

# Bulletin



Working in partnership  
to achieve climate  
justice and sustainable  
development



# Comment

By Lucy Slack, Secretary-General, CLGF



This is the first Bulletin of 2022 and after a very challenging year in 2021, I would like to thank our Board, members, and staff, both in the regional offices and at headquarters, for their tenacity to adapt and respond to ensure that our work to represent and support our local government members continues.

In this edition, you can read more about CLGF's work to support and strengthen local economic development in nine countries in three regions of the Commonwealth, funded by FCDO (formerly DFID). This project has successfully delivered tangible benefits locally, and new approaches have been adopted nationally. We hope to build on these results and continue this successful partnership, particularly as local governments work to support their communities in recovering from the pandemic.

In the run up to the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), CLGF and its Commonwealth partners have launched the Call to Action on Sustainable Urbanisation in the Commonwealth – this seeks a greater focus on addressing rapid urbanisation and the impacts of climate change through a more collaborative partnership between citizens, local government, central government, civil society, professionals, universities, and the private sector. There is huge potential to mobilise the Commonwealth networks, including our own Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network, to work with member states to realise this. The high-level discussion, hosted by HRH Prince Charles in advance of the Cities Day at COP26, and CLGF's event at COP26 on urban inequalities and climate justice, both highlighted the critical role of local and city governments in ensuring sustainable development and are featured in this Bulletin.

Looking to the future, I am committed to ensuring that CLGF continues to ensure a strong voice for local government in the Commonwealth; to advocate with our members for greater empowerment and adequate resources to improve delivery at the local level; and to build effective partnerships to strengthen local government capacity across the Commonwealth. I look forward to working closely with members across our network as we work towards this vision.

## CONTENTS



- 3-5** CLGF LED programme: a reflection
- 5** Local government at COP26
- 6** Call to Action for sustainable urbanisation
- 7** Networks update – Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network
- 8** Networks update – Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network
- Members' update
- News in brief



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# CLGF LED programme: a reflection

A CLGF-led programme, funded by the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, has demonstrated in a very practical way, the importance of local economic development as a tool for government and local government to strengthen community engagement and resilience, enhance livelihoods, create jobs, and to reduce poverty.

The programme - *Reducing poverty through Local Economic Development (LED) in the Commonwealth* started in 2017 and, following a short, no-cost extension to enable CLGF and its partners to navigate the impact of COVID19 on final activities, was completed at the end of last year.

Completed successfully, and exceeding many of its targets, the project focused on rolling-out and supporting LED in selected partner countries to show that local economic development, facilitated and enabled by local government, is a means of reducing poverty.

CLGF Programmes Manager, Claire Frost commented: “The results have reinforced the theory of change, and the levels of local buy-in have been high throughout. The relevance of LED in poverty reduction has only been further reinforced by the global pandemic, which has highlighted the importance of local responses to threats and challenges.”

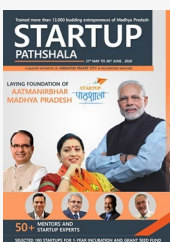
CLGF was able to leverage significant additional support to reinforce FCDO’s contribution and a number of project partner countries are building support for LED into their post-COVID recovery strategies, for example, South Africa.

With a number of activities, across several countries of the Commonwealth, the headlines include:

- Creation of 23,044 jobs through support to the development and implementation of LED strategies across the project’s nine focal countries, impacting over 49,425 lives through the provision of capacity building, training and increased access to income generating activities and programmes;
- Development of LED strategies by 55 local councils, implementing actions in support of their local communities’ economic empowerment;

- Revision/production of LED guidance by five national governments to better support local government in the implementation of LED and the mobilisation of local communities towards pro-poor, gender sensitive, participatory and inclusive economic development;
- Mobilisation of more than £3,457,000 into bankable projects developed by the local councils and their partners, built on local knowledge of existing and under-developed value chains and economic potential;
- Increased capacity of 356 elected leaders and council staff in LED to support the institutionalisation of LED into their local councils

With most councils having limited resources for investment in local economic development, and often little experience in preparing projects and sourcing finance, it was important that the roll-out of LED also took



**As well as working to roll out LED, CLGF has supported countries that are just starting to test the LED concept.**

At the city level in India, CLGF has been helping Madhya Pradesh to integrate LED into city service provision, with a focus on small and micro-enterprise start-ups, including establishing incubator centres. A pilot in Jabalpur is bringing together a range of different partners to work with the Corporation. In addition to providing successful mentoring and a space for new businesses, the incubation centres have worked with CLGF to develop a specific area for support to women-led start-ups. This has increased the number of women taking part in activities linked to the incubation centres; and also encouraged one incubate to develop a platform linking crafts produced by rural local artisans, coordinated by local self-help groups, into a widely accessible online shopping cart. CLGF then involved the Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission (MPRSML) to further support and expand the reach of this initiative across the women-focused, self-help groups linked to MPRSML programmes.



**As a result of the project In Zambia, Botswana, Ghana and Eswatini, governments have developed national guidelines, or policies, for local economic development.**

In Zambia these national guidelines now form part of the integrated development planning process for local government ensuring that all local governments in Zambia are required to ensure that local economic development is part of their local development plans. In Eswatini, the acting Prime Minister launched guidelines developed as part of the project to support public private partnership at the local level when he attended the investment fair; and Botswana has also adopted a local economic development policy.

into account the need for local governments to be able to package projects and work with local partners to finance LED initiatives. Strategies formed the basis for enabling the development of bankable projects and their capitalisation, via approaches to a range of potential investors, including central government development funds, local financing organisations/banks, and the private sector directly. A series of investment fairs, as part of the project, offered a key opportunity for local governments to profile their LED projects, framed within their LED strategies, and present them to potential investors, bringing investment and jobs into local communities.

CLGF Secretary-General, Lucy Slack said: “The programme has emphasised the importance of working with, and through the key statutory actors responsible for local economic development, which are also CLGF members. CLGF has local staff based in the target project regions and, by working at the local level with individual local governments, national

associations of local government and ministries responsible for local government, CLGF has been able to ensure that sustainability has been embedded throughout.”

The final pillar of the programme focused on learning lessons, collating and disseminating good practice and promoting the importance of LED in achieving local, national and global development targets. CLGF contributed to the body of evidence-based research on LED, including a report on *Local Economic Development as a Driver for Trade*, and articles published in the *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*. Other countries in the Commonwealth are now actively embracing and implementing the LED model as a result of this programme.

The programme has demonstrated very positive and tangible steps towards the impact target of improved livelihoods for Commonwealth citizens as a result of local economic development. The *LED as a Driver for Trade* report has positively reinforced this link and

contextualised LED in terms of its role in sustainable consumption and production and market development for trade across the Commonwealth. The SDGs provide a global framework for social, economic and environmental development. While the global pandemic has unfortunately seen many of the gains to date in the SDGs eroded, it has certainly highlighted the need for local communities to be more resourceful and resilient. The success of this initiative suggests that local economic development should be supported to play a meaningful role in the recovery efforts.

Summing up, Ms Slack concluded: “Results show high levels of local ownership and strong buy-in by local leaders and officials, who received targeted training and capacity building support to better understand their local economies, to map key local value chains, and to work with local community actors and the private sector to develop local economic strategies for their areas. Project partners put significant emphasis on supporting local councils to implement the learning from the training and capacity building activities and this resulted in the development and adoption of pro-poor, gender sensitive, participatory and locally responsive LED plans and strategies, to guide LED. These strategies now form the framework against which the councils are delivering LED services and thanks to demonstration/pilot projects undertaken as part of the programme, citizens can better understand, participate in, and monitor how local government is and should be enabling local economic development in their areas.”



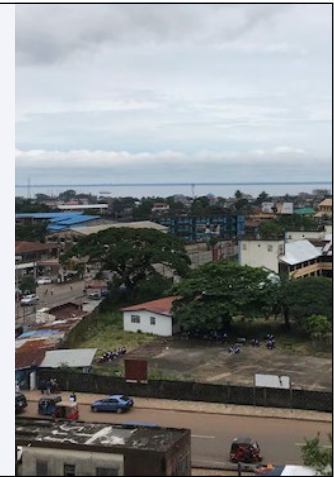
**Councils across the Commonwealth are putting together financially bankable projects.**

Kgalagadi District in Botswana identified small stock as a key value chain that was under-developed in the area and undertook a comprehensive analysis, resulting in inward investment in the Tsabong Multi-Species Abattoir - a key element of the project, raising an investment of £1,869,283.

In Sri Lanka, Udubbadawa identified the need for additional industrial space for local industry. The council developed a project focused on providing a shared production space for small local industry in Welipangamulla City. Funds to the value of £12,765.00 were raised by the council, and £21,276 by the National Local Government Development Bank, and construction of the council-owned space is underway.

In Sierra Leone the Government has also highlighted LED as a means of councils raising local revenue.

Recognising the potential of local procurement to support LED in Sierra Leone, and with most of the existing procurement contracts being won by businesses based in the capital, CLGF has worked with the LGA (LoCASL) to develop local guidelines on local government procurement and how it can be used to support LED. Four pilot councils have mapped their local businesses and successfully started to implement the new guidelines. As a result of the project, the partners are now working with SMEs in the councils to build capacity and make sure that they have the necessary resources, registration with the council, and access to documentation to be able to apply for local procurement opportunities. The project has also supported SMEs to form consortia to increase their chances of accessing council procurement opportunities. Already ten businesses have successfully won local procurement contracts.



## SUSTAINABLE URBANISATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH

# Local government at COP26

CLGF, in partnership with Cities Alliance, UK Research and Innovation and the British Academy delivered a special event on local climate action at the 26th Conference of the Parties, or COP26, in Glasgow last November.



Entitled *Urban Informality and Inequality: a global call for climate justice*, it focused on the challenges of urban informality, inequality and climate vulnerability and the importance of a local response, bringing together a cross section of partners with local communities to develop effective responses to change.

It was a hybrid event and convened international speakers and audience members from local and city governments; central governments; research communities; and civil society. An impressive panel of experts and practitioners looked at the priorities for action and explored the role that researchers, civil society actors, city governments and policymakers can

play in strengthening local action for sustainable climate justice, emphasising the importance of a people-centred approach. You can [listen to the event in full, using this link](#).

The keynote was delivered by Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone and CLGF member, who explained the realities of providing services to people living in informal settlements, against a backdrop of the impact of climate change. She stressed the need to talk about climate change, not just in terms of changes in the weather but in relation to the impact on the most fundamental aspects of our daily lives. She called for better control and organisation of land access to

prevent informality from increasing.

The panel, consisting of: Rose Molokoane, Federation of the Rural and Urban Poor, South Africa; Rubbina Karruna, FCDO, UK; David Dodman, International Institute for Environment and Development, UK; Harriet Bulkeley, Durham University, UK; Sonia Dias, WIEGO, Brazil; Aromar Revi, Institute for Human Settlements, India; Martin Kipping, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany; Dr. Joanes Atela, African Centre for Technology Studies, Kenya; Vanesa Castan Broto, University of Sheffield, UK; Emilia Saiz from UCLG; Anibal Gaviria, President of Cities Alliance and Greg Munro of Cities Alliance moderating; endorsed Mayor Aki Sawyerr's comments, adding that:

- finance is crucial and must be leveraged, locally and from the North to the South
- national and local governments must work together
- policies and actions must be informed by fact-based data
- action must be taken in partnership with communities, listening to their views and needs

# Call to action on sustainable urbanisation



Photo courtesy of The Prince's Foundation

To mark World Cities Day at COP26, CLGF and its Commonwealth partners highlighted the important work they are doing around rapid urbanisation and sustainable development by sharing a high-level discussion which took place on the eve of this event.

**The Prince's Foundation, together with CLGF, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the Commonwealth Association of Architects and the Commonwealth Association of Planners considered ways in which the Commonwealth can respond to the 'triple threat' of climate change, rapid urbanisation and natural resource depletion, and the need for greater collaboration if the targets are to be met within the limited time now available.**

Hosting the event, HRH The Prince of Wales, said: "Sustainable urban development is clearly critical to responding to the climate emergency. The scale of our response needs to be equal to the scale of the challenge we are facing. I sincerely hope the very essence of adding social, environmental, and commercial value can help to inspire and guide our actions and responses in the weeks and months ahead. The Commonwealth Call to Action seems to me to provide

a really perfect rallying point for Commonwealth member states, central and local governments, civil society, and organisations at all levels, to come together seriously to support and deliver real and transformational change through the way that we plan and manage our cities and human settlements."

The Call to Action was circulated to Commonwealth Heads of Government, highlighting the issues facing the Commonwealth and urging the need for collective interdisciplinary action to place climate conscious urban planning and management at the heart of the response to climate change. The Commonwealth, with its many shared systems and structures, can lead and model collaborative, inclusive and effective action on sustainable urbanisation. CLGF and its partners are working to ensure that this will be reflected in the agenda of the CHOGM in Kigali in 2022.

Marvin Rees, the Mayor of Bristol and Board Member of CLGF who moderated the discussion, said: "It is critical that we work together across all levels of government and with civil society, the private sector and academia to make our cities and towns liveable for all. Mayors have a critical leadership role in ensuring the voices of cities are heard at an international and national level. We must all understand the threat climate change poses to our cities, the critical role sustainable urbanisation can play in building resilience and reducing global carbon emissions and we must commit the global finance needed to provide the infrastructure that is needed to decarbonise. Cities and national governments need to be working more closely along with the finance sector to ensure that we can deliver on our carbon reduction commitments and the SDGs. The Commonwealth and the Call to Action offer an opportunity to get in place the governance and finance we need."

# Commonwealth Women in Local Government (ComWLG)

The Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network is a network of networks, connecting women leaders across the Commonwealth, providing a platform for exchange and learning, and working to support members in promoting and mainstreaming gender equality.

[Read more about ComWLG.](#)



To enhance the capacity to operate as a 'network of networks' and maximise the benefits of the ComWLG Network, CLGF member LGAs were invited to nominate a focal point to serve as a conduit for all ComWLG matters.

Key activities over recent months have included:

## PAN-COMMONWEALTH

### Month of mentoring

ComWLG hosted two webinars entitled: Mentoring for Women's Political Advancement and Leadership, which facilitated exchange on the key lessons and experiences from mentoring programmes being implemented across the Commonwealth. These webinars were a precursor to the successful Month of Mentoring campaign, which ran on social media throughout August, and culminated in the publication of a research paper *A Review of Mentoring Programmes for Women's Political Advancement and Leadership*.

## PACIFIC

**Tuvalu:** A new local economic development (LED) demonstration project aims to promote a vibrant, diverse and sustainable local economy in Funafuti by supporting the community with local models for climate change adaptation and resilience.

**Fiji:** Suva City Council hosted a Women's Day event with CLGF's Regional Director among the key speakers.

The 14th triennial conference of Pacific women took place in April and the 7th Ministerial meeting on 4 May, hosted by French Polynesia.

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

**Eswatini:** The Women in Local Government Forum (WILGF) and Young Women in Local Government Network (YWLGN) hosted a joint virtual annual meeting, attended by more than a hundred members.

A Mentorship of Young Women in Local Government programme was launched, linking mentors with mentees, using the group's annual meeting as an orientation for the programme and to share a guide and support tools.

In **Zambia**, a mentorship programme similar to that in Eswatini is continuing.

**Lesotho:** The WILGF held virtual workshops on strategy validation and adoption in the country's 10 districts to disseminate the WILGF strategy to council members and discuss future actions.

**Zimbabwe:** Following the introduction of a 30% quota for women in local government, the WILGF conducted local level meetings and met with the Zimbabwe Women's Parliamentary Caucus to strategise the next steps and modalities toward the full implementation of the quota. WILGF ran a public awareness campaign on the radio. Quota implementation

modalities are being developed through a cross-governmental, collaborative approach involving several ministries and local stakeholders.

In 2021, the WILGF and YWLG networks in Southern Africa launched a 50/50 campaign to increase women's representation in local government, focusing on peer learning, across four countries in the region.

## ASIA

**Pakistan:** CLGF and the Local Councils Association of the Punjab (LCAP) held workshops with all four provincial local councils associations in Pakistan to develop strategic plans to support women in local government. They also delivered training sessions in all four provinces on the laws relating to women, their role and their duties as set out in the relevant local government acts, and strengthening leadership skills and capacities.

## CARIBBEAN

**Jamaica:** The Association of Local Government Authorities for Jamaica (ALGAJ) launched its *Women in Local Government Network* in 2021. More details are available on their Facebook page.

**Belize:** The 2021 municipal elections in Belize resulted in 34% women councillors being elected at the polls (23/67). For the first time, the country's capital has a female Mayor, Sheran Palacio.

*Network updates  
continue on page 8*



**Sustainable urbanisation – advancing the call to action**

In response to rapid urbanisation and climate change, CLGF, as part of the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities initiative, has developed the Call to Action on Sustainable Urbanisation across the Commonwealth in

partnership with several other Commonwealth organisations. The call asks Commonwealth governments to prioritise the issues; work collaboratively across governmental spheres and professional disciplines; and find practical ways to progress work. [The Call can be read in full](#) on the CLGF website and will be raised at the forthcoming CHOGM – Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

**Strengthening youth advocacy**

In response to the call at the last CSCN steering committee, work is underway

to develop a youth network comprising young city leaders, mayors/local councillors, local government officials, planners, architects, academics etc; all of whom play a critical role in ensuring sustainable communities. The two local government Youth Steering Committee representatives are: George Mwanza, Mayor of Chipata City, Zambia and Mandisa Mthimkhulu, who represents young professional practitioners and works in HR in Mbabane Municipal Council, Eswatini.



Due to a number of elections and political reshuffles, we are delighted to welcome the following new members to the CLGF Board:

**Hon Minister Roshan Ranasinghe,**  
Sri Lanka.

**Hon Gatabazi Jean Marie Vianney,**  
Rwanda.

**Hon Gary Nkombe,**  
Zambia.

**Cllr Joanne Vanderheyden,**  
FCM, Canada.

**Hon Clay Sweeting,**  
Bahamas.

**Hon Dato’ Sri Reezal Merican bin Naina Merican,**  
Malaysia.

**Cllr. Sade Gawanas, Mayor of Windhoek,**  
Namibia.

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**Building financial capacity in the Caribbean**

Working in partnership with CLGF, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) launched a project in September to provide training workshops to enhance the resource mobilisation skills of public officials responsible for accounting and reporting. It targets municipal officers and policy makers from 50 municipalities in the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, St Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago. It will utilise e-learning modules and virtual workshops covering financial and development topics, such as budgeting for local government, gender equality and social inclusion, and action planning. [Read more.](#)

**Pacific Urban Forum**

CLGF Pacific joined development partners and country delegations at the 2021 virtual Pacific Urban Forum. Its aim was to assess the status of national urban development commitments across the Pacific region; share updates on key urban priorities, progress and challenges by country representatives; and formally launch the Pacific Partnership for the New Urban Agenda (PP-NUA). The event attracted over 100 participants, including 20 speakers from across the region. CLGF’s Regional Manager was a key speaker and the CLGF office instrumental in organising the event.

**Cameroon LED project**

In September 2021, CLGF and the Commonwealth Secretariat agreed a joint programme of work to support the Government of Cameroon in capacity building for local economic development (LED). The programme will support Cameroon to build on recent decentralisation reforms to advance LED processes which contribute to effective social services, economic development and community resilience.

**Bloomberg winning cities**

Bloomberg Philanthropies announced the 15 winners of the Global Mayors City Challenge with five coming from the Commonwealth. The competition is designed to highlight the most promising urban innovations coming from the pandemic. Winners receive \$1M and technical support to bring their ideas to life. CLGF congratulates all the winners, especially those in the Commonwealth: Freetown, Sierra Leone: creating a digital marketplace to support tree maintenance and the urban canopy. Kigali, Rwanda: introducing a smart-waste system to improve sanitation and water quality in the city. Kumasi, Ghana: Addressing waste management and youth unemployment crises by training young people to install toilets. Rourkela, India: Providing cold-storage units to women’s co-operatives to empower female food vendors, reduce food waste, and increase access to fresh foods. Wellington, New Zealand: Creating a ‘virtual twin’ of the city to help residents to better understand climate change impacts.