

Commonwealth Local Government meets

clgf

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) convened for its annual symposium in Kampala, Uganda in April 2006.

The CLGF is the voice of local government in the Commonwealth, representing local authorities, local government ministries, local government associations, NGOs and other local government stakeholders. It works to promote democratic government at the local level throughout the Commonwealth and to encourage the exchange of best practices among member states and organisations.

Among the dignitaries were several ministers, deputy ministers, MPs and mayors from Commonwealth countries. The President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, spoke on the importance of local government in the Ugandan context. Father Smangalis Mkhathswa, President of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa, outlined the local government priorities for Africa in realising the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and ensuring good governance.

The theme of the symposium was 'localising' and delivering the MDGs in Commonwealth Africa. It was built on the momentum to further explore linkages between local democracy, good governance and ensuring effective delivery of the MDGs at the local level. To that end, the symposium focused on an exchange of good practice policy and case studies and also sought to develop the 2005 Commonwealth

Principles on Good Practice for Local Democracy and Good Governance. The Aberdeen Principles, as they are known, are a set of common values and objectives shared by member states and organisations with the objective of developing them into practical recommendations to ensure that the principles are embedded into local government policy at the national and local level.

One such principle is that local government should enjoy constitutional and legal recognition to protect the fundamental principle of local democracy. Local citizens should elect their local representatives in regular elections and should be able to participate actively in the democratic process. Moreover, the continuous need for capacity building and development of effective leaders is central to strong local democracy.

The fourth CLGF symposium will be hosted in Auckland, New Zealand in March 2007. It will focus on delivering development through local leadership.

The establishment and deepening of systems of local government is gaining momentum in Africa. Countries such as Malawi, Mozambique, Mali and Namibia are but a few examples of a new commitment to decentralisation. We will certainly keep you abreast of these and other developments.



L-R: Frederick Golooba-Mutebi, LORC, Uganda; Reuben Baatjies; Cllr. Joe Aketch, Nairobi, Kenya; and Mme Catherine Mfoula, Yaounde, Cameroun



L-R: Reuben Baatjies and Basil Morrison, President of New Zealand Local Government