

Kigali Statement on Strengthening Local Government in Eastern Africa

Meeting of Local Government Ministers from Eastern Africa
4-5 May 2011, Kigali, Rwanda

INTRODUCTION

Ministers and local government representatives from Eastern Africa, comprising Burundi, Comoros Islands, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda met in Kigali, Rwanda, (4-5 May, 2011) to validate a study, commissioned by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), The United Nations Development Programme, Regional Service Centre, Eastern and Southern Africa (UNDP RSC-ESA), and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) on “The state of local government in Eastern Africa” with specific focus on decentralisation, local government financing, inclusive service delivery and local government capacity. The meeting was organised by CLGF, UNDP (RSC-ESA), and UNCDF and hosted by the Ministry of Local Government, Rwanda.

The workshop deliberated on the study findings, made recommendations for its improvement, and discussed practical strategies for addressing the issues that the study raised. Participants recognised the significant progress in decentralised governance already being made in Rwanda and across the region. They noted the extensive commitments at national, regional, continental and international level to decentralisation and strengthening local government. They further committed to working together as a region to strengthen decentralisation, and improve local governance and service delivery in their efforts to reduce poverty and achieve the MDGs.

Knowledge exchange, peer review, and learning from regional good practices were highlighted as important priorities for the future. The key role of local government training and the need to ensure that there is sufficient training capacity was recognised. Participants recommended exploring the possibility of establishing a centre of excellence for local government capacity building in the region.

Ministers also recalled the recommendations of an earlier informal meeting of East African Community (EAC) local government Ministers in Munyonyo, Kampala, 2009.

Ministers endorsed the recommendations of the workshop, noted that the consultants who prepared the study would make revisions in the light of the issues addressed at the 2011 validation workshop, and discussed how they could work together more effectively to implement the recommendations of the study across the region. In this regard, Ministers agreed to establish a Local Government Forum for Eastern Africa.

The Forum will bring together Ministers of Local Government and Local Government Associations from across the countries of Eastern Africa (Burundi, Comoros Islands, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda), and the East African Local Government Association. It was proposed that it will meet at least once a year, will provide leadership and a platform for closer regional cooperation and joint working

to strengthen decentralisation, and local government's role as the key entry point for sustainable local development and meeting the MDGs in the region.

In recognition of the role of local government in giving effect to many of the decisions taken by the East African Community, and the importance of decentralisation in the region, it was recommended that an institutional relationship between the EAC and ministers of local government from the EAC countries should also be progressed to reinforce the work of the Forum.

Ministers further agreed that:

- Hon James Musoni, in his capacity as interim chair, should convene a small team to work with the support and advice of the partners – CLGF, UNDP (RSC-ESA) and UNCDF – to develop more detailed proposals for the Local Government Forum for Eastern Africa, and a roadmap for institutionalising the relationship between Ministers from EAC member states within the EAC structures. A report setting this out will be tabled for discussion at the Forum's inaugural meeting, to be held provisionally in March 2012.
- Ministers from EAC member states will brief the Ministers responsible for the EAC in their respective countries regarding the commitment in the region to establish an institutional relationship between Local Government Ministers and the EAC.
- The interim Chair will start a dialogue with the EAC Secretariat, inform them of the decision to establish the Forum, and explore the steps required to institutionalise the local government sector within the EAC.
- Consultations on holding the inaugural meeting of the Forum in either Burundi or Tanzania, provisionally in March 2012, will be initiated. The meeting will receive and consider the report on establishing the Forum, progress towards institutionalising the local government sector in the EAC, and a report on developments in taking forward the *Report on the State of Local Government in Eastern Africa*.

It was noted with satisfaction that, as recommended at the 2009 Munyonyo meeting, a regional local government adviser, funded by the Commonwealth Secretariat, will soon be stationed in Kampala and that Uganda will be hosting the next Commonwealth Local Government Conference, May 2013.

Thanks were given to the consultants for preparing the study, and to CLGF, UNCDF, UNDP (RSC-ESA), UNDP Rwanda Country Office, and the Commonwealth Secretariat for supporting the meeting. Warm appreciation was expressed to Hon James Musoni and his staff for hosting the meeting and for the excellent arrangements made.

5 May 2011

Hon James Musoni, Minister of Local Government, Rwanda, Chair
Mr Ferdinand Niyongabo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, representing the Minister of Local Government, Burundi
Hon Saendou Djazila, Minister of Local Government, Comoros Islands
Hon Lewis Nguyai, Assistant Minister of Local Government, Kenya
Hon George Mkuchika, Minister of Local Government, Tanzania
Hon Adolf Mwesige, Minister of Local Government, Uganda