

Bulletin



Building safe, sustainable and inclusive communities



Comment

By Dr Greg Munro, Secretary-General, CLGF



I am very pleased that CLGF has deepened its role and function in relation to gender. At the Commonwealth Local Government Conference in Malta last November, CLGF launched the Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network (ComWLG) to strengthen and advocate for greater political inclusion of women at local government level. This was followed up by the CLGF Executive Committee

adopting an organisational gender strategy with both internal and external facing components; and then the active participation of the network in the Women's Forum at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) in London in April this year. Included in this bulletin are items about CLGF's participation in CHOGM; an update on our work in the Pacific; and the outcomes of the East Africa Local Government Forum; which include further commitments to the inclusion of women. CLGF participated in the High-Level Political Forum in New York in July, where the role of local government in SDG implementation was discussed and reported upon. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is viewed as crucial for the successful delivery of the SDGs. Also in this bulletin is the upcoming Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network meeting in Kigali in September 2018, where the programme will include the need for inclusive cities and women's economic empowerment and contribution to economic growth.

UN Women have estimated that, based on the current speed of progress, global salary parity between the genders (as only one measure of gender inequality) will take another 170 years to achieve. This is clearly unacceptable and, at CLGF, we believe that true gender equality will only be achieved when women are at the centre of political and economic influence, and leaders in both spheres. As Sheryl Sandberg, the Chief Operating Officer of Facebook states: "In the future there will be no female leaders. There will just be leaders". CLGF is proud to contribute in some way to making this a reality.

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Cover photo courtesy of the Rwandan Government

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Women's empowerment



In April the UK hosted the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), a biennial event that provides an important focus for Commonwealth leaders to reaffirm joint values, reflect on achievements and set common priorities for the future. For the Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network (ComWLG), launched at the 2017 Commonwealth Local Government Conference in Malta, it also provided an exciting opportunity to progress the agenda for increasing women's political representation, particularly at the local level, and to push for stronger commitment by Commonwealth heads of state from the 53 member countries.

For only the second time, the CHOGM forums included a Commonwealth Women's Forum, which brought together around 400 women: heads of government, ministers, local leaders, senior officials, the business sector and activists. Entitled *An Empowered future for Women and Girls*, the forum dedicated a full day to women's political inclusion. CLGF's ComWLG partnered with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the Commonwealth Secretariat to deliver a session on *Women's political participation at all levels*. A flagship activity for ComWLG, the session contributed to each of the Network's four priority areas:

- work with existing elected women
- work with prospective elected women
- work with political parties and LGAs
- work at the Commonwealth and International level

Chaired by CLGF Patron Rt Hon Helen Clark, former New Zealand Prime Minister and UNDP Administrator, a panel of elected politicians shared their own stories about the issues facing women and some of the strategies used to tackle them: difficulties in encouraging women to stand in local elections; increased scrutiny and moral policing while in office and running for election; defamation; and the mentoring, coaching and sponsorship processes that can make a difference.

Invited by CLGF, Mayor Sunkarie Kabba-Kamara of Makeni City Council, Sierra Leone

gave the keynote and, commending CLGF for establishing ComWLG, she committed to supporting women across the Commonwealth through the national LGA of Sierra Leone, using the network's learning and peer to peer support systems; Cllr Buumba Malambo of Kafue District in Zambia, highlighted the importance of education and mentoring for women; and Cllr Bev Esslinger, Chair of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Standing Committee on International Relations from Edmonton, stressed the need for more women in local government to stand for election.

CPA panellists were Hon Maria Browne MP, Minister of Housing, Lands and Urban Renewal in Antigua and Barbuda and Hon Angela Thoko Didiza MP, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Africa Regional Chairperson.

The Outcomes statement for CHOGM's Commonwealth Women's Forum picked up on these themes and included recommendations to develop practical strategies and legislation to increase women's access to leadership from grassroots to national and international levels. It called on heads to commit to working with all political parties and systems to increase the proportion of women candidates through training, sponsorship, mentoring and access to networks such as ComWLG, with particular attention to creating opportunities for young women and girls.



As part of ComWLG's continuing work to support women, CLGF is a partner in the Commonwealth Partnership for Democracy (CP4D) project. Working with local governments and parliaments across the Commonwealth in the run up to the next CHOGM, the project will seek to improve representation of women, young people, people with disabilities and the LGBT+ community and help raise standards and build political commitment to increase inclusion and accountability.

Building capacity in PNG

Having recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with one of its members, Local Government Professionals Australia (LGPA), CLGF is now working with LGPA and another member organisation, the Papua New Guinea (PNG) Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs, to develop a joint project to strengthen the capacity of local level governments in PNG. This initiative is being enthusiastically supported by CLGF members and championed by the High Commission of PNG to Australia. Efforts are underway by CLGF Pacific and LG Professionals Australia, together with PNG partners to mobilise the necessary resources for a new programme based on city to city partnerships and exchange as a means of enhancing the delivery capacity of local governments in PNG.

Local government in the Pacific



Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Local Government, Fiji.

CLGF members and partners representing local and central government from across the Pacific (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga and Tuvalu), together with development partners active in the region, met in Suva, Fiji Islands to discuss local government's role as a partner in development and localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The event was organised by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) as part of CLGF's Strategic Agreement with the European Union to promote local government as a key actor in development, with keynote addresses from the Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport, Fiji, Hon Praveen Kumar Bala, who spoke about the changing nature of local government in the region, and Ms Emmanuelle Guiheneuf, representing the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Fiji.

The meeting was opened by CLGF Pacific Regional Director, Mrs Karibaiti Taoaba, who emphasised the need to work together as a regional consortium of local government practitioners and collaborating partners to

address the range of challenges and complexities involved in local government effectively carrying out its role in sustainable development.

Local government in the Pacific operates in a challenging environment where isolation and distance increases the cost of delivering services. Problems attracting qualified staff, inadequate infrastructure, information and communications technology all adversely impact on local government's operations, compounded by their vulnerability to external shocks and natural disasters. The meeting provided an opportunity to consider how the SDGs are being addressed nationally and their relevance at the local level, and in this context, members highlighted some of the primary challenges impacting directly on local government being able to play its full

role in development. It was agreed that the challenges facing the sector have the potential to be transformative, and discussions and exchange provided the basis for refocusing CLGF's work in the region, and form the basis of a new proposal to expand work in the region designed around three core pillars to reinforce resilience at the local level: Governance and leadership; service delivery; and urbanisation and urban management.

At the meeting, delegates highlighted the value of closer regional collaboration as a network of local government practitioners, and the significance of partnerships between cities and communities within the region as a vehicle for experience sharing and exchange of good practice. They also emphasised the need to raise the profile of the role of local government as a partner in sustainable development via the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and other regional CROP agencies.

Local government taking ownership

DSG Lucy Slack welcomed the strategic partnership between the EU and CLGF to work collectively to strengthen local government's contribution to national development efforts. She said: "It is essential for local governments to take ownership of the interventions, and for this to happen, political will is critical. Local government must ensure that the SDG imperative of leaving no-one behind is not forgotten. Local government must develop effective working relationships with national

government, non-state actors, civil society, the private sector and other key stakeholders within the local context, in line with the commitment to multi-level governance in the Agenda 2030." She welcomed the EU's continued support for local government as a partner in achieving the European Development Consensus.

Local Government New Zealand's (LGNZ) annual conference took place in Christchurch, the theme - *Future-proofing for a prosperous and vibrant New Zealand* - attracted more than 600 delegates, mayors, chairs, chief executives, councillors and senior management from New Zealand's councils, together with key players from the private sector, business, government and non government agencies.

This year's conference also provided the backdrop for the launch of a new project on localism and the benefits to be gained.

Celebrating local government performance

The LGNZ EXCELLENCE awards have fast become a major feature to the annual conference and are designed to showcase council projects, programmes and people who have made a real impact in local communities. They also recognise and celebrate excellent performance by councils with regard to community engagement, governance and strategy, environmental impact, infrastructure management, economic development, cultural vibrancy, and overall value and service delivery.

“ It is essential for local governments to take ownership of the interventions, and for this to happen, political will is critical. Local government must ensure that the SDG imperative of leaving no-one behind is not forgotten. ”

Lucy Slack



News in brief West Africa

The 3rd General Assembly of the Local Councils Association of Sierra Leone (LoCASL) takes place in Bo City on 14-15 September 2018. In addition to electing a new executive the meeting will look at the successes and challenges of Local Economic Development policies and programs in Sierra Leone. Mayors and councillors will come together with key decisions makers from central government and development partners to discuss the existing and future role of local councils in taking forward inclusive LED.

Zambia

A new project to support local government decentralisation has been launched by CLGF, working with the Local Government Association of Zambia and the Ministry of Local Government and with funding from the European Union and the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Running for 36 months, the main activities include local authority capacity assessments; capacity building at local and organisational level; peer learning between Zambian and European local authorities; developing and implementing integrated development plans in five selected local authorities; developing Local Economic Development strategies in 10 local authorities; and raising general public awareness of the decentralisation process and the role of local government in development.

East Africa direction of travel

Local Government in East Africa has been confirming its priorities and strategic direction at a meeting of the East African Local Government Forum (EALGF) held at the end of May in Nairobi, Kenya.

Co-hosted by the Kenya Ministry of Devolution and ASAL, the Kenya Council of Governors and CLGF, the Forum brought together representatives from all levels of government from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The fifth Forum to take place since the EALGF was launched in 2012, the focus of the meeting was an exchange about the common issues facing local government, in particular, supporting more effective decentralisation, localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and looking at the role of local government, and other local and national actors, in implementing and achieving the goals. The meeting was also used to make progress on revising and refining EALGF's strategic priorities toward the East African Community (EAC).



Coming out of the meeting was broad agreement on the importance of the EALGF as a network which facilitates the exchange of good practice, brings together local government stakeholders to proactively engage with the EAC and fosters mutual support across the region. There was also a commitment to reinforce the Forum's core objectives to:

- support implementation of decentralisation and local development
- strengthen local democracy
- improve local government financing
- promote inclusive service delivery
- strengthen local government capacity.

Deputy Secretary-General Lucy Slack stressed the importance of the meetings in giving a

voice to key stakeholders to agree priorities for collaboration across the region. She explained: "The Forum has resulted in a better understanding of the current work across the EAC to strengthen decentralisation and localise the SDGs; and a clearer overview of the strategic direction of key regional actors supporting or representing local government in the East Africa Region, such as EALGA, the EU, UN Habitat and CLGF."

Linking directly to the work of CLGF's newly launched *Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network (COMWLGN)*, CLGF Programme Manager Claire Frost added: "We are especially pleased that there is now commitment to concrete activities to support women's political inclusion in so many of our member organisations and we are looking forward to sharing these through the Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network."

The Forum has been supported through CLGF's EU funded project *Strengthening local government's role as a partner in development*. East Africa is one of five focal regions for the project running from 2015 until 2018. Activities in East Africa include supporting local government networks – LGAs, ministries and regional associations – to share experiences and challenges about localising the SDGs and other key issues, including closer engagement with the EC delegations.



Localising the SDGs in Dominica

With support from CLGF and funding from the EU, four councils in Dominica are showing how they can localise some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recent experience of Hurricane Maria has brought into sharp focus the issues surrounding the effects of climate change and the imperatives of disaster management to make cities, towns and communities safe, resilient and sustainable. A common feature to the approach taken by all four councils is Local Economic Development (LED).



Roseau City Corporation is creating a disaster/emergency response team, routinely functioning as a landscaping and sanitation business enterprise in the city. This dual purpose addresses the need for disaster preparedness, while allowing the Corporation to pilot LED outside of emergency situations, using the same resources.

After Hurricane Maria destroyed the abattoir, Portsmouth Town Council is restoring it,

demonstrating the *Build-Back-Better* principle, embedded in the country's new building standards. This allows the town's butchers and meat vendors to resume business under sanitary conditions.

Grand Bay Village Council is set to reduce the incidence of non-communicable diseases with training; encouraging food outlets to offer more nutritious menus; and introducing an exercise programme targeting people living with non-communicable diseases. The Council is establishing a related LED enterprise to produce non-gluten flour from local provisions - sweet potato, dasheen, breadfruit, banana - as a community business initiative.

Business is also on the mind of Canefield Urban Council where a composting facility is being provided to process organic waste generated from the council's operations in cutting roadside grass and shrubs. Using cuttings from residents, the council will sell the compost as a revenue raising initiative.

Local government at the High Level Policy Forum

CLGF, as a member of the **Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF)**, took part in the **2018 High Level Policy Forum (HLPF)** in July. HLPF is the United Nations' central platform for the review and follow-up of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda. CLGF Secretary-General Greg Munro moderated a session on localising the SDGs and Board Member Cllr Innocent Uwimana, President of the Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities, called for better resourcing of

work relating to the achievement of the SDGs. Using the opportunity of the first Local and Regional Governments' Forum within the framework of the HLPF, the GTF presented a second report in the series, entitled *Towards the Localisation of the SDGs* to showcase the extent to which local and regional governments have been involved in the implementation process of the SDGs over the period 2016-2018. There were encouraging results from the 99 countries providing input and a further report will be available in 2019.

News in brief Pakistan

Following the July 2018 national elections in Pakistan the Local Councils Associations in the four provinces of Pakistan are advancing their internal reviews to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the new national administration. This has involved renewal of boards and executive bodies, reviewing constitutions and looking at a variety of strategic opportunities to increase the effectiveness of decentralisation to deliver development at the local level. The process is being supported by the CLGF EU project *Strengthening association of local authorities and their local government members for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes in Pakistan*.





CSCN meets in Rwanda

The third meeting of CLGF's Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network (CSCN) takes place this month in Kigali, Rwanda. Building on previous meetings and the 2017 Commonwealth Local Government Conference, the meeting will focus on:

- Cities and trade: the role of devolution in empowering cities
- The role of ICT in the ease of doing business
- Inclusive cities: women's economic empowerment
- Innovative finances for urban services and infrastructure

Each session will identify specific action points where CSCN members can:

- Share knowledge on successful urban policies and city strategies
- Develop cities' technical skills and capacity to help set, implement and monitor the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 11 relating to inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements
- Realise recent international pledges for scaling up financial support to strengthen the capacities of cities and municipalities
- Ensure that the concerns and needs of cities are recognised in national policy-making and legislation

City governments have a central role to play in enabling inclusive urban economies through improved services and investment in infrastructure; but also in convening local stakeholders, civil society and the private sector to deliver local economic development, ensuring no one is left behind. Local economic development is becoming increasingly recognised as a function of local government, and can be a useful lens through which to examine other city processes and responsibilities.

The CSCN Kigali meeting will explore a city perspective on the 2017 Valletta Outcomes - *resources and capacity for effective local government*; as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the New Urban Agenda; the Declaration on the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment; the CHOGM 2018 Communique and the Singapore Statement on Commonwealth Cities for implementing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

CLGF continues to engage, directly and indirectly, with major global decision makers and influential platforms and will ensure that the relevant action points agreed in the meeting will inform on-going advocacy, knowledge-sharing and technical assistance programmes being developed with a range of partner organisations for the benefit of its city members.



Established in June 2015, the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network held its inaugural meeting in Singapore in October 2015.

The meeting adopted the Singapore Statement on Commonwealth Cities for implementing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. The Singapore Statement acknowledges the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its recognition of the role of cities, especially Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 to 'make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable', as well as SDG 16 on 'effective accountable institutions', and other SDGs, relating to economic growth and employment; infrastructure; and climate change.



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