

**Yaoundé Communiqué on Leadership Capacity Building
for
Decentralized Governance and Poverty Reduction in Africa**

May 30th 2008

WE, the Ministers and Heads of delegation in charge of Decentralization and Local Government, accompanied by Senior Civil Servants, Chairpersons, Associations of Local Governments, and Mayors representing different countries of Africa at the Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Local Government and Decentralization, Elected Women Local Government Leaders and Development Partners held in, Yaoundé, from the 28th to 30th of May 2008, with the theme of “From Policy to Implementation: Challenges and Strategies for Effective Implementation of Decentralized Governances in Africa”

I. PREAMBLE

Noting that the present Ministerial Conference is a direct follow-up to the Ministerial Conference on Decentralization held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe 1999; the 2nd Africities Summit held in Windhoek, Namibia 2000; the 3rd Africities Summit held in Yaoundé, Cameroon 2003; the Eastern African Ministers of Local Government Conference on Decentralization and Local Development held in Mombasa, Kenya 2004; the Conference on Decentralization: the new Dimension of Peace, Democracy and Development, held in Florence, Italy 2004; the Eastern African Ministers for Local Government Consultative Meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya 2004; the Arusha Conference on the Foundation of Eastern Africa Local Government Association held in Arusha, Tanzania 2005; and the Ministerial Local Government Conference on Leadership Capacity Building for Decentralized Governance & Poverty Reduction for Sub-Saharan Africa held in Kigali, Rwanda 2005, the 4th Africities Summit held in Nairobi, Kenya 2006, the Ministerial Conference on Participatory Planning and Budgeting for Effective Local Level Delivery of Services in Maseru, Lesotho 2006, the African Governance Conference under the theme, the Capable State for Poverty Reduction in Africa held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso 2007,

Expressing gratitude to the Government of Cameroon, and in particular the Minister of State for Territorial Administration and Decentralization, for hosting this conference,

Thanking the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the Municipal Development Partnership (MDP), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) for the technical, financial and other contributions which made this conference a reality,

Acknowledging the importance of sharing of country experiences on Local Government Leadership, Decentralized and Participatory Governance, and the role of Local Governments in Local Economic Development and Poverty Reduction in line with the Millennium Development Goals and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) objectives,

Taking cognizance of the capacity building initiatives by the Municipal Development Partnership for Eastern and Southern Africa (MDP-ESA) such as the African-Latin America Mutual Action Learning Initiative; with financial support from the Netherlands Government, the World Bank Group and UN-HABITAT;

Also taking cognizance of the Euro-Africa Partnership for Decentralized Governance,

Further taking cognizance of the progress made in the implementation of the (Aberdeen Agenda) Commonwealth Principles of Good Practice for Local Democracy and Good Governance, and the operationalization of the principles through such initiatives such as the Kampala Agenda for local Democracy, good governance and delivery of the MDGs in Africa,

Recognizing the need to link policy formulation to action, continual pursuit of leadership capacity and innovative approaches at institutional, policy and human resources levels that would improve capacity building for participatory local governance as well as effective and sustainable delivery of services, especially to the poor,

Noting that the key issues related to moving from policy formulation to implementation are, but not limited to

- Capacity Building for Local Governance,
- Resource Mobilisation
- Women in Local Government Leadership and
- Partnership and Decentralised Cooperation

Bearing in mind the challenges and constraint that confront decentralization and local governance which includes the following;

Under Capacity Building

- A lot of attempts have been made to respond to the issue of capacity constraints but countries do not have comprehensive capacity building policy frameworks
- The capacity building approaches are not far reaching and exclude some stakeholders such as CSO and the Private sector
- There are limited visible innovative, appropriate institutional arrangements for capacity building. Those that are available are overly emphasizing technical capacity development for administrators and Councilors at the expense of cross-cutting capacity requirements.

Under Resource Mobilisation the noted challenges are;

- Over-reliance on central government for financing Local Governments
- The mindset of local Government leadership foster extractive local revenue approaches
- Tax sources assigned to local governments are the peripheral and non-yielding ones
- There exist an unclear and ambiguous situation of the principles, mandates and statutes of resources sharing among the tiers of government. Local Authorities have become simply agents of Central Governments for resource mobilization and utilization.
- Locally generated revenues are in many cases absorbed into national coffers and not used by the Local Authority thus becoming a disincentive for collection and compliance.

For elected women in local government,

- Women face challenges in accessing leadership positions and getting re-elected at political parties primaries
- Women have inadequate access to land and credit
- Women face difficulties in reconciling work and family responsibility
- Women face difficulties related to socio-cultural traditions and discriminatory stereotypes

The challenges related to partnership and decentralized cooperation are;

- Limited knowledge and information access on cooperation and partnership opportunities
- Capacity to access mutual cooperation opportunities are limited
- Gains from partnerships and cooperation are not assessed and recognized

We agreed on the following strategies bearing in mind the challenges.

Capacity Building strategies

- Have a comprehensive country specific capacity policy based on the principles of inclusiveness, mutual peer partnership, gender sensitivity, innovativeness and creativity
- Create country specific institutional arrangements for creative and innovative capacity building
- Give due reference to the principles and context in the implementation of policies for capacity building.
- The local government process should determine the substance and specific requirements and be able to establish core principles for assessments, determination of capacity gaps and addressing the identified gaps within country and across country.
- Establish core benchmarks for measuring Capacity Building for Local Governance and use it a basis for performance assessment and impact on interventions. Eg. Benchmarks
 - Creativity
 - Innovation

- Transformational
- Identify areas/countries that could serve as best practices and use them as learning points for study tours within the context of South-South Cooperation and mutual learning.

Resource Mobilisation

- Create adequate incentives for Local Governments for mobilizing Local revenues
- Empower the citizens to play an active role in revenue mobilization, utilization and accountability.
- Have well defined statutes for revenue sharing between national and local government
- Utilize and enforce mandates which have been given to Ministries of Local Governments for instituting statutes for local revenue mobilization
- Adopt institutional mechanisms for engaging communities in decisions on revenue management from fee fixing to reporting through
 - Public hearing
 - Publishing local accounts report
 - Develop a citizens charter

Elected Women in Local Government

- Develop mutual support among women
- Insist on adoption of laws on affirmative action within political parties and governments
- Support economic and political empowerment of women
- Promulgate and implement legislation to provide and protect land ownership for women and remove or revise discriminatory laws and property rights
- Within the context of participatory budgeting local government should make budgets that are gender sensitive
- While Civil Society pursue to explain and establish the difference between cultural and religious values to suppress stereotypes against women, Governments should endeavour to abolish gender discriminatory laws,
- Implementation of measures enhancing women's education including awareness of human rights laws and how to use them should be promoted

Partnership and Decentralised Cooperation

- Local Government ministries should give support by way of policy and legislation to Partnership and Decentralised Cooperation
- Develop Guidelines and institutional framework for Partnership and Decentralised Cooperation
- MDP where requested by respective countries should assist in developing a standard approach for policies and Institutional framework for Partnership and Decentralised Cooperation at the country level

Based upon these strategies and taking into consideration current opportunities and goodwill the following commitments were agreed upon;

- Undertake diagnostic studies/ Rapid assessments on capacity for Local Governments to identify gaps, innovative responses, best-practices and disseminate.
- Encourage, in the African context, the promotion of partnership and decentralized cooperation through the identification of best practices the sharing of these shining cases among the peers of local government institutions
- Match existing capacity (human, equipment, resources) and competencies to roles and functions using available information.
- Review existing capacity building policies and implement them with the view to responding to identified capacity gaps

Resource Mobilisation

- Governments must have very clear institutional process for revenue sharing
- Establish processes for open governments and community participation in revenue management
- Governments and specifically local government institutions work assiduously to adopt innovative means of enhancing local revenue mobilizations and management.
- Establish processes for participatory citizens' scrutiny of local government activities and functions.
- Governments must encourage the culture of having citizens charter

Elected Women in Local Government

- Governments should support elected women leaders in local governments to form a network at local government, national and regional levels to bring them together and provide a forum through which issues and challenges confronting them in their work can be addressed in a sustainable manner.
- AMCOD should recognize the critical input of pre-conference seminar for elected women local government leaders and thus future AMCOD meetings should be preceded by a pre-conference for elected women leaders in local government to discuss critical issues affecting them..
- Local governments, central governments and international development partners should support study tours among African local governments to provide opportunities for the exchange of experiences and practices for capacity-building of elected local government women leaders.

Partnership and Decentralised Cooperation

- Ministries responsible for Local Government should established institutional arrangements and mechanism for decentralized cooperation and peer to peer mutual learning.
- Governments should open and broaden up the scope of the cooperation to include CSO, the Private sector and other non state actors.

In conclusion Ministers reaffirm their commitment to the Maseru Declaration, and endeavour to give their support to the implementation of all the outstanding issues

Participating Ministers and Heads of Delegations

No.	Ministers	Country	Signature
1.	Hon. Virgilio Ferreira FONTES PEREIRA Minister for Territorial Administration	Angola	
2.	Hon. MOKO DEMONLE Issa Ministre de la Décentralisation, de la Gouvernance Locale, de l'Administration et de l'Aménagement du Territoire	Benin	
3.	Hon. Clement O. SAWADOGO Ministre de L'Administration Territoriale et de la Décentralisation	Burkina Faso	
4.	Hon. Venant KAMANA Ministre de l'intérieur et du Développement Communal	Burundi	
5.	H.E. MARAFA HAMIDOU YAYA Ministre d'Etat, Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale et de la Décentralisation	Cameroon	
6.	H.E. Emmanuel EDOU Ministre Délégué en charge de la Décentralisation	Cameroon	
7.	Hon. BOUCHRA TI ABDOULHALIM Ministre des Affaires Sociales, Gouvernement de l'Ile Autonome de MOHELI, Union des Comores	Comoros	
8.	Hon. Maxwell KOFI JUMAH Deputy Minister for Local Government	Ghana	
9.	Mr. Benson KIYANJUI KIMANI Principal Economist, Ministry of Planning of National Development	Kenya	
10.	Hon. Dr. Pontšo 'Matumelo SEKATLE Minister of Local Government	Lesotho	

11.	Hon. Sime'on MORIBAH Deputy Minister, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs	Liberia	
12.	Mr. KESTER Kaphaizi Principal Secretary Local Government & Rural Development	Malawi	
13.	Général de Division KAFOUGNA KONE Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale et de la décentralisation	Mali	
14.	Hon. Dr. James Burty DAVID Minister of Local Government	Mauritius	
15.	Mme. ZARROUK Najat Directrice de la Formation, représentant le Ministre de l'Intérieur du Royaume	Royaume du Maroc	
16.	Hon. Lucas CHOMERA Jeremias Minister of State Administration	Mozambique	
17.	Hon. Jerry EKANDJO Minister of Regional and Local Government, Housing & Rural Development	Namibia	
18.	Hon. MALAM ARI BOUCAR Secrétaire Général Ministère de l'intérieur, de la Sécurité Publique et de la Décentralisation	Niger	
19.	Hon. PETRO KONI ZEZE Georges Ministre Haut Commissaire à la Décentralisation et à la Régionalisation	Central Africa Republic	
20.	Hon. MPANGO OKUNDO Joseph Dovel Vice-Ministre de l'Intérieur	Democratic Republic of Congo	
21.	Hon. Mrs Maria de Cristo Costa CARVALHO Minister of Public Administration, State Reforms and Territorial Administration	Sao Tome and Principe	

22.	Hon. . OUSMANE MASSECK NDIAYE Ministre d'Etat, Ministre de la Décentralisation et des Collectivités Territoriales	Senegal	
23.	Hon. DAUDA KAMARA Minister of Internal Affairs, Local Government and Rural Development-	Sierra Leone	
24.	Hon. John Angol KORODIT Minister of Local Government	Sudan	
25.	Senator Chief SIPHO SHONGWE Minister of Regional Development and Youth Affairs	Swaziland	
26.	Hon. Celina OMPESHI KOMBANI Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office Regional Administration and Local Government	Tanzania	
27.	Hon. ABDERAMAN Djasnabaille Ministre chargé de la Décentralisation	Chad	
28.	Hon. Pascal AKOUSSOULELOU BODJONA Ministre d'Etat, de l'Administration Territoriale et des Collectivités Locales	Togo	
29.	Hon. Maj General KAHINDA OTAFIIRE Minister of Local Government	Uganda	
30.	Hon. Benny TETAMASHIMBA Deputy Minister of Local Government and Housing	Zambia	