



THE GABORONE DECLARATION - LOCAL GOVERNMENT VISION 2030

Preamble

The Commonwealth Local Government Conference/General Meeting of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), Gaborone, 16-19 June 2015, inaugurated by HE President Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana.

Appreciative of the video message by HRH Prince Charles and its powerful appeal for a new holistic approach to urban and rural planning and development to enable successful, resilient cities and harmonious societies;

Celebrating the 20th Anniversary and achievements of CLGF since its establishment in 1995, and the messages of support received from CLGF Patrons, notably from HE President Museveni of Uganda, HE President Mahama of Ghana, and Prime Minister Sopoaga of Tuvalu, and while recognising that local government world-wide faces many future challenges, notably in promoting local democracy and good governance, achieving economic growth and local economic development and creating sustainable cities and local governments;

Convening in advance of the 2015 UN Summit on the post-2015 Development Agenda, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, the Third International Conference on Development Financing, COP 21 and Habitat III in 2016 and following the 2014 SIDS Conference and 2015 World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, all of which recognised the important role of local government;

Recalling the significant engagement of CLGF and its partners in the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments for post-2015 Development Agenda and Habitat III since 2013 and the progress made in ensuring that local government has a direct role to play in the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and in particular the proposed new SDG on inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements;

Acknowledging the impact of rapid urbanisation on local governance, planning, service delivery, infrastructure development, the growth of informal settlements, urban sprawl and the effect that these have on the quality of life of citizens, issues which will need to be addressed fully at Habitat III in 2016;

Welcoming the endorsement by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 2013 of the Kampala Declaration on Developmental Local Government and the Munyonyo Statement on local government's role in the post-2015 development agenda, as well as their recognition, in their 2014 Statement on the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda, that the Agenda should address effective and accountable institutions at all levels;

Expecting that the forthcoming UN Summit, Commonwealth and other high-level meetings will give formal and practical recognition to the role of local government in the post-2015 development agenda, including in respect of the means of implementation, the review and monitoring provisions at national and international levels and detailed target setting, in line with the Rio+20 recommendations and above referred-to Heads of Government and other decisions;

Recognising that the attainment of the SDGs by 2030 will require a massive global, multi-stakeholder effort, backed by the necessary domestic and international resources, but that, in addition, local governments everywhere will continue to be confronted by many unexpected short term challenges between 2015-30, arising out of economic uncertainties, natural disasters, conflict and insurgency, and major human tragedies such as the current migration crises;

Accordingly agrees the adoption of the **Gaborone Declaration - Local Government Vision 2030** for implementation by CLGF member local governments and local government ministries and CLGF, working with partner organisations, international development agencies and other stakeholders including civil society and the private sector 2015-2030 to strengthen national development and achieve the SDGs as follows:

I PROMOTING LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

1.1 Decentralised and well-functioning local democratic and governance processes, including elections, are essential for local government to play its role in sustainable development as a distinct sphere of government in line with The Aberdeen Principles, which have been endorsed by Commonwealth Heads of Government and incorporated in the Commonwealth Charter, and other instruments such as the African Charter of Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Government and Local Democracy, which have or are being adopted.

1.2 For local government to play its full role in achieving the SDGs by 2030, it needs to be empowered, capacities need to be reinforced, governance should be strengthened and citizens should be more engaged in the democratic process. To be fully effective, local government management and service capacity need to be strong and resources need to be adequate.

1.3 Local government should be recognised as equal to central/federal and provincial/state government, with a distinct role to play in the multi-level governance framework.

1.4 Public participation should be institutionalised and enhanced to ensure openness, transparency, inclusiveness, accountability and responsiveness. Bold and principled leadership, and leaders who can instil trust, and know how to manage conflicting interests are central to the achievement of sustainable development. Local governments should look to scaling up their capacity in ICT to make governance and service delivery more efficient, reduce delays, improve revenue collection and enhance accountability.

Actions

- Ensure democratic local government elections in line with the Aberdeen Principles.
- Implement decentralisation commitments as an essential step to empowering local governments to play their full role as a partner in achieving sustainable development.
- Recognise local government as a distinct sphere of government, with a clear role to play in the multi-level governance framework to minimise conflict both within and between levels of government to ensure a more coordinated approach towards achieving national and global development goals.
- Achieve fair and equitable fiscal decentralisation, reduction of unfunded mandates, improved access to and mobilisation of own source revenue, and local government access to 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.
- Local government associations are key institutions for advancing decentralisation. They should be strengthened to ensure a voice for organised local government as key partners in the achievement of the SDGs.
- Local governments must ensure the full and equitable participation of women in all political processes, through gender sensitive participation and engagement, with a target of 50% gender parity by 2030.
- Local government must proactively engage youth in the democratic process through civic education, consultation and representation.
- Transparent and open local government enables civil society to scrutinise council decisions and to hold their elected representatives to account through meaningful deliberation and consultation in open forum.
- Further empower citizens so they know their rights and responsibilities and feel confident to exercise them, and can participate actively in planning, implementing and monitoring of local development.
- Improve the availability and quality of data and information to enable local government to more effectively plan, deliver and measure progress towards achieving the SDGs.
- Invest in leadership capacity at the political and administrative levels to lead local communities to achieve strategic, coordinated and inclusive development and growth.

2 ACHIEVING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Local government plays a key role in promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Local economic development (LED) is a process which brings together different partners, with the private sector, in a local area to work together and harness local resources for sustained economic growth. There is no single model for LED, which is encapsulated in the Cardiff Consensus (2011), adopted by CLGF members and endorsed by CHOGM.

2.2 Local government's main role in economic development is one of enabling, through provision of basic infrastructure and a conducive environment. Inclusive economic development has the potential to address many of the common priorities of local government which in turn align with national and global development goals. Almost all local government activities can and do have an impact on economic development. This is fundamental to the concept of developmental local government, set out in the 2013 Kampala Declaration, endorsed by CHOGM.

2.3 In the context of globalisation it is important to recognise the interconnectedness of economic development at the global, regional, national and local levels and to ensure that local government's role is mainstreamed into all levels of planning and operations. There is a strong need for more interaction between local and national levels to strengthen LED policies and frameworks and to empower local governments to deliver local growth and development, in an environmentally sensitive way.

2.4 Local government is best placed to facilitate partnerships with local stakeholders in both the formal and informal sectors. In this regard the importance of the informal sector should be acknowledged as contributing to the local economy, and space provided for informality, not just physically but also politically and in terms of governance. Local government's key role in LED is as a partner and facilitator to create an enabling environment and atmosphere for local dynamism and innovation for business, particularly for young people

Actions

- The enabling policy and legislative environment for local government to pursue LED must be in place, in line with the Cardiff Consensus.
- Local economic development feeds into national and regional growth strategies. The role of local government should be mainstreamed and reflected in the planning and operations of regional and national partners and organisations, including regional integration organisations.
- Local governments should develop long-term strategic plans which have an economic dimension, encompass an understanding of their local economies, focus on locally appropriate economic development solutions, and provide a sound enabling environment for economic growth to be sustained. They should be balanced with short-term needs and the electoral cycle. Strong local strategic leadership, with long term vision is essential to ensure opportunities can be maximised.
- Local governments must recognise the important role of the informal sector in planning, particularly in areas where there are high levels of urban migration, and provide appropriate support and regulation.
- Local government should be proactive in forging partnerships with the private sector and use their local economic development strategies as a way to ignite and drive cities as engines of sustainable growth.
- Strengthen data and information availability to monitor and measure sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The use of ICT can support the capture and analysis of data, which must be aligned with national data collection.
- Support the institutional reform process by strengthening key institutions that are able to support the local economy. In particular recognise the role of universities, and other specialised institutions such as those that are able to facilitate the retention of local capital.

3 CREATING SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

3.1 Unprecedented human migration is resulting in rapid urban growth. Cities are at the forefront of managing the impact of unplanned urbanisation, which often results in significant challenges in the provision of adequate infrastructure, service delivery, governance and development, particularly in peri-urban areas where there are often high levels of poverty.

3.2 There has been a strong call from local government, including the Global Taskforce, UNDP, UN Habitat, and other stakeholders for a dedicated goal reflecting the needs of cities, and reflecting territorially-based challenges in all human settlements. It also recognises the role of local government in managing risks, mitigating the impact of natural disasters and climate change adaptation, which is a significant threat, particularly in small island developing states: in creating inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and local governments.

3.3 Local government has a role to play in supporting the achievement of the 17 SDGs. Many of the proposed goals, including water provision, health, sanitation and housing, food security and transportation call attention to the importance of institutional capacity at local level, and will be supported in whole or in part by the governance and service delivery that is undertaken in cities and local governments.

3.4 The heightened challenges around attaining sustainable human settlements call for more imaginative leadership and planning that involves working with communities and putting citizens and natural systems at the centre of planning. Local culture, knowledge and traditions need to inform planning and it should reflect a community-based approach that encompasses diversity, and the environment.

3.5 There is a need for new and locally based urban and rural planning approaches, to adequately plan for the many dimensions of urbanisation, which should include mixed use policy, green space provision, and urban agriculture amongst others.

3.6 Innovative public and private solutions to financing infrastructure and service delivery, which leverage on the economic opportunities in cities, will be central to ensuring sustainable growth and development to 2030 and beyond.

Action

- There is an urgent need for holistic national urban policies to provide for effective planning which recognise the importance of reducing urban sprawl, strengthening urban-rural linkages, the need to provide for and protect urban and peri-urban agriculture and counteract mass migration.
- It is critical for sound planning to know the city and the community, promote consultation, and ensure that data collection and analysis supports planning compliance and effective monitoring of improved service delivery.
- There is a need for new and locally based urban and rural planning approaches, which include mixed use policy, green space and urban agriculture, to adequately plan for the many dimensions of urbanisation.
- Cities and local governments are at the forefront of dealing with the causes and impacts of climate change. Cities should focus on building resilience, planning for low carbon economies and effective disaster management and responsiveness.
- Cities need to build capacity to deal with the threat of extremism and urban terrorist attacks.

4 CAPACITY AND RESOURCES- MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Local government and its partners must continue to advocate strongly to ensure that its role as a partner in achieving the SDGs and national development goals is recognised and reflected in global agreements.

4.2 For local government to play a full role in supporting the achievements of national and global development targets such as the SDGs, it is essential that adequate resources and powers to access own-source revenue are devolved to the local level: domestic resource mobilisation will be critical to achieve the SDGs.

4.3 Local government often lacks technical and human capacity, financing and support. Mechanisms are required which support local government in infrastructure development, aggregated borrowing, access to domestic bond markets, implementation of municipal bond agencies, PPPs, mobilising local revenue and taxation, sectoral finance, debt issuance and management. National local government associations can play a key role in identifying capacity needs, providing expertise, and establishing potential partners.

4.4 Strengthening knowledge, understanding, and the technical and leadership capacity of local governments and communities is essential to ensure that local government can effectively respond to the needs of its citizens in the context of priorities of achieving national and global targets.

Action

- Suitable financing mechanisms need to be developed to support the strengthening of capacities and to build effective local institutions, through the localisation of resources alongside localising the SDGs.

5 LOCALISING THE SDGs: FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW:

5.1 It is important that the monitoring and review of the SDGs at the national level is not just a top-down process. Local governments, in consultation with their communities, should be encouraged and enabled to feed into the regular reporting processes. Likewise there is a need for a new global partnership that gives recognition to local governments.

Action

- Strengthen the linkages between local government and national planning and budgeting systems for effective localisation of the SDGs.
- Develop people-centred local monitoring systems and indicators to help track local government's contributions at the local, national and regional level to peaceful and inclusive societies, and to urban and rural development.
- Ensure a new global partnership by which local government, through CLGF and its international partners can assist in monitoring the progress of the SDGs

6 THE COMMONWEALTH ADDING GLOBAL VALUE

6.1 The Commonwealth, working together with its member states and partners, including through strategic partnership between the Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Foundation and Associated Commonwealth Organisations, such as CLGF, can add value to the achievement of the post-2015 agenda through political commitment, technical support and strategic advocacy.

Action

- CLGF should work with its members, partners in the Global Taskforce, UCLG, Cities Alliance, DeLoG, UNDP, UN Habitat, the EU, DFID, the Commonwealth Secretariat, development agencies and other key stakeholders to reinforce local government's role in supporting the achievement of the SDGs, the preparations for Habitat III, and the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.
- CLGF and local government should be represented on any Commonwealth mechanisms established to help monitor and achieve the SDGs.
- CLGF should develop a 15 year strategy and business plan focusing on supporting its members in developing and implementing modalities to localise the SDGs. Local governments who know their communities are best placed to ensure that achieving the SDGs leaves no-one behind.

Expresses warm appreciation

To the Government and People of Botswana, especially HE President Lt General Seretse Khama Ian Khama, His Honour Vice President Mokgweetsi Eric K Masisi, Hon Slumber Tsogwane, and Cllr Rev Mpho Moruakgomo for hosting the CLGF Conference, and for their kind hospitality; to Hon Dr Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta; Hon Teima Onorio, Vice President of Kiribati; , Rt Hon Helen Clark; Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, Dr Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, Dr Josephine Ojiambo, Mr Abdoulie Janneh, and other dignitaries for their participation; to all speakers, resource persons, development partners, CLGF's gold partner Barclays Africa, technology partner, Microsoft, other sponsors, and exhibitors for their participation and support.

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