



Commonwealth Local Government Conference

**Developmental local government:  
Putting local government at  
the heart of development**

14-17 May 2013 Kampala, Uganda



# Kampala declaration on developmental local government

The seventh Commonwealth Local Government Conference and General Meeting of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, Munyonyo, Kampala, 14-17 May 2013, addressed by HE President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, CLGF Honorary Patron and hosted by the Government of Uganda and also addressed by HE President Mahinda Rajapaksa, HE President Paul Kagame, Rt Hon Helen Clark, Dr Joan Clos and Dr Richard Sezibera:

**AWARE** of the current debate about the future of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the post-2015 Development Agenda and the desire to ensure that global goals regarding democratic governance, growth and employment, inclusive development, the environment, food security and fragile and conflict environment supplement the existing goals relating to poverty reduction and basic services;

**CONSCIOUS** of the changed international environment resulting from the financial and economic crisis of 2008 which has had severe impact in many countries, especially on the job prospects of young people, and has resulted in reduced commitments to international cooperation, including reductions in development assistance;

**MINDFUL** of the impact of global market integration, food and fuel shortages, political instability and climatic factors on many countries, especially fragile and small states;

**WELCOMING** the new *Charter of the Commonwealth*, agreed by Heads of Government and signed by HM Queen Elizabeth II, setting out core Commonwealth political values, and affirming in particular, the validity of and commitment to the 2005 *Aberdeen Agenda on Local Democracy and Good Governance*;

**TAKING INTO ACCOUNT** the validity of and commitment to other policy frameworks relating to local government, which have been endorsed by Commonwealth Heads of Government, notably the 2007 *Auckland Accord: Delivering Development through Local Leadership*, the 2009 *Freeport Declaration on Improving Local Government* and the 2011 *Cardiff Consensus on Local Economic Development*;

**RECALLING** other key international policy statements underlining the role of local government in development, including the outcomes of the 2010 UN Global Forum of Local Development, Kampala, the 2011 Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Busan, the 2012 Rio +20 Summit and the 2013

European Commission Communication on Empowering Local Authorities;

**ENCOURAGED** by the emphasis UNDP, UNCDF, UN Habitat, the EU and other development partners, notably those part of the DeLoG network, are placing on the role of Decentralisation and Local Governance (DLG) in the formulation of the post-2015 Development Agenda and in preparations for Habitat III, as well as the resources they are providing to CLGF, its members and other local government partners in pursuit of the objectives of DLG and to strengthen local government capacity, including of national and regional associations of local government;

**NOTING** the deliberations of the UN High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 Development Agenda and the recommendations of the Global Task Force of Local & Regional Governments for Post-2015 and Habitat III;

**HIGHLIGHTS** the role of Developmental Local Government, which entails:

- local democratic governance that is inclusive, transparent and participatory;
- democratic development and public participation;
- innovative, sustainable, people-sensitive local economic growth and social development;
- integrated and coordinated developmental activities of public and non-state agents;
- human rights, gender equality, cultural diversity and opposition to discrimination;
- leadership and building of social capital, peace and stability and dialogue.

**UNDERLINES** growing urbanisation, its impact on cities and the resulting pressure on infrastructure and service delivery and the importance of ensuring that local government can properly plan and manage a response to this urban challenge;



**UNDERLINES FURTHER** the need to reach out beyond the formal and informal sectors to promote inclusive development;

**EMPHASISES** the importance of the post-2015 Development Agenda embracing a **New Development Agenda** for all countries, developing and developed, which comprises goals, targets and indicators relating to:

- democratic governance, including community governance;
- basic service delivery;
- growth, employment and wealth creation;
- inclusive development and addressing inequality;
- climate change and environmental sustainability;
- food security;
- fragile and conflict/post-conflict environment.

**STRESSES** the critical relevance of DLG to the successful implementation of the post-2015 Development Agenda and in particular for local governments and their associations to have responsibility for setting local/sub-national targets and indicators and overseeing their realisation;

**CALLS ON** national governments, development partners and in particular the UN, UNDP, UN Habitat and other Specialised Agencies to ensure that DLG is fully integrated into the post-2015 development agenda and local government is properly acknowledged as a global partner at the 2013 UN General Assembly and in subsequent negotiations;

**REQUESTS** that Commonwealth Heads of Government at their 2013 meeting in Colombo to formally endorse the outcomes of the CLGF Kampala Conference and provide a leadership role in taking forward the *New Development Agenda* at the UN and elsewhere;

**FURTHER CALLS ON** all CLGF members to commit themselves to the realisation of the objectives set out in this Declaration;

**MANDATES** the CLGF Board to develop a **Plan of Action** in support of the promotion of *Developmental Local Government* and realisation of the *New Development Agenda*, in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNDP, DeLoG, PLATFORMA and other development partners, academia, the private sector and civil society;

#### **The conference agreed:**

Strong local government is critical for nation building. Resilient and effective governance and development at the local level provides the foundation for a strong nation. Active engagement and support of individual citizens and communities, and partnerships at various levels, underpin successful social and economic development strategies. The environment to enable developmental local government is created through strengthening partnerships among central government, local governments and civil society organisations, and the private sector, and ensuring that equitable and inclusive participation is embedded in legislative frameworks.

Effective developmental local government is premised on the mandates and legitimacy of local government being respected

at all levels. Local government has a clear comparative advantage in knowing and advocating the real needs of the community and can best take advantage of opportunities in the areas of equity and social inclusion in service delivery. Local government can access communities which are outside the normal reach of other parts of government to facilitate development.

Democracy and development are mutually reinforcing. Democratically elected leaders are in a unique position to give voice to community needs and application of the *Aberdeen Agenda: Commonwealth Principles on Local Democracy and Good Governance* can facilitate creation of the right environment for local development. Citizen-led approaches to home grown local democracy are essential and should be enhanced through embedded civic education processes.

Decentralisation and a clear legislative framework sets out the role and functions of local government. True decentralisation involves putting local government at the heart of development through commitment and participation of all stakeholders in the devolution process. Capacity of local government institutions and civil society, together with availability of adequate resources that follow function, is critical. Quality leadership that demonstrates committed political will and the ability to encourage positive change also strengthens local development. A heightened focus on quality and capacity across these critical areas is required.

Genuine engagement and innovation in local democratic processes cannot be achieved without meaningful participation of women and young people. The environment must be conducive to the voices of women and youth. They represent communities which are often under-represented and bring unique perspectives to enable local governments to respond effectively to the needs of all sectors of society.

Access to quality and affordable basic services is a primary requirement and right of all citizens, as well as being a foundation for socio-economic opportunities and growth. Minimum service delivery levels for mandated responsibilities need to be established and implemented. Sustainability is created by people willingly paying for services they genuinely need and which are delivered at a level that meets expectations. Creative, consistent, sustainable and equitable financing mechanisms need to be explored and applied. Knowledge sharing on the vast range of innovative revenue generation options should be scaled up.

The particular challenges faced by smaller states in supporting developmental local government, such as isolation, capacity and dependency, need to be addressed through effective ICT, institutionalising and better empowering traditional structures, and local government autonomy, to manage their affairs and resources.

Local government associations and regional forums have an important role in supporting and influencing developmental local government at several levels, including providing channels for consolidated inter-governmental dialogue, capacity building



and collaboration. Clearer legislative frameworks and mandates, together with adequate resources, are required in order to optimise the value of these institutions.

Mainstreaming local economic development (LED) approaches in local government policy and service delivery will enhance living standards and wellbeing through promotion of growth, employment and wealth creation. The influence of local government at the micro economic level should be maximised. Methodologies based on successful experiences in LED policy approaches and frameworks, coordination, community participation and private sector partnerships should be promoted as a key component of developmental local government.

Emphasis on the challenges and opportunities for local government presented by rapid urbanisation was identified as a key issue. Potential exists for development where urbanisation is planned, well governed and supported. Challenges should be addressed through national and local governments, together with communities, working alongside each other under the developmental local government approach.

Local government efficiency and citizen engagement can be enhanced through maximising available information and communications technology. Opportunities remain for local government to access available ICT, and research on good practices should be undertaken by CLGF to make a business case for further investment in such technologies.

**DECLARED** their will to see 2014 designated as the year of Developmental Local Government by CLGF and all its members.

**LOOKS FORWARD** to the 8th Commonwealth Local Government Conference, New Delhi, 2015, being hosted by the Government of India;

**EXPRESSES** warm appreciation to the Government and People of Uganda, especially HE President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and Hon Adolf Mwesige, Minister of Local Government, the Uganda Local Governments Association (ULGA) for hosting the CLGF Conference and their kind hospitality, and to all speakers, resource persons, development partners, sponsors and exhibitors for their participation and support.

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## MUNYONYO STATEMENT ON

# Local government's role in the post-2015 development agenda

Six hundred local government representatives, including ministers of local government, local government leaders, senior officials, academics and representatives of civil society, the private sector, international and development partner organisations, met at the Commonwealth Local Government Conference: *Developmental Local government: putting local government at the heart of development*, Kampala, May 2013, and emphasised that the voice of local government must be heard in shaping the post-2015 global development agenda.

They recalled the progress made to date in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and discussion about the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and that much can still be done in the remaining two years, including at the local level. They welcomed the growing recognition and acknowledgement of the role for local government in development, including the outcomes of the UN Global Forum, the Busan Partnership, Rio+20 and the European Communication on Local Authorities and the preparation for Habitat III. They endorsed the Communique of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for post-2015 and Habitat III: *The local and Regional Governments' Development Agenda*, Istanbul, March 2013, and called for one global development agenda recognising the role of local government as a key stakeholder in poverty reduction and development to address poverty and sustainable development. They agreed

that the global post-2015 development agenda should relate to both developed and developing countries.

### 1. Local government: a key stakeholder in development

Local government is a key part of the state and draws its mandate from its local democratic accountability. Local government works at the front line, is closest to the people and can therefore identify and respond to development needs and gaps. It has a range and reach of functional responsibilities, including strategic planning and service delivery, as well as legal and moral legitimacy, and should be recognised as a key stakeholder in development.

Participation in national planning processes, national committees or similar mechanisms, bringing together local



governments, national associations of local government and other relevant national stakeholders in development are key to facilitating dialogue between local and central government to ensure participation in the laws and policies that relate to the local level and can contribute to the good governance of the post-2015 process.

Good governance is fundamental to the credible role and voice of local government in shaping and implementing the post-2015 development agenda. Principles of participation in decision making, service delivery and budgeting, transparency, accountability, and inclusion must underpin local government's meaningful role in development.

## 2. Role of local government in post-2015 – key thematic areas for local government

Local government has a central role in ensuring democratic values, basic service delivery, economic growth, resilience, wealth creation and employment generation through local economic development, promoting inclusive development and addressing inequalities, promoting environmental sustainability, protecting local environmental resources, climate change adaptation and mitigation, food security, and managing fragile and conflict/post-conflict environments.

Rapid urbanisation presents opportunities for growth and development. Good urban governance and planning, with a strong focus on local economic growth and development is essential. Where appropriate, local government should have the legal responsibility to design, manage and implement urban planning.

Local governments are agents of change and innovation, and new global development targets should be flexible enough to be localised, so that planning and delivery can be aligned at the local, national and global level. Local governments are well placed to play a role in defining and monitoring local targets in their communities, and should also be part of the monitoring systems at the national level. In this regard it will be important to establish solid baseline data and benchmarking which properly reflects recent progress by local governments towards achieving the MDGs. Good intergovernmental processes involving, where appropriate, an oversight role by national ministries, are essential.

## 3. Priorities to enable local government to play a full role in development and to implement post-2015 targets

To enable local government to contribute fully to the new global development agenda, emphasis should be placed on:

- ensuring a clear legal mandate for the role and functions of local government. Decentralisation of responsibilities to local government must be accompanied by the requisite financial resources (transfers from central government, access to own-source revenue and other finance mechanisms), technical and human capacity;
- removing the barriers to decentralisation to promote a bottom-up approach, which should include building local skills, staff and leadership capacity, which should reach out to the large population beyond the formal and informal sector, to boost the achievement of localised targets and goals;
- building and sustaining strong partnerships with other spheres of government, civil society, the private sector, traditional leaders, young people, women, marginalised and vulnerable groups to ensure effective, coordinated and sustainable local development;
- ensuring that development partners continue their support to strengthen local government and decentralisation, and that local government has direct access to development funding: decentralised cooperation among local governments and associations is a key mechanism to strengthen the capacities of local government;
- continuing to build the global partnership of local, regional and international local government organisations, development partners and multi-lateral institutions to advocate strongly with local and national stakeholders in support of local government's role in the post-2015 global development agenda;
- recommending that local government should advocate to their national delegations at the UN and elsewhere to ensure recognition of local government's role in shaping the post-2015 development agenda and implementing the targets which are agreed;

CLGF should take forward the recommendations of the consultations to the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Colombo, November 2013 and to work with the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNDP and the Global Taskforce to ensure that the voice of local government is reflected in the UN General Assembly process.

Appreciation was expressed to the Rt Hon Helen Clark and UNDP for their support for and participation in the Kampala consultation on the post-2015 development agenda.

