



CLGF Southern African Conference, Lusaka, Zambia 25-26 June, 2019

Promoting local governance and local economic development towards localising the SDGs

Meeting outcomes

Introduction

Ministers of local government, local government mayors and councillors, senior officials from local and central government, presidents and representatives of local government associations, development partners and the private sector, met on the 25th to 26th June 2019 to raise awareness of the role of local government in achieving the SDGs and ensuring no one is left behind; identify priorities for more effective localisation of the 2030 Agenda; promote gender mainstreaming in local leadership and development; and to strengthen regional dialogue, policy making and exchange.

The participants agreed that the meeting offered a timely chance to reflect on the importance of localisation of the SDGs, within the context of national development strategies now aligned, or being aligned to the SDGs. They emphasised the importance of ensuring that local government is empowered and has the necessary skills, capacities and resources to use LED as a tool to deliver the SDGs, relate these goals to the priorities of local communities, and measure progress towards their achievement.

They welcomed the knowledge base emerging from the CLGF projects and other initiatives in the region and encouraged CLGF and its partners to continue to document this learning. They recognised the progress made towards implementing decentralisation and local economic development in the region including through integrated development planning. They recognised the challenges presented by urbanisation especially in secondary cities, but also the opportunities for job creation, especially for youth, women and marginalised citizens; innovation and economic growth. They reflected on the reality of informalisation of employment, transport and housing and the impact that places on sustainable development.

They shared experiences on the different initiatives that local governments can undertake to promote LED, highlighting the lessons and challenges they face in ensuring impact at the local level and their plans for ongoing delivery and sustainability. Partners from the private sector, development agencies and civil society shared their priorities for working with local government. Participants encouraged development partners to continue supporting local development including providing direct support to local government and coordinating their support at local and regional levels. Women's political and economic empowerment was stressed as essential to achieve the SDGs and participants put forward concrete actions mainstreaming gender in local government.

Regional exchange and collaboration were identified as priorities, including promoting a regional approach to economic development. They recognised that LED is not a one size fits all and must be adapted to the local context in each place, it is an approach which empowers local stakeholders to drive their



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development in their local community. Participants prioritised the importance of better research into LED and its impacts to improve policy making. They welcomed a whole of government approach to service delivery and local economic development and recognised the important role that decentralisation plays in empowering each actor in that process.

Participants reflected on key achievements, challenges and opportunities in smaller discussion groups highlighting the following:

Achievements

- The progress with regard to policy and legal framework
- Mainstreaming and institutionalisation of LED in the region and how this has placed stakeholders in the driving seat
- The common understanding of LED as an approach to development
- The support of development partners
- The improved capacity to plan and implement LED
- Their increased ability to mobilise resources for LED

Challenges

- Financial and human capacity remains limited, and staff turnover impacts on progress
- Limited stakeholder participation including linkages with the private sector
- Incomplete decentralisation and weak coordination vertically and horizontally in government
- Limited data and research

Opportunities

- Partnerships at local, national and regional level to support LED (including between councils and with universities)
- Natural endowments that can be leveraged for LED
- Local government's mandate allowing for active support of LED and LED's institutionalisation across the region
- Political will and stakeholder support
- Innovative financing mechanisms available for LED

Local and central government agreed to work together to encourage SADC to recognise and support the role of local government in delivering development and in localising the SDGs in the region. They emphasised the importance of closer regional collaboration and committed to reforming the Southern African Local Government Forum.

Moving forward they committed to:

- Deepen partnerships for delivery, including strengthening the coordination between CLGF members in the region;
- Actively work toward the implementation of existing policies in an inclusive way at all levels;
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- Build a cross sectoral knowledge base for local government to draw on, including through partnerships and peer to peer support;
- Actively support gender equality and mainstreaming of gender into all activities;
- Continue and reinforce exchange and learning across the region;
- Continue to explore innovate methodologies for financing, service delivery, outreach and engagement
- Strengthen advocacy at all levels, including towards SADC

They called on CLGF work with its members to develop an action plan and resource mobilisation strategy to continue to support its members toward achieving these commitments.

Recognised the supportive role of CLGF's Southern Africa office in coordination and implementation. They looked forward to working with CLGF to strengthen its programming in the region. Finally they expressed appreciation to the Ministry of Local Government and LGAZ for hosting the event; DFID and the EU for support provided for CLGF's work; thanked the speakers and participants for their excellent contributions, and looked forward to continued engagement with them and other partners, including from the private sector.