

## **BELIZE STATEMENT ON THE PROMOTION OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE COMMONWEALTH**

**The CLGF Board meeting in Belize City, 17-18 May 2012, with representatives from Bahamas, Belize, Botswana, Canada, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Mauritius, New Zealand, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, and the United Kingdom, hosted by the Government of Belize -Ministry of Local Government, the Belize Mayors' Association and Belize City Council;**

APPRECIATIVE of the presence of Hon Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and CLGF Honorary Patron, HE Kamallesh Sharma, Commonwealth Secretary-General, ministers, mayors and senior officials from across the Caribbean region and senior representatives of IDB, UNDP and other partner organisations;

RECALLING the incorporation of the *Aberdeen Principles on Local Democracy and Good Governance* in the *2009 Trinidad Affirmation on Commonwealth Values and Principles* which it expects to be likewise reflected in the proposed new Commonwealth Charter;

WELCOMING the high level political mandate given to CLGF and local government at the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Perth;

NOTING the expanded mandate of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), relating to in particular 'the suspension or prevention of the lawful function of parliament or other key democratic institutions' and the ability of accredited Commonwealth organisations such as CLGF to supplement the information available to CMAG;

HIGHLIGHTING the need to address the concerns of young people, especially at a time of high youth unemployment, as well as the role of women in local government and the importance of CLGF's cooperation with Commonwealth and other partners in this area;

UNDERLINING the need to respond to the special needs of small states, such as those in the Caribbean and Pacific, especially their economic and political vulnerability and the importance of further strengthening CLGF's activities in small states, including through new regional programmes;

RECOGNISING the value of the new CARILED programme in the Caribbean, as well as CLGF's programmes in the Pacific and other regions aiming to implement the *Cardiff Consensus for Local Economic Development* endorsed at the 2011 CHOGM;

AWARE of the value of CLGF's work on international knowledge- sharing and the contribution made by its research advisory group, as well as through city-to-city exchanges under the Inclusive Cities Network and the Pacific Capital Cities Forum;

LOOKING FORWARD to CLGF's Conference '*Developmental Local Government: Putting Local Government at the Heart of Development*', Kampala, May 2013;

RECOGNISING FURTHER with satisfaction the growing cooperation between CLGF and the Commonwealth Secretariat in line with the 2011 CHOGM decision that the Secretariat should draw on the technical and other expertise of Associated Organisations and allocate funds for which these organisations can apply to implement programmes;

NOTING FURTHER with appreciation the resources being provided for CLGF's work by, in particular AusAID, the NZ Aid Program in the Pacific, under the proposed new DFID support for Africa and Asia and looking for additional resources and support from other Member States and development partners;

ENDORSING the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between CLGF and UNDP which it hopes will build further on existing cooperation;

GUIDED by the decisions of Commonwealth Heads of Government with regard to encouragement of democratic processes, institutions and culture in Fiji and in the Maldives and the need to defend and support democratic local government structures;

ACKNOWLEDGING the decision to hold local government elections in Malawi in 2014 and the recommendations of the 2011 CLGF Karachi seminar aimed at restoring the ability to elect local representatives in Pakistan in line with the country's constitutional provision;

SUPPORTING CLGF's assistance to democratic local government in Zimbabwe and its recent initiatives to support local democracy in Myanmar and South Sudan;

COMMITTS TO:

- working closely with CMAG, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and other partner organisations in defence of Commonwealth values notably the *Aberdeen Principles* with a view to reporting to foreign ministers at their next meeting and to CHOGM in 2013;
- taking forward the 2011 CHOGM mandate on the promotion of strategies to promote localism, sustainable development and economic growth in partnership with the private sector and for the implementation of the *Cardiff Consensus* including through the establishment of a CLGF task force to develop an Action Plan for implementing the *Cardiff Consensus* and local economic development strategies;
- developing enhanced programmes of regional capacity-building in all regions of the Commonwealth, including in the Caribbean, building on agreed CLGF cooperation with the Caribbean Forum of Local Government Ministers (CFLGM) and the Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities (CALGA) and working closely with existing and new partners such as FCM/CIDA, the EU, IDB and UNDP.

Belize City 18 May 2012