

# COMMONWEALTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM LONDON AFFIRMATION ON GLOBAL COOPERATION AND LOCAL DEMOCRACY



The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Board meeting, London, 11-12 July 2016, hosted by the Local Government Association of England and Wales, and followed by the 2016 Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Meeting, 12-13 July, attended by senior elected leaders from local and central government from across the Commonwealth:

**Conscious** of the volatile international environment with political instability in many countries, mass refugee and migrant flows, xenophobia, civil strife and terrorism, with a consequent need for local government to foster good community relations, promote social cohesion and counteract extremist threats.

**Aware** of the fragile global economic situation and the uncertainties produced by recent events, including the UK referendum on European Union membership, and recognising the role that local government and in particular cities as engines of growth have in promoting local economic development in partnership with the private sector.

**Strongly welcomes** the adoption of the *2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development* as a comprehensive means of addressing global challenges and its recognition of the role of local and regional government, not only in Sustainable Development Goal 11 on inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements, but also as an integral part of all SDGs.

**Welcomes further** the adoption of the *Paris Agreement* on climate change and the recognition accorded to local and regional government in its implementation, which reflects their commitment to climate change mitigation, notably through the *Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy*.

**Recalls** the commitment in the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* to scale up international cooperation to strengthen the capacities of municipalities and other local authorities and its highlighting of the importance of financing local government, including by mobilising resources locally and through municipal bond markets and lending from financial institutions and development banks.

**Encouraged** by the willingness of development partners to work with local government in partnership to implement the SDGs and address climate change, including in small and in particular small island developing states (SIDS).

**Acknowledges** the recognition by the 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) of the role of local government in sharing good practice and mobilising support for common goals, including through the CLGF Botswana Conference; and the further recognition given to the importance of enhanced collaboration between, in particular, the intergovernmental Commonwealth and Associated organisations like CLGF.

**Applauds** the leadership role taken by Malta as Chair of the Commonwealth and appreciative of its decision to host the 2017 CLGF Conference.

**Honoured** by the recent launch of the Commonwealth Hub, which includes CLGF, by HM Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth and the attendance of HRH The Prince of Wales at the CLGF Marlborough House reception on 12 July.

**Appreciative** of the message of support from the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan and UNDP Administrator Rt Hon Helen Clark and the participation of Commonwealth Secretary-General Rt Hon Patricia Scotland in its meeting.

## **Affirms that:**

- Global cooperation for peace and development is today more vital than ever, when faced by political turmoil, economic uncertainty and the rise of extremist and xenophobic forces in many countries.
- Intergovernmental organisations such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth and the European Union have an essential role to play in maintaining the post-1945 international order, promoting democratic values and economic well-being.
- Local democracy and the free election of local representatives, as set out in the *Commonwealth Aberdeen Principles*, is fundamental to the democratic process and a powerful force for promoting understanding, social cohesion and community-driven development.
- The Commonwealth Local Government Forum, CLGF, plays an important role in promoting local democracy, good governance and development in support of its membership and globally.

## **It agrees to:**

1. Continue international advocacy through the Global Task Force of Regional and Local Government, and alongside UNDP and other development partners, private sector, civil society and key stakeholders to ensure localisation of the SDGs with local government assigned direct responsibility in sub-national monitoring and reporting of SDG implementation and to be recognised as a distinct stakeholder at the UN.
2. Partner with key stakeholders notably the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNCDF and ICLEI to promote climate change adaptation measures, support CLGF members in the SIDS and other countries affected by climate change and work to facilitate local government access to the Green Fund and other forms of climate finance.
3. Seek full implementation of the Addis Ababa commitments on sub-national finance, both at national level and through international development finance and commercial sources; encourage active participation of local governments and their associations in decision-making on development finance; and look to the November 2017 CLGF Conference in Malta, *Fit for the Future: resources and capacity for effective local government* as a means to further advance these aims.
4. Strengthen collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, Associated Organisations and other Commonwealth partners, notably through the newly-established Commonwealth Hub to promote Commonwealth values and principles and take forward joint initiatives and programmes.
5. Enhance the capacity of CLGF to respond to its members' needs by providing active support for its activities, including for its regional offices, and by encouraging Commonwealth governments, international development agencies and corporate partners to extend financial and other assistance for its work.
6. Resolve to maintain CLGF's partnership agreement and programmatic engagement with the European Commission and the EU through its world-wide membership including its members in Cyprus and Malta.
7. Task the CLGF Secretary-General and the Executive Committee to review CLGF structures, resources and staffing to see how the above objectives can be realised.

The Board also warmly welcomes the appointment of Dr Greg Munro as CLGF Secretary-General. It recognises the dedication to CLGF and the wider Commonwealth and international community, by its founding Secretary-General, Carl Wright, over 40 years, and welcomes his new role as Secretary-General Emeritus and ex officio Board member.

The Board further recognises the past leadership provided by Mayor Lawrence Yule as its Chairperson and Hon Adolf Mwesige as Vice Chairperson and welcomes the assumption of Rev Mpho Moruakgomo as new CLGF Chairperson.

Appreciation is expressed to the Local Government Association of England and Wales and the Commonwealth Secretariat for co-hosting the Board and Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network Meeting.