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Successful, safe and sustainable cities: towards a New Urban Agenda

COMMONWEALTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM

CLGF BACKGROUND PAPER

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Successful, safe and sustainable cities: making cities fit for the future
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Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) was founded in 1995, as a focus for action on local democracy in the Commonwealth. It works to promote and strengthen democratic local government across the Commonwealth and to encourage the exchange of best practice. It has some 200 members in 45 Commonwealth countries including national ministries of local government, local councils, and local government associations.

Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network (CSCN)

The CLGF CSCN Network was set up in June 2015 to focus on cities and the New Urban Agenda and what support is needed to equip them to meet the new SDGs. An inaugural meeting of the network was held in Singapore in October 2015. The network comprises city members of CLGF and partner organisations. The CSCN focuses strongly on medium, capital and secondary cities which are part of the CLGF membership. It is open to any Commonwealth city member of CLGF.

This paper was commissioned by CLGF for the July 2016 meeting of the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network and written by David Satterthwaite, International Institute for Environmental Development, UK

The meeting is taking place in the run-up to Habitat III and the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments and will help formulate a local government position to feed into these meetings.

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Successful, safe and sustainable cities: towards a New Urban Agenda

1. Introduction

There is a new interest in cities by national governments and international agencies from three perspectives.

The first is the recognition of their economic importance - for attracting investment and innovation in national and regional economies. The second is in the healthy living conditions and high quality of life they can provide, if they are well governed. The third is in their potential to delink a high quality of life from high greenhouse gas emissions and thus contribute to avoiding dangerous climate change. Table 1 summarises how the negative view of cities has given way to more positive perspectives.

Table 1: How cities are viewed

Negative	Positive
Parasites on the economy and on rural areas	Leading innovation, social justice and economic success
Centres that concentrate and generate air and water pollution	Centres with the healthiest populations and low levels of air pollution
Driving climate change	Centres that reconcile high quality of life with low emissions
Concentrations of poverty, inequality and violence	Centres for inclusive livelihood opportunities, cultural exchange and gender empowerment

While there are examples of innovative cities or city-communities that validate the positive attitude, there are also many examples of urban centres which meet few, if any, of the criteria for sustainable development – and with very large deficits in provision for basic infrastructure and services. Cities provide so many agglomeration economies that lower the costs of achieving the positive aspects – but these depend on urban governments with the capacity to take advantage of these. So many urban governments have little or no investment capacity and technical capacity to do so.[i]

Two new sets of goals have been agreed that have such relevance for city and municipal governments; the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement. But while these commitments have been developed and agreed by national governments, many fall within the responsibilities of local governments. National governments committed to a comprehensive and ambitious set of goals within the SDGs and Paris Agreement – but with little said about who has to act and how these will be financed. It is hoped that the New Urban Agenda being drafted for agreement at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in October 2016 will address these.

This paper and the second meeting of the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network follow on from the '*Cities 2030: Vision, leadership and public service excellence*' meeting held in Singapore in September 2015. The outcome document of this meeting was the Singapore Statement on Commonweath Cities implementing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. (See Annex A)

[i] United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) (2014), Basic Services for All in an Urbanizing World; the Third Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization, Routledge, London.

2. The sustainable development goals and urban development

2. The sustainable development goals and urban development

The SDGs bring a very ambitious range of goals that are relevant for rural and urban development – and for global issues. Human development, is central to the SDGs; so is the elimination of extreme poverty and hunger and 'leaving no-one behind.' They recognise the importance of having goals that focus on urban issues. They also include goals and targets relevant to disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and climate change mitigation in urban areas and even a recommendation that responds to the need for these to be integrated (United Nations 2015).

The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF)[2] of which CLGF is a member, successfully campaigned for the inclusion of a specific stand-alone goal on sustainable urbanisation in the 2030 Agenda. SDG 11 calls on all actors to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" and has 10 targets covering areas such as housing, transport, air quality and waste management among others (see box 1)

The SDGs relevant to human development and poverty reduction are mostly national goals – and so are assumed to include urban populations. They include:

- **Universal provision for risk-reducing infrastructure by 2030:** 6.1 achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all; 6.2 achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations

- **Universal provision for services by 2030:** 7.1 ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services; 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including minimum, and achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable; 1.4 ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services; 3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all; 4.1 ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education; and

11.2 Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all

- **Universal housing:** 11.1 by 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.

- **The rule of law:** 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; 16.3 promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all; and 16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

- **Voice/participation/government accountability to citizens**: 11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries; 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels; 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels; 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

- **Decent work and livelihood opportunities:** 8.3 promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage formalisation and growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprise; 8.5 By 2030 achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities; 8.8 protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers; 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

One of the hot issues in discussions of the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and now the New Urban Agenda is the extent to which local governments can be considered as leaders in making and addressing their commitments and the extent to which national governments allow (or actually support) this. City governments are not recognised as part of 'government' at inter-governmental meetings within the United Nations. Official development assistance agencies can only fund city governments with the approval of national governments. But local governments are becoming more organised, in recognition of the need to

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[2] The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments is a coordination mechanism bringing together the major networks of local government to undertake joint advocacy relating to international policy processes

2. The sustainable development goals and urban development

influence global commitments, especially those that are part of their responsibilities.

Within this is the growth of networks of urban governments (or local governments) to press their priorities. To demand that they are a key part of 'government' not just one among many stakeholders (as in many international documents and discussions). To be recognised as more than just 'implementers' but

as key actors in setting and achieving locally determined priorities.

The prospects of meeting most of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement would be enormously enhanced if local governments were allowed (and encouraged) to make their own commitments to meeting the new goals and to influence national policies and funding systems to support this.

Box 1: SDG Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Targets:

11.1   By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums

11.2   By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons

11.3   By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries

11.4   Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage

11.5   By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations

11.6   By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management

11.7   By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

11.a   Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning

11.b   By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels

11.c   Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilising local materials

3. Challenges

The diversity among Commonwealth countries makes it difficult to generalise challenges facing their local, regional and national governments. Commonwealth countries had around 879 million urban dwellers in 2015 and this is projected to grow to 1.3 billion by 2030. Projections also suggest that most of the population growth will be in urban areas – and that the level of urbanisation will rise from 38 to 45% in these fifteen years.

Most Commonwealth countries have faced a very rapid growth in their urban populations and many fast growing cities, and it has proved difficult for their governments to keep up. Many cities have faced a tenfold increase in their population over the last 40 years. Many larger cities face annual population increases of over 100,000 a year. The scale of urban population growth projected for 2015-2030: for India, 10.9 million new urban dwellers a year, for Nigeria 4.8 million, for Pakistan 2.3 million, for Bangladesh 1.9 million, for Tanzania 1.1 million.[3]

In most cities in low and middle-income nations, a large part of the growth in their populations over recent decades has been in informal settlements. Local governments or national utilities often refuse to provide infrastructure and services to these or they are prevented by law from doing so. It is common for cities to have 30-60 percent of their population in informal settlements – and some have even higher percentages. This helps explain the very large deficits in provision in urban areas for key infrastructure.

In 2015, 400 million urban dwellers in the Commonwealth lacked a drinking water source piped to their home and 315 million lacked even rudimentary provision for sanitation. According to UN-Habitat, 255 million lived in 'slums' in 2014. In this year, India had 98 million slum dwellers, Nigeria 42 million, Bangladesh 29 million - and Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania between 4 and 8 million.[4] Figure 1 shows the % of the urban population with water piped on premises in 2015 – note the very large deficits in provision for many nations, and Figure 2 shows nations that have gone backwards on provision for water piped on premises as they had a lower proportion of their urban population with this in 2015 than in 1990.

Making markets safe for women and girls – lessons from Port Moresby

Ensuring a safe space for citizens, especially women, is essential for local economic development. City-managed market places are one of the most important areas for women vendors to be able to sell produce and make a livelihood. In an attempt to stem endemic violence and intimidation in and around many city markets in Commonwealth countries, city governments have undertaken a number of initiatives to increase safety and security.

A 2011 UN Women study of Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea found that with around 80% of the vendors in the markets being women and girls, 55% reported that they had experienced some form of violence and 22% had experienced more than one incidence of sexual violence while in the markets in the last 12 months, with several reported cases of rape.
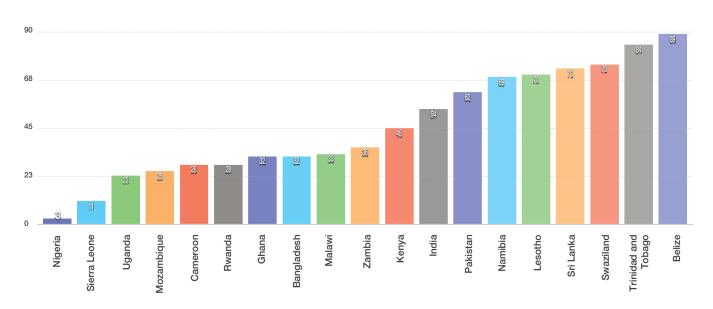
To address this, the city council has facilitated the establishment of vendors associations, with 50% representation of women in executive positions, and has reviewed how their budgets are allocated to ensure that the needs of women and men are taken into account across the different municipal departments.

The city council is also launching a Safe Cities Behaviour Change Campaign which has five components: reformed and enhanced systems to prevent and reduce violence in public spaces; enhanced capacity of duty bearers and agents of change to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls; increased respect amongst market users for women's and girl's rights to a life free from violence; gender sensitive infrastructure and social planning measures; and, capacity building for media to report and cover issues of violence against women and girls and provide information about services available.

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[3] UN-Habitat (2016), World Cities Report 2016: Urbanization and Development; Emerging Futures, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Nairobi, 247 pages.
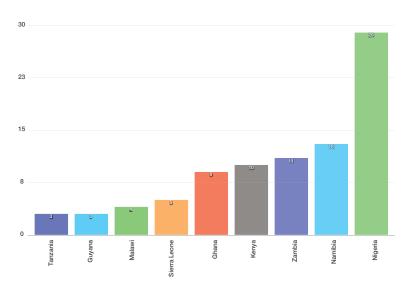
[4] This is based on UN-Habitat's definition of slum households – see the report listed in reference 2. Some governments have their own definition of slums and thus have different figures for their slum population to those coming from the UN.

Figure 1: % of urban population with water piped on premises 2015

Source: Statistics drawn from UNICEF and WHO, (2015), 25 Years Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water; 2015 Update and MDG Assessment.

Figure 2: Nations with a decline in % of their urban population with water piped on premises 1990-2015

Source: Statistics drawn from UNICEF and WHO, (2015), 25 Years Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water; 2015 Update and MDG Assessment.

3. Challenges

One of the most pressing challenges for addressing the SDGs in urban areas is having urban governments with the technical capacity and the finance needed to act on the goals – including act on the deficits made evident in Figures 1 and 2. It is a little humbling to recall how all the government representatives attending Habitat I in 1976 made a commitment to universal provision for water and sanitation by 1990. But the limited data available on municipal finance shows so many cities and smaller urban centres with little or no investment capacity – and it is generally cities with the largest deficits in infrastructure and services that have the least investment capacity. For instance, for the few cities for which data is available, in sub-Saharan African cities, municipal budgets are the equivalent of between US $5 and $50 (except for South Africa where they are much higher) whereas innovative cities in Latin America have the equivalent of US $400 to $1,300. So strengthening the financial base of urban governments has great importance both through decentralisation and through urban governments expanding their own revenues. The 'Zero draft Revised' of the New Urban Agenda states that "*we will promote context-sensitive approaches in financing urbanisation and in enhancing financial management capacities at all levels of government, adopting specific instruments and mechanisms necessary to achieve sustainable urban development…*" (110) and "*We will mobilise endogenous resources and revenues generated through the capture of benefits of urbanization…*" (111)

The SDGs also stress the need for monitoring government progress and a long list of indicators to do so have been elaborated. But these say little about the huge lack of data on many of these challenges, especially disaggregated data (i.e. data on each locality/ward/small area).

National urban policies

A National Urban Policy (NUP) harnesses the dynamics of urbanisation and integrates them into the national development strategy. The role of NUP is not to replace local urban policies, but to assist with harnessing the benefits of urbanisation while mitigating the challenges. This is achieved by helping to align sectoral policies that affect urban areas and by developing an enabling institutional environment. A recent example of such a policy is the 2015 National Urbanisation Policy of Rwanda which facilitates positive urban developments across the country. For example, improved access to building land, serviced by a series of reforms such as the reallocation of land and the creation of land bank, the preservation of urban culture and heritage, the introduction of a property tax, funding for public investment, and promoting urban governance.

At present, in most low- and middle-income nations, data collected by governments (eg censuses) and international agencies (eg the Demographic and Health Surveys) do not provide local governments with the data they need to act. Many national government sample surveys do not have sample sizes large enough to provide relevant disaggregated data to urban governments. Censuses should provide this (as they cover the entire population) but it is rare for census authorities to provide local governments with the data they need disaggregated to small area units or streets – i.e. what is needed to design and implement the initiatives needed to meet SDG goals. In many countries, to this is added a failure to record causes of death. Innovations in ICT continue to provide new and cheaper methods for collecting this essential data, as well as opportunities to empower communities through decentralising data collection, but the ultimate decision to aggregate this data lies with central government.

Using technology to manage large infrastructure projects - Auckland

By 2020, the population of Auckland, New Zealand is expected to expand from 1.4 million to 2.2 million, and Auckland Transport, the agency responsible for the city's public transportation system, has launched more than 200 capital projects ranging from bridges to new bike lanes and massive rail tunnels. Auckland approaches their infrastructure projects from a holistic, strategic perspective, and have partnered with Microsoft SharePoint Server and local partner LeapThough and adopted a custom digital solution called Fulcrum to manage the 200-plus construction projects. Developed by LeapThought, Fulcrum uses the capabilities of SharePoint Server to provide cross-departmental tools that help manage properties impacted by projects such as the NZ $2.4 billion (US$ 1.65 billion), 10-year megaproject City Rail Link. The city is using Fulcrum to keep track of every step in a complicated property acquisition process and enables the sharing of all construction, design, and legal documents related to the project across the project teams and stakeholders. Because Fulcrum uses the capabilities of SharePoint Server, the city is able to track every stage of a project with complete audit capabilities, and stakeholders can store and share large two and three-dimensional designs in a central location that can be accessed online. The cost savings and operational efficiencies gained by using Fulcrum on big projects can also extend to smaller capital projects as well and Auckland estimates savings of $3 million in the first 10 years alone.

(Taken from 'Award winning solution keeps Auckland ahead of the growth curve' by, Roger Jones, Chief Information Officer, Auckland Transport, as featured on the Microsoft CityNext website)
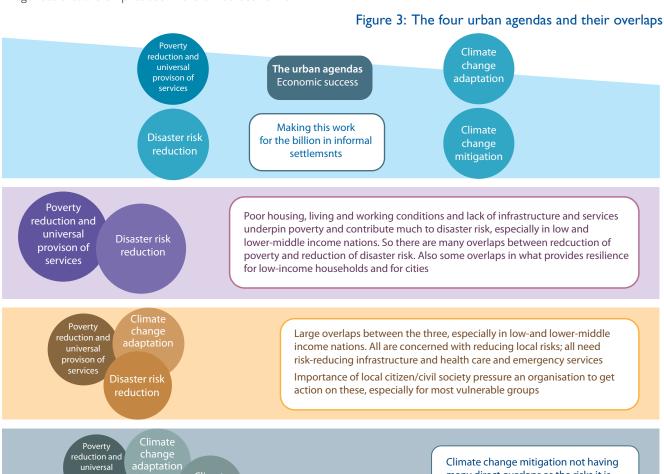
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4. Achieving sustainable development

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All definitions of sustainable development are about addressing more than one objective and making different environmental and development objectives work together. Figure 3 illustrates the bringing together of four urban agendas that are emphasised in the SDGs: economic

success combined with poverty reduction and universal provision of services (and making this work for the billion living in informal settlements) that then folds into development disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Other aspects need addressing too – for instance protecting ecosystem services and sustainable water and waste water management, but at least in part these are within these four agendas.

Figure 3: The four urban agendas and their overlaps

Poverty reduction and universal provison of services

The urban agendas
Economic success

Climate change adaptation

Disaster risk reduction

Making this work for the billion in informal settlemsnts

Climate change mitigation

Poverty reduction and universal provison of services

Disaster risk reduction

Poor housing, living and working conditions and lack of infrastructure and services underpin poverty and contribute much to disaster risk, especially in low and lower-middle income nations. So there are many overlaps between redcuction of poverty and reduction of disaster risk. Also some overlaps in what provides resilience for low-income households and for cities

Poverty reduction and universal provison of services

Climate change adaptation

Disaster risk reduction

Large overlaps between the three, especially in low-and lower-middle income nations. All are concerned with reducing local risks; all need risk-reducing infrastructure and health care and emergency services

Importance of local citizen/civil society pressure an organisation to get action on these, especially for most vulnerable groups

Poverty reduction and universal provison of services

Climate change adaptation

Disaster risk reduction

Climate change mitigation

Climate change mitigation not having many direct overlaps as the risks it is addressing are global and with their largest impacts in the future

Climate change mitigation

Poverty reduction and universal provison of services

Climate change adaptation

Disaster risk reduction

But mitigation is essential to the other three agendas because wihtout it, the scale and nature of risk in the future threatens progress in all the other urban agendas

Source: Bartlett, Sheridan and David Satterthwaite (editors) (2016), Cities on a Finite Planet; Towards Transformative Responses to Climate Change, Routledge, London.

5. City leadership

We have many strong examples from high-income Commonwealth countries of innovative cities and of what a functioning local democracy (often with elected mayors) committed to more accountable, transparent and participatory ways of working can do. There are fewer examples of this among low and middle-income nations. However, in Latin America, it was linked to changes at national level –in most cases, the return to democracy and changes in the constitution to support decentralisation and stronger financial bases for local governments. It is also linked to the region being heavily urbanised. New concepts and approaches were developed – including participatory budgeting that allowed the residents of each district within a city to set priorities for public works and that made the whole government budget more transparent.[5]

There has also been city-based innovation and leadership in other regions. Among Commonwealth countries in Africa, Durban has been an innovator in linking climate change adaptation and mitigation to development and to promoting and supporting other cities to innovate – for instance through the Durban Adaptation Charter.[6] City and municipal governments have also been encouraged and supported to act through their membership of city networks – for instance the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments which supports the work of the Local Authorities Major Group (LAMG), to facilitate the participation of the constituency in UN processes – and also CLGF, UCLG, ICLEI, C-40 and the Compact of Mayors.

In many Commonwealth countries, there are powerful examples of urban poor groups forming their own saving groups, in which most savers and saving group managers are women, who work together with local governments. For instance, there are national federations of slum/shack dwellers in India, South Africa, Namibia, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Ghana and all seek to work with local governments – for instance in upgrading their settlements or building new homes where land is available. These federations have also developed a capacity to undertake detailed surveys and prepare detailed maps for all informal settlements in a city – information local governments usually lack – that provides the information base to guide interventions. These have been prepared in over 600 cities, most of which are in Commonwealth countries, and advances in ICT present opportunities for further expansion of these types of initiatives.[7]

Challenges for city leadership and the issue of capital cities

In many countries there continues to be a blurring of responsibilities between local and national governments. This is particularly the case in capital cities where national governments often ignore city authority as they carry out their functions, and even more so where when there is an opposition party in power at the local level. One of the major areas requiring attention in the Jamaican context has been identified as the overlapping roles of MPs and councillors in local development. Citizens want their roads fixed regardless of who has responsibility. Kingston believes that the local authority is uniquely placed to play the role of facilitator: bringing together different spheres of the public sector, the private sector and civil society. This approach helps to build the credibility of the city council while as partners they enable joined-up governance across a wide range of sectors.

Through regular Town Hall meetings and sector-specific consultations, the council brings stakeholders together to discuss issues affecting citizens, enabling a shared understanding of the needs of the citizens, a clearer understanding of the challenges faced by all concerned and providing an opportunity for suggestions for greater collaboration aimed at increased efficiency and effectiveness.

Another key challenge for the city is the lack of appropriate and timely data. For example with the current Zika virus crisis, the Department of Public Health does not automatically share data relating to suspected and confirmed cases in the city with the council, limiting the council's ability to understand and respond to emerging challenges. One of the solutions has been for the City Council to host multi-sector discussions which allow various public sector agencies such as the police, health department and city council to work together to share data, ideas and approaches without being territorial. Creating a culture of shared governance is essential and at times difficult to effect.

5 Cabannes, Yves (2004), "Participatory budgeting: a significant contribution to participatory democracy", Environment and Urbanization, Vol. 16, No. 1, pages 27-46; Cabannes, Yves (2015), "Participatory budgeting and basic services; municipal practice and evidence from the field", Environment and Urbanization Vol. 27, No. 1.
6 Roberts, Debra, Derek Morgan, Sean O'Donoghue, Lisa Guastella, Nongcebo Hlongwa, Penny Price (2016), Durban, South Africa, in Bartlett, Sheridan and David Satterthwaite (editors), Cities on a Finite Planet; Towards transformative responses to climate change, Routledge, London, pages 96-115.
7 See the Know Your City programme described at www.sdinet.org for more details

6. Financing and investment

Achieving the development objectives set out in the SDGs will require properly resourced cities. Achieving fair and equitable fiscal decentralisation, reduction of unfunded mandates, and improved access to and mobilisation of own source revenue, will be essential in ensuring inclusive equitable urban environments. Financing large scale development and infrastructure investment will require access to new and innovative financing mechanisms such as climate change financing and other international funds, development partner funding, and partnerships with the private sector through funding mechanisms such as municipal bonds, Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), and aggregated borrowing. In many cases local governments currently lack the necessary empowerment and has limited human, technical and financial capacity, which will affect their ability to play a full role in the implementation of the SDGs.

Urban planning: Few urban governments in the low and middle-income Commonwealth nations have the capacity to plan – or to implement agreed plans – and to manage urban expansion. Managing urban expansion well is central to many of the SDGs, including ensuring an adequate supply of serviced land for new housing, avoiding sprawl and hazardous areas; and protecting watersheds and other ecosystem services (flooding prevention being one key aspect in many cities). There are difficult and often contentious trade-offs that need to be made (e.g. upgrading versus resettlement) and often powerful real estate interests that subvert needed land-use management.

Local economic development (LED): is an approach which brings together different partners in a local area to work together and harness local resources for sustainable economic growth; it is becoming increasingly recognised as a function of local government. Although LED is often not a formal statutory requirement, even of urban local government, many of the existing roles and functions of local government (such as the delivery of core services and public goods), together with its democratic legitimacy and role as a community leader and convener, mean that it is well positioned to integrate strategies for economic development into its work. Local governments are increasingly building an economic development component into their local strategic planning; they can facilitate the necessary strategic and local partnerships eg with the private sector and community organisations, to support local economic development in their communities; and they can ensure that they create a strong enabling environment for development through improving the services and quality of life in their communities with long-term sustainable investment. They are also well placed to relate directly to other spheres of government, where appropriate, eg in electrification etc.

LED offers a comprehensive framework for 'integrating' and 'localising' the SDGs. Local and regional governments can play a crucial catalytic role as initiators and drivers of effective LED processes, fostering participation, the creation of decent jobs, and the economic empowerment of women, youth and vulnerable groups. LED contributes to strengthening social trust and cohesion, helping to build societies that are more stable and resilient to growing, complex and widespread risks, preventing conflict, and ensuring sustainable development.

City leadership for local economic development in Belize City

Leadership, both from within the council but also across the local community and the private sector, has been a critical factor in the success of Belize City Council's local economic development programme. Spearheaded by the Mayor, the City has focused on building relationships across the community to engage local people in developing a vision for economic growth and development. This has also helped to change the way in which the private sector views the council. The city council's reputation with the private sector has shifted from one of wariness that the council was only interested in collecting their taxes, to one that sees the council enabling investment and job creation. LED is now part of the Belize City Urban Development Masterplan 2011-2030, has been integrated across all departments and service areas, and a specific LED Unit has been established to implement the strategy.

6. Financing and investment

Habitat III and the search for The New Urban Agenda: One of the disappointments with the most recent Zero Draft of the New Habitat Agenda is that it feels a need to have another long list of goals. This is a big disappointment. The New Urban Agenda was meant to be about how the full range of SDGs and the Paris Agreement can be realised in urban areas by urban governments. Instead, it is another long list of goals that don't add much to commitments already made and it is all about national governments - "We commit" stated 42 times "we will" 87 times. So much of what 'we' commit to are actually the responsibilities of local government. We do not need more goals. What we need is the capacity, willingness and finance to address goals in each urban locality to which governments have already committed. The commitment that should be there is "We commit to supporting urban governments to develop their responses to the SDGs within their jurisdiction and to work with them so no-one is left behind. This means shifting attention from defining goals to creating the institutional and governance basis for achieving them."

Integrated Development Planning for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level

Ethekwini Municipality (Durban) is committed to an urban development strategy that is holistic and sustainable. The city has identified the SDGs as key elements that influences the city's strategic approach to development. At a strategic level the city has aligned its Integrated Development Plan (IDP) to the 17 SDGs and at an operational level each of the programmes that would be implemented have been aligned to the relevant goals and targets. The incorporation of the SDGs into the city strategy has come at an opportune time where all South African municipalities are developing their five year IDP's. Ethekwini Municipality is using the opportunity to incorporate the SDGs into its long term city development strategy which is being spearheaded by a City Planning Commission. One of the key objectives is to continuously highlight the importance of the SDGs and how they influence the sustainability of the city, through various communication tools. The city has hosted a Master Class on localising the SDGs with local and national ministers from Sri Lanka and the council-hosted Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE) which is a dedicated knowledge management unit within the city, that will be championing the learning and peer-to-peer exchanges on the localisation of the SDGs with various partner cites both in and outside the region.

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Successful, safe and sustainable cities: towards a New Urban Agenda

7. Conclusions

It is good to see the recognition of the importance of cities to national economies. But economic success in any city does not automatically contribute to a healthier city, a more inclusive city (where as the SDGs state no-one is left behind) or a sustainable city. This needs capable and accountable urban governments. Hundreds of millions of urban dwellers within the Commonwealth have very inadequate incomes and live in poor quality, overcrowded housing that lacks basic infrastructure and services. In some nations, there is even a lower proportion of their population with water piped to premises to what they had in 1990. So they have actually gone backwards on their commitments.

Most Commonwealth countries have faced a very rapid growth in their urban populations in recent decades and they have not managed to develop the national and local governance structures to allow them to keep up. Projections suggest a growth in the urban population of the Commonwealth of 400 million in the next 15 years. We noted earlier the scale of urban population growth projected for 2015-2030 that included 10.9 million new urban dwellers a year for India and 4.8 million a year for Nigeria. Will these simply get added to the population in informal settlements lacking services? Now, to this governance and service provision there is an added challenge, including the need to adapt all urban centres and systems to operate within regional and global resource limits, build resilience to the increasing risks climate change is bringing and contribute to the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

When seen in aggregate, this seems impossible. But if seen as spread across the tens of thousands of urban centres within Commonwealth countries it seems less daunting. But this requires urban (municipal and metropolitan) governments with the capacity to govern well, to act, to mobilise resources – addressing local needs (and being accountable to local populations, especially those who are most likely to be left behind) and folding into this disaster risk management climate change adaptation and mitigation. We know this is possible as it has been demonstrated in many cities. But these cities and towns are the outliers. The ones that have succeeded. It is in getting comparable innovation among most or all urban government that is the basis for meeting the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. But this is a challenge to national governments because effective local governments depend on supportive and appropriate legislation, rules and regulations (planning, health and safety, building standards, disaster risk reduction,

climate change) and systems of devolved finance. Success or failure to achieve genuine multi-level governance will significantly impact on the countries' abilities to achieve sustainable urban development.

As noted above, we do not need more goals. What we need is the capacity and willingness in each urban centre to respond to local needs and priorities and, within the framework of the global goals, to develop and implement key services to promote sustainable local development, which should be quantified so that it is seen to contribute to efforts to address the goals to which governments have already committed. Why doesn't the New Urban Agenda look as short, precise, action-oriented frameworks that have encouraged local government to act – as in the Healthy Cities movement, participatory budgeting and the Hyogo and Sendai frameworks for disaster risk reduction?[8]

Do we accept that the two most important actors for getting the SDGs addressed in urban areas are urban governments and local civil society (especially representative organisations of the urban poor whose unmet needs, the SDGs are meant to address)? If that is the case, then we need to look at the changes in what national government and international agencies do.

International development assistance agencies are only as effective as the local intermediaries through which their funding flows. The key issue is thus how to increase and enhance support to these two actors. Local funds are needed so that they can draw on and can be managed in ways that are transparent and accountable downwards to their population, as well as upwards to higher levels of government and horizontally to the stakeholders, funders and others active in the urban territory. Development assistance is legitimated on the basis of it addressing the needs of urban (and rural) poor groups. It is time it developed direct contacts with them and becomes accountable.

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[8] More details of these and other 'new urban agendas' are discussed in Satterthwaite, David (2016), "Editorial: a New Urban Agenda?" Environment and Urbanization, Vol. 28, No. 1, pages 3-12.

Annex 1

Singapore statement on commonwealth cities implementing the 2030 agenda on sustainable development

We, the mayors and local government representatives from cities across the Commonwealth, meeting in under the auspices of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, CLGF, on the occasion of *Cities 2030-Vision, Leadership and Public Service Excellence,* **Singapore, 5-6 October 2015:**

Appreciative of the facilities and hospitality, provided by our co-hosts, the UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence and the Centre for Liveable Cities, Singapore;

Saluting World Habitat Day 2015 and conscious of the preparations to develop the New Urban Agenda in anticipation of Habitat III in 2016 in recognition that a majority of the SDG targets and indicators are applicable at urban level;

Acknowledging the adoption by the United Nations of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its recognition of the role of cities and local governments in the new sustainable development goals, the SDGs, especially SDG 11 to 'make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, SDG 16 on effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, as well as in respect of the means of implementation, set out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the provisions for sub-national follow-up and review of the SDG;

Encouraged by the statement of the UN Secretary-General of 24 September 2015 that cities are at the heart of many global challenges and opportunities and that mayors will have a critical role in the implementation of the entire spectrum of the 2030 Agenda;

Endorsing the local government commitment to implement the SDGs contained in the CLGF Gaborone Declaration- Local Government Vision 2030, the Declaration of Cities' Commitment of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Statement of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments 'All SDGs are Local';

Convinced that the establishment of the new Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network, CSCN, by the CLGF, provides a valuable and practical vehicle for our cities and other Commonwealth cities to join together to help set, implement and monitor the SDGs and assist us in developing the necessary capacity for this task;

Commit to:

1. Inform our citizens and communities about the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and engaging with central and provincial government, development partners, academia, civil society and private sector partners to ensure the application and localisation of relevant SDGs in our own areas of jurisdiction.

2. Focus on core areas of need, including making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; creating effective, accountable and inclusive institutions; promoting economic growth and employment; building resilient infrastructure; and addressing climate change, with special attention to the needs of cities in least developed countries and small island developing states.

3. Share knowledge and know-how on successful strategies to implement the 2030 Agenda among the CSCN membership and through direct city-to-city partnerships.

4. Work with CLGF, UNDP-GCPSE, CLC Singapore and other partners to develop the necessary technical skills and capacity to help set, implement and monitor the SDGs, thereby ensuring a bottom-up approach to sustainable development.

5. Cooperate with CLGF and through the CSCN to realise the pledges of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for scaling-up international cooperation to strengthen the capacities of municipalities and other local authorities, to give support in implementing resilient and environmentally sound infrastructure, to support local governments to mobilise revenues, strengthen debt management and municipal bond markets and help subnational authorities to finance necessary investments and promote lending from financial institutions and development banks, deal with risk mitigation and holistic disaster risk management in line with the 2015 Sendai Framework.

6. Make use of CLGF's unique central and local government membership to promote partnership between mayors and ministers to implement the 2030 Agenda, with a view to ensure that the concerns of cities and their specific developmental and financial needs are adequately recognised in national policy-making, including through appropriate legislation and, where applicable, constitutional recognition, in line with the Commonwealth Aberdeen Principles on Local Democracy and Good Governance.

7. Take up membership, where applicable, of CLGF and its CSCN and mandate the Mayors of Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica; Strovolos, Cyprus and Windhoek, Namibia to form the steering committee of the CSCN, and cooperate with the CLGF Board and Secretary-General in developing its membership, organisation and work programme in line with the aims and objectives set out above.

Singapore, 6 October 2015

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