Eswatini, a ten year strategy was agreed to work towards the main aims.
- A 50/50 campaign was launched in Zambia and a Gender and Elections action plan formulated ahead of the 2021 elections.
- ComWLG engagement in Zimbabwe with the President has resulted in Cabinet approval for a 30% quota of women in local government.
- Three Young Women in Local Government Networks were launched in Eswatini, Lesotho and Zimbabwe, with training for many members leadership and mentoring.

West Africa (Ghana): Nov 2020

- The National Association of Local Authorities Ghana ran workshops for 100 elected and appointed Women Assembly Members to improve leadership, representation and decision-making.

South Asia (Pakistan): Feb 2021

- As part of a project with the Local Councils Association of the Punjab, the LGA’s Women Development Committee held a workshop to develop their Strategic Plan.

Caribbean:

- The Association of Local Government Authorities of Jamaica (ALGAJ) established a Women in Local Government Network Steering Committee in June 2020 and launched their Women in Local Government Network in April 2021.
- In July 2019, ALGAJ launched the Women in Local Government Feature, a monthly publication that forms part of the LGA’s monthly newsletter, to highlight experiences of women councillors to guide other women wishing to enter local politics.
- Prospective candidate training workshops were delivered ahead of the Tobago House of Assembly Election, Trinidad Local Government Bye-Election and Belize City Elections. Trinidad and Tobago held a National Chapter Caribbean Women in Leadership in January and February 2021.

NETWORK COORDINATION

**We want to profile our members’ networks or committees, and publicise your activities and materials to the Commonwealth**

Does your Association have a Women in Local Government Network?

Join the conversation by going to the Facebook page.

**Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network**

**ALGAJ**  
Women in Local Government Network

"Advancing the interests and number of women in local government."

The latest chapter of the women’s network to be launched by the ALGAJ in Jamaica



**The Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network (CSCN)**

CLGF launched the Commonwealth

Sustainable Cities Network in 2015 to responding to the city agenda, holding its first meeting in Singapore in 2015. Current projections show that up to 75% of the world’s population will be living in urban areas by 2050. Most of this urban growth will occur in developing countries in Africa and Asia, and almost 50% of this growth is projected to be in Commonwealth cities, but impacting severely on small island states and

rural areas. These challenges are further exacerbated by climate change and, since February 2020 the global Covid-19 pandemic means that cities and human settlements face further urgent pressures to respond to, and ultimately to rebuild their often shattered communities.

The CSCN Steering Group Committee met last month to strengthen the action plan around delivering its objectives.

[www.clgf.org.uk/what-we-do/cities-network/](http://www.clgf.org.uk/what-we-do/cities-network/)

## NETWORKS

## Role of CSCN

CSCN brings together Commonwealth mayors and managers to support cities and human settlements in responding to the challenges and opportunities of urbanisation. Specifically, the network is working towards supporting the CLGF membership and actors more broadly in advancing the New Urban Agenda and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 11 (make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable), through improved policies; global, Commonwealth, regional and national advocacy; exchange of experience, city to city partnerships; shared learning; targeted programmes; and strengthened city leadership.

## Focal areas

The network has four priority areas:

1. Devolution and city empowerment - strengthening urban democracy, governance and finance.
2. Enhancing economic development in urban areas - Commonwealth cities and trade.
3. Building smarter cities - using ICT more effectively to improve service management and delivery.
4. City inclusiveness and resilience - making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, as an entry point to achieving the SDGs.

Using CSCN as a key vehicle, CLGF seeks to strengthen strategies and implementation for effective urbanisation: ensuring CLGF policy reflects the needs of cities and urban areas, takes account of urban rural linkages, and that priority actions are city-led, people-focused and respond to the diverse needs of the Commonwealth.

## Providing a framework

CSCN provides a framework for:

- Learning and exchange
- Enhancing capacity to enhance delivery in cities
- A platform for research and knowledge sharing
- Identifying and developing evidence-based policy

- To strengthen advocacy in support of sustainable urbanisation in the Commonwealth and in other international fora.

The work of the CSCN is guided by a representative Steering Committee, providing oversight, guidance and policy direction.

Recent activities (in brief) More details can be found on the CLGF website.

## Sustainable Urbanisation – A Call to Action

CLGF, in partnership with the Commonwealth Association of Commonwealth Universities, the Commonwealth Association of Architects and the Commonwealth Association of Planners; supported by the Rwandan Ministry of Infrastructure, the Rwandan Ministry of Local Government and The Prince's Foundation, launched a Call to Action asking for:

- A greater focus on enabling sustainable urbanisation in Commonwealth policy-making
- A Commonwealth dialogue to define and implement a new way of working across respective networks towards multi-level governance and sustainable urbanisation
- A commitment by member states to a new Commonwealth Initiative of practical action to support sustainable cities and human settlements across the Commonwealth to respond to the Call to Action and to play their full role in achieving the SDGs.

A 12-week, online programme was held last year with experts from around the Commonwealth on all aspects of sustainable urbanisation. Details can be found on the dedicated [CLGF website](#), including recordings of the discussions; the text of the [CLGF Call to Action](#) and an [CLGF online](#) platform of good practice.

## Bloomberg Philanthropies 2021 Mayors Challenge

CLGF partnered with Bloomberg Philanthropies to reach out to eligible CSCN city members and support 2021 applications. The Challenge will support 50 innovative cities in implementing

their urban solutions in the wake of COVID-19, sharing best practice globally.

## Healthy Cities Mayor's Round Table discussion

Working with partners: BOVA network; RBM Partnership to End Malaria; UN Habitat; and Uniting to Combat NTDs; in January 2021, city leaders came together to agree a common position and Framework for Action to be presented at CHOGM in Kigali in June 2021, bringing city and community leaders into the highest levels of decision-making with respect to the prevention and control of high-risk vector-borne diseases and Neglected Tropical Diseases.

## Belize City urban sustainability and smart city project

CLGF is supporting a 15-month, pilot City Demonstration Project in Belize City; which is responding to city challenges by implementing an Urban Sustainability strategy which focuses on enhancing affordable housing supply; slum upgrade through participatory Public Space Enhancement; and integrated urban planning (data management, cultural heritage etc.), to support improved inclusivity, reduced inequalities, enhanced resilience and provision of adequate social services.



### NETWORK COORDINATION

Any Commonwealth city where their parent ministry or local government association is a member of CLGF, or where they have individual membership of CLGF, can become a member of the CSCN. The objective is to ensure broad membership across cities and human settlements of all sizes and from all regions of the Commonwealth.

Both networks are managed by Janine Xavier-Cross CLGF's Networks Officer.

**If you would like to know more. Please email Janine: [janine.xavier-cross@clgfcaribbean.org.tt](mailto:janine.xavier-cross@clgfcaribbean.org.tt)**



# CLGF in Pakistan



**CLGF's EU funded work with the Local Councils Associations in Pakistan continues to support local government during a challenging year. Local government tenure has come to an end across three of the provinces and curtailed in the Punjab with no sign of dates being set for local elections in any of the provinces.**

Adding to these tensions, the Supreme Court of Pakistan ruled last month that the termination of local government tenure in Punjab, prior to the end of their mandate was unconstitutional, raising questions about whether councillors would be brought back to serve out the rest of their mandate. The Supreme Court also directed the Electoral Commission of Pakistan to hold local government elections by September 2021 at the latest. However, in the context of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic it is unclear if local elections will even take place in 2021.

Despite this, CLGF and the Local Councils Association of the Punjab (LCAP) continue to work on the implementation of the project, entitled: *Strengthening the Associations of Local Governments and their Members for Enhanced Governance and Effective Development Outcomes in Pakistan*, funded by the European Commission and running from January 2017 Until October 2021.

The project seeks to build the capacity of the Local Councils Associations (LCAs) and enable them to support

and enhance the contribution that local government and local elected leaders make to governance and development.

A key output has been establishing increased media outreach and the creation of effective media tools to get the messages and experience of local councils associations and local councillors out to a wider audience. The project's new YouTube media Channel for local governments in Pakistan will expedite information exchange on local government issues and share the experience of past councillors throughout Pakistan. Plans to further expand LCA TV in the coming year are well underway, and it will then include training sessions and awareness raising content in the lead up to local government elections. The local Councils of Pakistan are also increasing their internal communication through their **DIGITAL** newsletter ensuring that key local government news is circulated across the local government community.

The project has also supported associations to hold Annual General Meetings and other meeting bringing their membership together. As well as

general strategic planning, these have been crucial to approve a number of important decisions, and make plans for the association's financial sustainability and intensified advocacy in the absence of the overdue local government elections.

Working to increase the diversity and inclusivity of local government, progress has also been made with the establishment Women's Development Committees in all four provinces, and one national LCA; and Minority Development Committees in three provinces; which aim to increase the number of women and minority representatives in local government by supporting those wishing to enter local government, and those already serving, by providing training and networking support. Building a community of support will help in the campaign at provincial level, and keep the issue of equal representation firmly on the agenda.

Another consequence of this work has been to link the LCA and local government Pakistan to CLGF's wider work in the Commonwealth. The President of LCAP, Ms Fozia Khalid Warraich, was part of an expert panel in a regional local government exchange on Strengthening resilience at the local level; and Pakistan was represented in other important regional and Commonwealth exchanges on LED and Trade as well as to look at the impact of the pandemic on local government over the course of 2020- 2021.

At a time of many barriers, Pakistan local government is defying the odds.



# Sustainable Urbanisation in the Commonwealth



**CLGF and its members have been increasingly highlighting the importance of a greater focus on sustainable urbanisation in the Commonwealth.**

Rapid urbanisation, the impacts of climate change and more recently the global pandemic have only served to highlight that although cities and human settlements are places of opportunity and economic growth, they are often also places of informality and poverty where many Commonwealth citizens face serious challenges in finding employment and living healthy, safe and secure lives. By 2050 an additional 2.5 billion people will be living in the world's towns and cities, with almost 50% of that population growth taking place in the Commonwealth. CLGF has been working in partnership with the Association of Commonwealth Universities, Commonwealth Association of Architects, Commonwealth Association of Planners and the Princes' Foundation, and in coordination with the Government of Rwanda, to highlight the importance of better integrating sustainable urbanisation into the work of the Commonwealth, and to using the Commonwealth networks – intergovernmental, quasi-governmental, and civil society networks – to better support a more collaborative approach to delivering sustainable development. This work will reflect the realities of the Commonwealth, and CLGF's Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network will be a key vehicle in bringing Commonwealth cities together to share experiences and to test new initiatives on the ground.

CLGF is also working with the Rollback Malaria partnership, UN Habitat and other partners to highlight the critical role that cities play in ensuring healthy communities. Most Commonwealth cities have responsibility for primary health care, but many are also responsible for other key services that ensure healthy cities; namely water, waste management, sanitation, environmental health, and public information and awareness raising. In the run up to the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, which will include a summit on reducing the incidence of Malaria and neglected tropical diseases, CLGF is working to highlight the role of cities and local government in this work to ensure healthy cities, and we will be inviting mayors to sign up to a Commonwealth healthy cities charter to support this agenda.

Unfortunately the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, which was to have taken place in Rwanda in June 2021, has had to be further postponed due to the on-going impact of COVID-19 in many member states. This is a big disappointment to our colleagues in Rwanda, who have been working so hard to prepare the meeting, and of course the whole Commonwealth family. But we are continuing to develop these critical agendas in the run up to the rescheduled event, and to ensuring that local government has a strong voice in the negotiations when Heads are finally able to together.

## CLGF Board news



Photo courtesy of LGNZ

It is with much sadness that we announce the death of former CLGF Vice-Chair, Dave Cull. As a former mayor and President of the New Zealand local government association (LGNZ), Mr Cull leaves a great legacy with his work on climate change and localism.




We extend our congratulations to Marvin Rees on his recent re-election to the role of directly elected Mayor of the UK City Bristol. Recently elected to the CLGF Board, we very much look forward to working with him.



Photo courtesy of Informante <http://informante.webna>

Some of you may remember former board member, Matheus Kristof Shikongo, who has recently died. As former Mayor of the Namibian capital, Windhoek, Mr Shikongo oversaw many developments and transformations in the city and played a key role in international cooperation, also serving on UCLGA.

## CLGF Handbook

CLGF is embarking on the update of the 2021-22 edition of the  **Commonwealth Local Government Handbook**. This is a unique publication and a great opportunity for members to showcase local government in your country. A comparative reference guide on local government systems across the Commonwealth, it contains information on the legal framework and structure of local government in each country, recent local elections, the framework for local government's relationship with central government and areas of responsibility. The Handbook also provides data on women's political representation, as well as local government finance. CLGF is writing to all ministries and encourages you to get in contact with CLGF Policy and Research Officer, Idil Mohamed. **For more information please contact [Idil.mohamed@clgf.org.uk](mailto:Idil.mohamed@clgf.org.uk).**