



*Minister for Panchayati Raj Mani Shankar Aiyar (middle) launching the IBSA-LGF. Also seen (from L to R) B.B. Biyela, Municipal Manager, uThungulu Municipality, George Mathew, Director, Institute of Social Sciences, Jose Alberto Fogaca de Medeiros, Mayor of Porto Alegre and Nelly Rodrigues, Chairperson, District Panchayat, South Goa.*

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## Gender quota and governance

Women have made dramatic political gains in electoral politics across the world during the past decade or so. More so at the local government level. President Michelle Bachelet of Chile rightly puts it: "More women, more democracy, more justice." The Constitutional amendments in India providing not less than one third of seats for women in local government institutions have radically transformed Indian polity. Today various Indian States are engaged in competitive radicalism by way of reserving 50 % of seats in local bodies for women. Four States—Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand—have reserved 50 % seats for women. Uttarakhand has sought to steal the march over others by reserving half of seats for two terms. That the quota system in India has been a success is evident from the fact that in several States women are now getting elected from general, unreserved seats. Maharashtra and Karnataka have more than 43 % women in the village councils.

Latin America, with unsavoury reputation for machismo, has done quite well in bringing about a dramatic cultural change. Gender quota has proved to be an ice-breaker. In 1991, Argentina introduced gender quota in the lower house. Ten years later, it was extended to Senate. Today, 43 % members in Senate and 35 % in the lower house are women. As of now, 14 countries have passed quota laws requiring that 40 % of candidates of political parties be women. Even the latecomers seem to have fared well. The percentage of women in legislatures rose from 15 % to 25 % in Ecuador in 2006 election. After the 2005 election in Honduras the presence of women has risen to 23 % from 5.5 %. In contrast, only 16 % of US Congress members are women. The advantages of the quota system are there for all to see. Latin American countries with quota have an average of 20.3 % women in the legislature whereas those without quota have only 13.7 % women in their parliaments.

Women's presence is larger in provincial assemblies and local councils. About a quarter of all local council members are women, more than double the percentage from a decade ago. At the municipal level, where representation and governance is closest to the population, the proportion needs to grow more significantly. Only 5.3 % of mayors are women. Obviously the quota mechanism does not apply here.

Studies have found that the cultural attitude that affected women's rise in politics in the past is slowly changing. Women are now favoured for promoting inclusion and consensus building. According to a poll, about two-thirds (57 %) of people in Latin America found quota as beneficial. As many as 85 % of people thought women were better decision-makers and 66 % said they were more honest. An MIT economist, Esther Duffo, found that by objective standards, the women in India's village councils ran the villages better than men. For example, women constructed and maintained wells better and took fewer bribes.

But women still face many hurdles. They have to navigate public prejudices. When President Cristina Kirchner of Argentina was campaigning for presidency last year, media reports tended to emphasise her liking for short skirts, kinky boots and immaculately coiffed hair. Even Bachelet came under attack for being a single mother who had never held elected office. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, a Harvard Business School professor, says that "It is an uphill struggle, to be judged both a good woman and a good leader." Indira Gandhi may have been viewed in India as the "real man" in politics. But even women like Hillary Clinton have to face scrutiny on many more dimensions than a man. Not long ago, there was the public debate about Hillary's allegedly "thick ankles" or the headlines last year about cleavage.

Gender equity is not a question of numbers, but of democratic principles. ■

## What's New

### “Water, water, everywhere...” - London Mayor disagrees

London Mayor Ken Livingstone is urging Londoners to opt for tap water over bottled mineral water when frequenting restaurants. Livingstone said that in addition to being less expensive, consuming tap water is better for the environment, citing the heavy carbon footprint of transporting bottled varieties by road and often vast distances by air.

“People should be encouraged to ask and feel

confident they can ask in restaurants for tap water, rather than have to pay through the nose for bottled water,” he told his weekly news conference recently. Indeed, considering the worldwide shortage of water and the fact that safe drinking water is available to Britons, environmental minister Phil Woolas went as far as saying that the amount of money spent on mineral water “borders on being morally unacceptable” in a BBC documentary.

### World's first truly green city in Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi will soon be the site of the world's first zero-carbon, zero-waste, car-free city. Construction began recently, with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi laying the inaugural cornerstone in Masdar City.

What will be unique about Masdar is that a major driver for the development of the city is carbon finance. Carbon emissions reduced by Masdar City will be monetized under the Kyoto Protocol's clean development mechanism. Madagascar will utilize a plethora of sustainable

technologies, such as photovoltaic cells and concentrated solar power. By implementing these technologies, Masdar City will save the equivalent of more than US \$2 billion in oil over the next 25 years. In addition, the city will also generate more than 70,000 jobs and will boost Abu Dhabi's annual GDP by more than two per cent. “We are creating a city where residents and commuters will live the highest quality of life with the lowest environmental footprint,” CEO Dr. Al Jaber said.

### Baghdad and Tehran Municipalities sign reconstruction agreement

Tehran Mayor Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf, a former air force commander in the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, and Baghdad's Mayor, Sabir al-Isawi, signed a joint economic cooperation agreement between the two cities worth hundreds of millions of dollars. The agreement stipulates that

Iranian companies will work on the reconstruction of Baghdad's infrastructure.

Two years ago, the Iraqi government had agreed to open an Iranian office in Baghdad that supervises the activity of Iranian companies and investors.

### In the United Arab Emirates, you spit, you pay

Local municipalities in Abu Dhabi plan to impose a fine on those caught spitting in public places. Imposed by municipalities of Abu Dhabi city, the Western Region of Abu Dhabi Emirate and Al Ain, a city in the emirate's eastern part, the fine will be 100 dirhams (27.25 U.S. dollars). Those spitting in the streets and public places will be required to pay the fines on the spot if caught by the municipal inspectors.

In case the violator, particularly taxi drivers and other motorists or pedestrians, are unable to pay the fine on the spot, inspectors will seize their driving license or work permit, which will be returned only on payment of fine. It is hoped that the imposition of the fine will curb anti-social and unhygienic practices which are reportedly a growing problem in the Emirates.

### Amsterdam Mayor cracks down on commercial sex work

Following an announcement earlier this year that a third of the brothels in the centre of Amsterdam are to be closed, Mayor Job Cohen announced an increase in the properties affected to more than half. Cohen is continuing his crack down on brothels after having found evidence of links to organized crime and sex trafficking in relation to these establishments. It was hoped that the legalization

of prostitution in the Netherlands in 2000 would have resulted in an improvement in conditions for sex workers. Contrary to this, lawbreaking and trafficking appear to be rampant. Legalisation "didn't bring us what we hoped and expected," said the Mayor. "We want in part to reverse it, especially with regard to the exploitation of women in the sex industry."

### Environmental campaign gains momentum amongst European cities

Following the launch of a campaign by the leaders of 10 European cities to address climate protection, the mayors of other European cities have been asked to sign on to the covenant as well. This initiative is an important step in recognizing the importance of community action to ensure environmental sustainability and to minimize the human impact on climate change. The initial signatories of the Covenant include the cities of Berlin, Bonn, Heidelberg, Helsinki, London, Milan, Nantes and Riga.

Deputy Mayor of London, Nicky Gavron stressed the value of international networking such as the C40, which is a group linking 40 of the largest

cities in the world that are committed to climate protection, and ICLEI's "superb" Cities for Climate Protection Campaign. Letizia Moratti, Mayor of Milan, shared highlights in the city's climate change defense plan and the newly introduced pollution charge. Deputy Mayor of Riga, Almers Ludviks, focused on improvements in district heating and the need to raise awareness among citizens on opportunities for action. Katrin Lompscher, Berlin Senator for Health and Environmental Protection, stressed the value of partnerships with a variety of local stakeholders, such as housing and hospital associations, city sanitation and energy service providers.

### Sebata Financial Management System provides all the Answers

Maletswai Local Municipality, based in the Eastern Cape town of Aliwal North, has signed on with Sebata, a MICROmega company, to supply a much-needed new financial management system. SebataFMS (financial management system), promises to vastly improve financial management and reporting in the municipality. An almost immediate turnaround time will significantly reduce queuing at municipal offices.

Dewald Pretorius, business development manager at Sebata, says the system is tailor-made for local government and municipalities and has

proven successful in several municipalities in South Africa, Namibia and Lesotho. Sebata FMS incorporates everything a municipality needs: asset management, debt collection, pre payment vending, payroll and human resources management. "...it is more efficient from a financial perspective and will enhance daily service delivery," Phakamile Ngaki, CEO of Sebata, explained. He also said that it is much more cost effective for a municipality to be directly connected to an all-in-one service provider. This eliminates risk, losses and inefficiencies associated with extended downtime on mission critical systems.

**Sharjah Municipality goes mobile to issue parking tickets**

As part of the ongoing campaign to build Sharjah as an economically and socially well-developed Emirate, the Municipality recently announced the completion of a new, fully-automated parking ticket system.

After careful consideration of the different products that exist to perform this service, Sharjah Municipality chose Barcode Gulf, distributor for Zebra Technologies and Motorola. The new system stands to revolutionise the existing procedure, where traffic wardens took up to three minutes to issue a ticket, and handwriting posed immense challenges and room for error.

The Transport and Freightage Department of Sharjah Municipality have become the first to introduce a mobility solution. The new system allows traffic wardens to issue fines within seconds and synchronize the issuance seamlessly with Sharjah's Police Traffic Department, delivering faster, more efficient results to Sharjah residents and visitors.

Wardens will be able to monitor parking tickets by scanning the barcode on the parking card to see if the ticket is still valid. In case of ticket expiry, the warden can issue a parking fine on the spot. The newly proposed solution from Barcode Gulf does away with handwriting.

**Local governance program in Albania**

January 23, 2008 marked the launch of a four year \$7.3 million initiative of USAID called the Local Governance Program in Albania. USAID Mission Director Edward T. Landau and the Mayors of 10 participating municipalities, selected by virtue of their fiscal capacity and small business growth rate, signed Memoranda of Understanding to outline the terms of the agreement. The program aims to improve governance in select municipalities and build public-private partnerships to foster a "business friendly" environment in which the local private sector can flourish. USAID activities will seek to increase investment, create jobs, raise incomes, and ultimately, expand municipalities' tax base.

In his remarks to the mayors, Mission Director Landau noted, "over the past decade, USAID assistance has helped establish the legal basis and technical skills needed for the decentralization of governmental powers to municipalities. Now, through local economic growth, USAID will seek to help generate the tax revenues and other financial tools that municipalities will require to exercise their powers." Municipal Economic Growth committees will be established in each city to support the program. A public-private-civil society partnership will help these communities develop a strategic vision of the future economic development for their communities and prioritize immediate actions, such as improvement of public services, tax collection procedures, and asset management systems.

**EU recognizes role of local government in development**

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), together with the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities organized a seminar entitled, "Non state actors and local authorities in development" in Lisbon, on 7 November 2007.

Following the CEMR seminar was the EU/Africa Summit, which took place in Lisbon in December 2007. CEMR and its world organisation, United

and Local Governments spoke on behalf of local and regional government, seeking to highlight the role of local government in overseas cooperation policies. The seminar also took place alongside the European Commission's Development Days, in Lisbon, from 7 to 9 November 2007, with the EDD especially focused on the impact of climate change on development cooperation and the need for partnership between all actors involved.

# HERstory

## *Nelly Rodrigues, Chairperson of the South Goa District Panchayat,* **on women and politics in India**

**N**elly Rodrigues wears many hats, and she wears them all well. At home she is a wife and a mother. By profession she is a chemistry teacher at the Murgaon Education Society College. Between these two jobs, Nelly manages yet another role: she is the chairperson of the South Goa District Panchayat, and a determined advocate of women's political empowerment. We sat down with Nelly Rodrigues to hear her story--the struggles and the triumphs, as well as her dream of seeing real gender balance in the Indian political system.

Ms. Rodrigues lives in Majorda, Goa, serving the same community where she was born and raised. Born to parents who did not take much of an interest in politics, young Nelly herself did not expect to enter the political realm. A student of the sciences,



she finished her MSc at Bombay University before moving on to get her B.Ed so that she could begin teaching what she was passionate about: chemistry.

She now jokes that while she teaches chemistry, she spends a lot of time thinking about the chemistry of politics!

Nelly began teaching at the Murgaon Education Society College in 1984. In 1988 she was elected president, and also served as president of the Junior Chamber. Later in 2000, Ms. Rodrigues became the President of the Lions Ladies Auxiliary of Lions Clubs Majorda Cansaulim. In addition to this, Ms. Rodrigues is a member of the Goa State Executive Bharat Scouts & Guides, as well as the President of Salcete Bharat Scouts and Guides. She is a life member of the A.A. de Majorda Club, Secretary of the Social Apostolete, a youth Red Cross Member, and a YRC Councillor. Ms. Rodrigues was also the District Chairperson for

Students Welfare in 2004, and member of the Telephone Advisory Committee in the year 2002-2003.

It's hard to believe it, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. Far before Nelly Rodrigues entered the political sphere, she was serving her community in various capacities. "It was because of my social work that people elected me as a panchayat (local council) member," explains Nelly. Because she was so committed to bettering her community, Nelly was elected a District Panchayat Member in the Colva Constituency in the year 2000. In 2005 she experienced her most impressive political victory. She again stood for elections and won with the highest margin in the state of Goa, of nearly 5,000 votes on an open seat.

Ms. Rodrigues has now been the Chairperson of the South Goa District Panchayat for 3 years and was recently elected President of the Panchayat Mahila Shakti Abhiyan (PMSA), a body of elected women representatives from the State of Goa. Her personal experience in politics and her work with the PMSA specifically makes her something of an expert on the challenges that women face in India, especially in the political sphere.

For Nelly, the most obvious challenge women face is the sheer lack of recognition for their contributions to society. Seventy five percent of Indian women live in the villages, and the amount

of work that they do is tremendous. "Women are even more capable than men, they could reach the moon if given the resources," says Nelly. Gender bias entrenched in the minds of people and in the political structures of our country sideline millions of women, and Nelly has made it her goal to be the voice of those women.

An initiative of the Federal Minister of Panchayati Raj Mani Shankar Aiyar, Panchayat Mahila Shakti Abhiyan is one avenue through which Nelly advocates women's political empowerment. The funds for this initiative are channelled through the federal government to the state level and are used to organize capacity building workshops and other programming for the elected women representatives of Goa.

Nelly always reminds herself that "it was a dream of Gandhi to empower villages." Women are now making this dream a reality thanks to a constitutional amendment which reserves one third of the seats for women in all leadership positions in panchayats (village councils). Nelly sees a qualitative difference between men and women leaders: the latter seem more sincere and dedicated in their efforts to serve their constituents. "By nature woman's heart is emotional and compassionate...it makes her work hard to make sure peoples' problems are solved."

Consequently, Nelly has noted that "there has been a drastic change due to this amendment. There has been a lot of progress and development...there is especially a lot more transparency. Women manage the budgets of their household, and they now manage finances at the village level very well." The problem Nelly sees in all of this is that the state government does not recognize this progress. As such, there is no reservation for women at higher levels of government, including in the parliament and state legislature.

Nelly demands that the quota system in place for the panchayats should be adapted at the parliamentary and legislative level as well. "We demand 33 per cent, and right now the government is not even willing to give one per cent." Nelly sees the reservation as the only way for women to enter higher-level positions. "Men spend a lot of money on campaigns and women cannot do this. They (women) must also maintain their homes. Women cannot fight the money and muscle power of men if they are not given this facility." If the success of the reservation system at the panchayat level is any indication, Nelly believes that quotas at higher levels of government will lead to economic empowerment of women.

Ms. Rodrigues feels hopeful that her dream will be realized, mainly because Mani Shankar Aiyar is so committed to decentralization and devolving power to the grassroots level. She strongly believes that "this pace of decentralization would never have happened under any other minister."

Ms. Rodrigues' own dedication to decentralization is equally evident. She finds immense satisfaction when she sees schemes implemented for her constituents: house repairs, scholarships for underprivileged children, old age stipends, infrastructure development, including roads, street lights, wells, bus shelters and community centres. Indeed, although Nelly Rodrigues dons many different hats, her role as Chairperson of the South Goa District Panchayat evokes in her a very unique sense of responsibility: "Once people have elected and given us a mandate we should work hard to make our villages model villages that will experience internal and external growth which will be actually visible." With women like Nelly Rodrigues helping to construct these villages, the benefits of this growth will be more equitably distributed.

— Surita Parashar

## HER STORY

## ■ The Big Story ■

### New forum for south-south cooperation

India, Brazil and South Africa, the three whales in the global ocean, have found a viable framework for cooperation in the form of IBSA Dialogue Forum since Foreign Ministers of the three countries met in Brasilia in 2003. This Forum at the government level has been rightly described as a “café-con-leite-alliance.” Given the significant synergies among the three countries, the dialogue forum has begun to acquire wings to fly. The cooperation involves diverse fields like Security Council reforms, WTO issues, human security, South-South cooperation and innovative globalization. And yet, the IBSA Dialogue Forum is not a formal organisation, it has no headquarters and it doesn't project itself either as alliance or a bloc. Central to IBSA's mission and agenda is the overarching goal to alter the balance of power between developed and developing countries.

With the launch of IBSA Local Governance Forum (IBSA-LGF) on January 19, 2008 in Delhi, IBSA has acquired a new dimension, a forum that will not only promote best practices in the field of local democracy among elected local government representatives of the three countries but also provide a civil society component to the trilateral initiative.

This Local Governance Forum has the following twin objectives: (1) to provide a global platform for practitioners of local governments and civil society organizations engaged in research and advocacy on local democracy, as well as democracy activists to share their best practices and learn from each other's experiences and (2) to facilitate South-South cooperation by promoting democratic decentralization, transparency of elections and streamlining service delivery.

India, Brazil and South Africa, the three regional behemoths, are also vibrant democracies. The interactions and collaboration within the IBSA framework at the local government level and the local government-civil society interface have the potential to offer a new governance model. It could give a new thrust to the much-needed globalization from below as against globalization from above. At the core of this initiative is the imperative need to strengthen grassroots democracy. There are significant synergies among the three countries. The IBSA-LGF would require to use these

synergies to fully utilize them for collective benefits of the South.

The South is bewilderingly diverse with some countries more endowed economically than others and their political, economic and social institutions at varying levels of development. While some are wrestling with their failed economies and doomed governance institutions, others are emerging as potential regional powers. At the level of local self-government, this diversity is even more pronounced. But this diversity can be an asset. India, Brazil, South Africa Local Governance Forum is envisaged as a platform not only for building alliances and partnerships, but also for improving governance and service delivery.

The cooperation among IBSA nations would strengthen the bargaining leverage of South with IBSA as powerful interlocutors of the developing countries vis-à-vis the industrial world. Central to the Forum's mission and agenda is the long-term objective of altering the balance of power and democratizing and decentralizing global decision-making bodies like the UN, WTO, and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Indian Panchayati Raj Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar launched the India-Brazil-South Africa - Local Governance Forum (IBSA-LGF) at the end of the three-day get-together in Delhi of mayors, councillors and civil society representatives from India, Brazil and South Africa.

With the support of the Ministries of Panchayati Raj and Urban Development, Government of India, and ActionAid International, the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi organised this get-together (January 17-19, 2008) as a backdrop for the launching ceremony.

The three-day conference, inaugurated by Urban Development Minister of India S. Jaipal Reddy, took stock of the areas of cooperation among the three countries. George Mathew, Director, Institute of Social Sciences, explained the background of this initiative. Delhi Mayor Arti Mehra, ActionAid International's Governance Coordinator Sandeep Chachra, Porto Alegre's Mayor José Alberto Fogaça de Medeiros and Zululand District Municipality Deputy Mayor Vusumuzi Osburn Mbuyisa, in their addresses, spoke of the significance of this historic initiative.

After the inaugural session, there were five thematic sessions, several presentations and three special addresses by Panchayati Raj Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, Member of Parliament and former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah and Magsaysay Award winner Aruna Roy. Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Anand Sharma, Brazilian Ministry of Cities' Chief International Advisor Luiz Carlos Fabbri and South African Democracy Development Programme's Executive Director Rama Naidu addressed the valedictory session. Summing up the proceedings, Institute's Associate Director Ash Narain Roy thanked the participants and all those who contributed to the success of the meet.

Participants in the three-day meeting representing the three countries constituted the veritable who's who in the field of advocacy and practice of local governance. Besides the Porto Alegre Mayor, representatives from Brazil included National Municipalities Confederation president Paulo Roberto Ziulkoski; Curitiba City Hall's Municipal Secretary of Management Jose Richa Filho; Porto Alegre City's CIDADE Director Sergio Baierle; Diadema City Hall mayor Jose de Fillipi Junior; National Municipalities Confederation's International Advisor Gustavo de Lima Cezario; Brazilian government's Special Advisor for International Affairs Alberto Kleiman; Curitiba City Hall's Secretary of International Affairs Eduardo Pereira Guimarães; Paraíba State Government's Cooperate Coordinator Sonia Maria Germano de Figueiredo; and Porto Alegre's Secretary of Political Coordination and Local Governance Cezar Augusto Busatto.

South African representatives included eThekweni Council's Executive Committee member and Democratic Alliance Caucus leader Cllr. John Steehuisen; Zululand District Municipality manager JH De Klerk; eThekweni Municipality councillor Jayraj Singh; SALGA

National Executive Committee member and Governance chairperson Cllr. Dickson Masemola, uThungulu District Municipality's Municipal Manager B.B. Biyela; councillor Theresa Thembi Nzuzi; councillor and United Democratic Movement's National Treasurer Thandiwe Christobell Nontenja; eThekweni Municipality councillor and caucus leader Wayne Thring; SALGA National Executive Committee member Cllr. Nandi Mayathula-Khoza; and SALGA CEO Xolile George.

The Indian side was represented, among others, by Kochi mayor Mercy Williams; Srinagar mayor Abdul Rashid Pandit; Bhopal mayor Sunil Sood; Agra mayor Anjula Singh Mahour; Faridabad mayor Brahmwati Khatana; Jammu Deputy mayor Rani Gargi Blowria, Myladuthurai Municipality chairman Jayaraman Lingaraj; Goa Zilla Panchayat chairperson Nelly J. Rodrigues; North District Zilla Parishad (Sikkim) president Lobzang Gyaltzen Tenzing; Nalgonda Zilla Parishad president Kasiratty Narayana Reddy; Purnea Zilla Parishad president Kanti Devi; Kanyakumari Zilla

Panchayat president Ajitha Mano Thangaraj; Srinagar councillor and Association of Local Governance of India president Abdul Gani Khan; and Bellandur Gram Panchayat president K. Jagannath. ActionAid International representatives, International Director (Asia) John Samuel, Country Directors of Brazil and India Jorge Romano and Babu

Mathew and Local Governance Expert Brian Meir were among the distinguished speakers. Inderjit Khanna, State Election Commissioner, Raja-sthan and K.C. Sivaramakrishnan, former Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development, were other special guests.

After three days of deliberations over various issues pertaining to local democracy, the conference unanimously adopted a Charter of India-Brazil-South Africa - Local Governance Forum. (See Charter on following page).

## THE BIG STORY



Section of the audience at the inaugural session (L to R) Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India Malay Mishra; Former Member of Parliament Ramchandra Reddy; Mayor of Srinagar (Jammu & Kashmir) Abdul Rashid Pandit; Associate Director, Institute of Social Sciences, Ash Narain Roy and Brazilian Charge d'Affaires J.C. Fonseca

## IBSA-LGF Charter

WHEREAS India, Brazil and South Africa are committed to democratic forms of government and aim at taking the democratic process to ever higher levels;

WHEREAS as delegates of cities and municipalities of the three major countries, we strongly believe that no democracy can be meaningful and vibrant without a strong base of local government system;

WHEREAS the three democracies of Asia, Latin America and Africa have launched the local democracy programme on a national scale;

WHEREAS there exists a vast scope for mutual cooperation and collaboration in different fields of local governance;

WHEREAS we strongly feel that there is urgent need for the formation of a multilateral forum to institutionalise cooperation and collaboration among the cities, municipalities and civil society of the three countries;

we, the local authorities, practitioners, researchers, activists of local governance and civil society, therefore, resolve to form the India-Brazil-South Africa - Local Governance Forum, that is IBSA - LGF, to further the following goals and objectives:

1. TO PREPARE necessary ground for: exchange of ideas and experiences; exposure to best practices; experiments, new methodologies and research in an environment of learning from each other for the evolution of ideal local democracy systems suited to the unique situations and genius of the three countries, their cities and their peoples;
2. TO PROVIDE a platform for all those who are committed to and are working for the promotion and strengthening of local governance;
3. TO WORK towards making governance at the local level more democratic, participative, transparent, just and humane;
4. TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE federal values in the constitutional, administrative and fiscal spheres for effective management of local government in each country;
5. TO DEVELOP multilateralism in the grassroots practices of local democracy;
6. TO PROMOTE international solidarity and cooperation in support of decentralised governance;

and commit ourselves to execute and expand the following programme in order to achieve the above-mentioned goals and objectives:

- BUILD alliances, partnerships and networks with cities, municipalities, academic centres, research institutions and civil society organisations engaged in practice, study, research and advocacy in the field of local democracy;
- INSTITUTIONALISE linkages between research and advocacy organisations working in the area of local governance in the three countries;
- ENCOURAGE active participation of under-privileged sections, particularly women and other marginalised groups;
- FORMULATE and undertake joint studies, actions and programmes to spread the ideas and practice of participatory democracy;
- SHARE research findings, best practices and innovations;
- HOLD conferences, discussions and meetings on all aspects of decentralisation;
- ORGANISE exposure visits of elected local government representatives, functionaries, research scholars, activists and media persons;
- PUBLICISE actions, programmes, events, research findings, visits, etc. through various forms of mass media, by bringing out books, periodicals, monographs and other publications and creating portals and websites, producing films, videos, documentaries, cassettes, etc.;
- ESTABLISH an International University of Local Democracy in any one of the three countries with country chapters in the other two;
- CONDUCT comparative studies and surveys as well as election watches for a better understanding of each other's local governance system and devise tools for creative interventions to achieve better local development, transparency, accountability and service delivery.

## The Practitioner's Page

**M**ayor José Fogaça opens his decentralization toolbox to talk about participatory budgeting, quota systems and community involvement in Porto Alegre



**B**razil's vibrant local government system is a model that holds many lessons for other governments that seek to devolve power to the grassroots

**level. What is the secret behind Brazil's decentralization success? José Fogaça opens his decentralization tool box to talk about Participatory Budgeting, quota systems and community involvement.**

A member of the PMBD, Fogaça was elected Mayor of Porto Alegre on behalf of the Socialist People's Party. Now in his 4<sup>th</sup> year in office he has been long listed for the 2008 World Mayor award, and it's not hard to see why. Formerly a Senator, a Federal Deputy of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, and a State Deputy in Rio Grande do Sul, Fogaça brings a cornucopia of political experience to the table. In addition, he maintains a critical perspective of government, likely because of his background as a professor of law and a journalist.

What did we learn about Fogaça when he joined other local government leaders at the IBSA LGF in January? Other than the fact that this talented composer can put on a great show along with his songbird wife Isabela Fogaça, we learned that his 2004 campaign commitment to be a 'candidate for change,' holds true today...

*Q: Are the people voluntarily involved in participatory budgeting?*

A: Yes, the people are voluntarily involved in the process. As many as 30,000 people are present in the 17 regional assemblies of the participatory budgeting of Porto Alegre. This large participation means that the people are confident in the system. In addition, participatory budgeting is entirely for and by the people—all sources come from the municipal budget; there is no support from external agencies.

*Q: What is the role of local government/municipality in the democratic process of Brazil?*

A: The role of local government in Brazil is essential for democracy and accuracy in the focus of social targets. Brazil is a very

decentralized country. Municipalities have no money, but are politically strengthened to ask for resources from Federal and State governments.

*Q: Do you have any quota system for women at the local government level?*

A: Yes, we have quota systems for black people, women and people with disabilities at the local government level, in the realm of public workers. We still fight against prejudices including our Accountability Court of Municipalities in Rio Grande do Sul State, but our lawyers sustain our position in the judgments.

*Q: What are the key challenges faced by municipalities in Brazil?*

A: The challenge is to obtain justice in the distribution of resources. Federal Government keeps the lion's share.

*Q: Are the distribution and management of basic services like health, education, sanitation and water under the purview of local government?*

A: Yes, all social services are under the supervision and execution of municipalities in Brazil, except for services provided by the police.

*Q: Brazil has been successful in tackling HIV/AIDS to a great extent. What is the role of municipalities in this?*

A: We have an effective distribution scheme for antiretroviral treatment. The demand for treatment is so great that it remains the responsibility of the Federal and State governments. Brazil says no to property rights in terms of HIV/AIDS medicines.

*Q: What are some additional best practices and innovative programmes of Porto Alegre Municipality?*

A: Our main action in communities is to promote solidarity through local governance. We join the enterprises, voluntary groups, service clubs, schools, mothers organizations, NGOs, sports associations, and neighbourhood entities to seek local solutions together. Many community problems are solved this way. Social capital is relevant. Where it does not exist, you have to create the local conditions to cultivate it. Also, co-responsibility is important, especially in terms of public budget. If people have it, communities gain large profits for themselves.

— Surita Parashar

# Global News

## Local governments climate protection agreement

In the follow up to the UCLG Jeju Congress Declaration in which the world's local leaders pledged themselves to confronting the challenges of global warming, UCLG, ICLEI, the G40 Group and the World Mayors Council for Climate Change inaugurated the World Mayors and Local Governments Climate Protection Agreement earlier this year at the start of the High Level Segment of the UN Climate talks in Bali, Indonesia.

The Climate Protection Agreement calls on local governments to accept the challenge and co-responsibility to do their part in preventing the dangerous effects of climate change. To make this

feasible, the Agreement also calls upon national authorities to support local governments by providing adequate mandates resources and international instruments to achieve the common goals.

The broadest possible number of signatories to the agreement will be a clear signal of the recognition that local governments should get involved in this issue. UCLG and sister local government's organizations are trying to make the voice of local authorities heard in this process and articulating a joint strategy to contribute to the governmental negotiations.

## A municipal boundary dispute in Turkey results in 21 deaths

A municipal boundary dispute between the Bayrampapa and Zeytinburnu districts contributed to a killer blast that occurred on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008 in Davupapa, Turkey. As many as 21 people died and hundreds were said to be injured in the explosion, which took place in a five-storey building and quickly triggered the collapse of second four-storey building adjacent. The buildings housed more than 130 businesses with thousands of illegal workers.

Building site safety is often ignored in Davutpapa

due to a municipal boundary dispute. While it is closer to the centre of the Bayrampapa district, topographically Davutpapa is governed by Zeytinburnu district. The arbitrary boundary has caused the latter municipality to ignore the infrastructure issues in the region, including building site safety. The neighbourhood is said to have serious infrastructure problems and it has no proper sewer system. "We are stuck between two municipalities. No one cares about this place," one of the workers said.

## Procidades program pumps 26.6 million into Brazilian municipalities

The Inter-American Development Bank announced the approval of US\$26.6 million for two operations under Procidades, a credit mechanism that finances integrated development programs for Brazilian municipalities that aim to improve the quality of urban and social services for their citizens.

In this case, Procidades will benefit Campo Grande with US\$19.3 million and Toledo in with US\$7.3 million. In Campo Grande, financing will help revitalize the downtown area, improve mobility across the city and increase the administrative efficiency of the city government. The program will

implement urban projects to improve city government workings.

In Toledo, the program will consolidate and expand education and social assistance services and sporting areas, improve public spaces and upgrade urban facilities designed to protect the environment and foster community living. It will also improve mobility conditions in freight and passenger transportation and the efficiency of the municipality's administrative management.

Two previous loans supported programs in Niterói and Nova Iguaçu municipalities in the Rio de Janeiro.

### US cities launch database in fight against illegal guns

To combat the spread of illegal guns 11 east coast US cities are launching a database, set to come into operation in 2008, which will pool information collected from local police forces. A spokesman for the group of cities, which includes New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore, said that the database would make it more difficult for illegal gun dealers to do business throughout the Interstate 95 corridor.

Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who co-founded the Mayors Against Illegal Guns Coalition together with Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, said the federal government hadn't done enough to

curb the use of illegal guns. "This is exactly the kind of system that the federal government should be building for cities, but since they don't seem to be doing it, we are doing it on our own," he said. "Right now, cities are fighting largely in isolation." Baltimore mayor Sheila Dixon agreed: "Violent crime, particularly gun crime, is not just a local problem, it's a national problem."

Bloomberg also told reporters that the mayors' coalition had sent a questionnaire to presidential candidates asking what they would do to get illegal guns off the street, but none of the leading contenders had replied.

### Guayaquil Mayor leads protest against Ecuadorian government

Led by Mayor Jaime Nebot, thousands of people marched through Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest and wealthiest city, to protest against government plans for constitutional reform earlier this year. Mayor Nebot says he has no presidential ambitions but would run again for mayor. "If the government does something good I do not oppose that, but if they seek to destroy Guayaquil and if the president wants to become an emperor then I will fiercely oppose that," he said. The mayor

warned the government that he would seek autonomy for Guayaquil. "I'm willing to give you the rest of my life, my life for Guayaquil, for an Ecuador without misery, for an Ecuador which employs, for a rebel and autonomous Guayaquil within the unity of an Ecuador that works," he warned. President Correa also gathered a similar crowd of about 40,000 supporters in Guayaquil, his native city, to mark his first year in office. Mayor Jaime Nebot has been short-listed for this year's World Mayor Award.

### Rural Tokyo to benefit from tax revenue transfer

Japan's Liberal Democratic Party government has come to an agreement with Tokyo's Governor Shintaro Ishihara to disperse some ¥300bn (US \$2.7 billion) of tax revenues from the capital to struggling rural areas. Ishihara told reporters that he had reluctantly acceded to Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's request for the transfer, which will be dispersed beginning April 2008. The agreement, which Fukuda hopes will assist in his administration regaining

support lost in rural areas, commits the government to giving full support to Tokyo's 2016 Olympic bid. Japan's internal affairs ministry said that central government grants to local governments had decreased by ¥5.1tr since 2004. Tokyo Metropolitan Government's own figures show that the capital yielded ¥4.9tr in tax revenue last year, ¥2.4tr of which was from business taxes.

## The Sitca S.A. company pledges \$4 Million for Limon garbage

The Sitca S.A. company will treat garbage from the Caribbean port city of Limon in addition to the towns of Siquirres, Guacimo and Matina, sorting out the organic stuff for processing into gas fuel for home use, recycling the rest and leaving only 30% to place in a landfill.

Under the proposed plan, the company will actually pay \$2 per ton to the municipalities that currently have to pay \$13 per ton to

landfills. The only requisite for the towns is that the municipal governments must sign a \$20-year contract.

The plan will be of immense benefit for the residents of Limon, who have been stuck with the 1,600 tons of refuse generated monthly with nowhere to put it. Limon's landfills currently function, but have a limited life and the use of them risks environmental contamination of the environment.

## Plastic bags - policies and practices to reduce consumption

ACR+, the Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling and sustainable Resource management, has published the 2008 update of its report entitled *Plastic Bags - Policies and Practices to Reduce Consumption*. The report, first issued in January 2006, looks at existing national initiatives around the world aimed at controlling the use of plastic bags.

Each year every person in a typical industrialized country consumes 300 plastic bags, a statistic that, when applied across the European Union, amounts to a whopping 150 billion bags being distributed each year. There are opposing views of what the infamous bags actually represent, ranging from

unsightly nuisance to serious environmental hazard. The different views have contributed to a range of policies being implemented around the world, including charges, taxes and even bans. In the most extreme cases, people have been imprisoned for selling plastic bags.

The report examines the national policy initiatives and tools used to control the use of plastic bags. The ACR+ report demonstrates that existing tools focus on the provision of information, infrastructure, legal and economic instruments and that each has a particular application, depending on local circumstances and the level of administration at which the policy initiative takes place.

## Mayor threatens would-be corpses with severe punishment

The 260 residents of the village of Sarpournex were recently given a severe and equally strange warning by their Mayor, Gerard Lalanne. The mayor of the village in southwest France has threatened residents with severe punishment if they die, because there is no room left in the overcrowded cemetery to bury them.

The ordinance posted in the council office read that "all persons not having a plot in the cemetery

and wishing to be buried in Sarpournex are forbidden from dying in the parish." In addition residents were told that, "offenders will be severely punished."

The mayor was forced to take action after an administrative court in the nearby town of Pau ruled in January that the acquisition of adjoining private land to extend the cemetery would not be justified.

## Towns and Regions to take a stand against human trafficking

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is urging all European cities and regions to sign an online declaration on the fight against human trafficking. The Declaration, which was presented and opened for signing on

31 May 2006, commits signatories "to make the fight against the trafficking of human beings a top priority for our administrations and to implement proposals...particularly those aiming at the protection of victims, their rehabilitation and reintegration."

### Adjmé Mayor criticizes Ivory Coast city and sanitation minister

Further to Ivory Coast City and Sanitation Minister Mel Eg Théodore's "cleaning-operation" in the streets of Adjmé Town, which forcibly relocated street vendors to restore the city's good-old-days look, Adjmé Mayor Youssef Sylla openly took up the fight with higher authorities. Without regards for the ranks of the Minister, Adjmé Mayor fumed at him, saying that the town authorities lost a lot of financial assets causing taxes

to be raised because of the "cleaning-operation." Sylla thus lost important funds in prevision of the upcoming elections. Moreover, he proved himself to his constituents incapable of protecting them appropriately; his measures to deal with the crisis have been unsuccessful. The town merchants had no better suited place to lure clients into their shops than the streets. All of this makes Sylla's stay in the town hall uncertain.

### Dubai shops around for twinning

Dubai is discussing twinning with more cities from across the world to enhance the sharing of knowledge and experience, a Dubai Municipality official said on the concluding day of the third Euro-Arab Cities Forum on 11 February.

The Assistant Director-General of Administrative and General Services Affairs in Dubai Municipality, Obeid Salem Al Shamsi, made the announcement as participants at the forum expressed their commitment to the sharing of expertise.

The Dubai Declaration outlined the forum's role in sustainably developing cities, its

importance as a platform for improving Euro-Arab cities' partnerships and the decision to hold the forum every three years in an Arab and European city alternately. A steering committee will assess the recommendations and devise ways of executing them, including workshops, training courses and additional forums. The speakers at the round-table discussion agreed that twinning was one of the key ways of achieving the forum's goals. The basis for twinning agreements will be focused on the different areas of knowledge offered by a city or that Dubai could offer.

### Growing amounts of municipal waste a big problem

A study by the European Environment Agency states that the amount of municipal waste produced each year is expected to grow by 25 % from 2005 to 2020.

It is estimated that currently each European citizen produces an average of over half a tonne of municipal waste a year. This amount should further increase to 680 kg per person by 2020. Sustained growth in private consumption contributes to this projected continuing increase in waste volumes.

The study is not all bad news. For instance, disposal by landfilling has always been the predominant treatment method for municipal waste,

but over the last two decades considerable reductions in landfilling have taken place. In 2004, 47 % of total EU municipal waste was landfilled. This is expected to decrease further to around 35 % by 2020.

In addition, it is important to remember that consumption patterns across the EU are not uniform. There are significant differences between citizens from the old (EU 15) and the new EU Member States (EU 12). While an EU 15 citizen generated 570 kg on average in 2004, the figure was only 335 kg for an EU 12 citizen.

### USAID launches a local economic development project in Sevastopol

USAID's Local Economic Development (LED) Project, the Sevastopol City Council and the Sevastopol Municipal Administration signed a Protocol of Intent on cooperation to develop and implement a strategy to bring investment to the city.

Following the signing ceremony, the City Council hosted the first session of the Expert Committee (EC) on strategic planning to promote investment at its offices. Notable attendees of the inaugural session included Earl Gast, USAID's Mission Director in Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, Valeriy Saratov, Chair of Sevastopol City Council, Leonid Savchenko, Deputy Head of Sevastopol Municipal Administration, and Howard Ockman, LED Chief of Party. The EC consists of CEOs of local

businesses, city council members, local government officials, representatives of the academic community and civil society organizations. The EC will make all decisions concerning directions and priorities of the city's future strategic plan on economic development, while LED will provide expert support and methodological guidance to the process.

LED has previously sponsored preparation of strategic plans for economic development in 44 Ukrainian cities. As of February 1, 2008, 43 plans were approved by their respective city councils, and 17 more cities were working to develop their plans with LED support.

### Guide on integrated environmental management for local governments

In order to help municipal authorities to improve environmental performance, the EU Commission has released a guide on integrated environmental management. The publication is aimed at Europe's local government and is based upon examples of best practice developed by towns and cities themselves.

The diversity between EU cities means that no uniform solution can be applied across the

board. Thus the guide is not intended to be a rigid set of rules to be followed in all circumstances, but instead as a reminder of the key elements that could be considered when developing integrated environmental management programs at local levels. The guide follows on from the publication by the EU Commission of the Thematic Strategy on the urban environment (2006).

### Tehran-Baghdad municipalities agree on 4 expert groups

February 23 Tehran Mayor Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf announced that Tehran and Baghdad municipalities were discussing the establishment of four joint working groups in engineering, traffic and urban transportation, urban services, as well as educational and cultural services. Technical issues of the city were identified during the first round of negotiations, which will be followed in the

subsequent working group sessions. Calling Iraq a rich country, Qalibaf said, "Iraq has no financial problem, all it needs are technical contribution, investment, consultation by our companies, and (involvement of) private sector." Qalibaf also held talks with Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki in which the Iraqi side sought Iran's technical assistance in rebuilding Baghdad.

### Municipalities Minister inaugurates sewage project in Karbala

On 17 February Iraq's minister of municipalities and public works, Riyadh Ghareeb, inaugurated a sewage rehabilitation project in the holy Shiite city of Karbala and laid the foundation stone for another project in the same area. The project will cost 6.95 billion Iraqi dinars (\$US 5.600 million).

The project will take six months for completion, Governor Aqil al-Khazali said, explaining that it aims at ridding the area of ground and rain water. Al-Khazali

added that the minister laid the foundation stone for another sewage rehabilitation project in central Karbala: "The project includes the rehabilitation of six water stations and the installation of six electricity generators," the governor indicated.

Karbala, Iraq's second holiest Shiite city after Najaf, lies 130 km southwest of the Iraqi capital Baghdad. It hosts the shrines of the third Shiite Imam Hussein, grandson of Prophet Mohammed, and his brother Abbas.

### Mayor of Nabateyyeh: Iran continues rebuilding Lebanon

Mayor Hatam Harb of Nabateyyeh, a city in southern Lebanon, declared Iran continues its help to rebuild Lebanon and has allocated one million dollars for urban development projects in the city. Iran first declared its commitment to help rebuild Lebanon after an Israeli attack against the country. The most recent donation was given by

Tehran municipality and other municipalities of Iran's big cities. Iran has participated in the implementation of approximately 600 development projects in Lebanon, including educational, religious, medical, and urban development, as well as various other infrastructure schemes, of which 70 percent of the operations have been completed so far.

### A new dialogue for development

The Euro-Arab Cities Forum held "a New Dialogue for Development" was held in Dubai on 10-11th February. The main theme of the conference was, "we need to co-operate more closely for our mutual interest."

The Forum was the third in a series dating back to 1988 and brought together representatives of over 40 European cities, and a like number from Arab cities across North Africa and the Middle East. The conference declaration requested that this Forum should be organised every three years, to be "a platform for improving partnership relations among European and Arab cities," organising exchanges, studies and conferences to achieve a common vision as a "necessary condition for a stable and peaceful world."

CEMR Secretary-General Jeremy Smith said "it is essential that, in today's more insecure world, we have better relations and co-operation between Europe and the Arab world - and it is at city and local level that the best progress can often be made. We are grateful to the Municipality of Dubai for making it possible to reopen our dialogue after a long gap. We need to build on this positive start."

The Forum was organized by the city of Dubai and the Arab Towns Organisation, together with European partners in the Congress of Local and Regional authorities of the Council of Europe, CEMR, COPPEM, the Italian-based network for Euro-Mediterranean partnership, and AUDI, the Arab Urban Development Institute.



# Election News

## Support for Sarkozy sinking

Results are in for France's municipal elections held on Sunday February 16<sup>th</sup> confirming the defeat of President Nicolas Sarkozy's Conservative party.

The Socialist Party swept the polls, taking an estimated 49 percent against 47.5 percent for the UMP. One tough and crucial victory did go to Sarkozy's party: UMP mayor Jean-Claude Gaudin won the port city of Marseille. However, the UMP lost almost 40 towns of over 30,000 inhabitants including cities such as Lyon, Strasbourg, and Toulouse.

In Paris, Socialist Mayor Bertrand Delanoë bettered his position while the northern city of

Caen, which had been governed by the Right for the past 100 years, decided to vote Left. His triumphant re-election has boosted his chances of winning the Socialist Party's leadership against frontrunner Segolene Royal and of carrying its colours in the 2012 presidential race.

Victorious left-wing leaders stepped up demands for President Nicolas Sarkozy to make big changes in government, after inflicting heavy losses on his right-wing camp.

The vote was an indictment of Mr. Sarkozy's personal style and his government's lacklustre performance in its first 10 months in power.

## Mayor Jinlong targets pollution and congestion in Beijing

Guo Jinlong, Beijing's acting mayor since November 2007, has been elected mayor of the Chinese capital by the city's legislative body. Guo takes over from Wang Qishan, who held this post from 2003 to 2007. Like his mentor, Chinese President Hu Jintao, Guo ran China's Himalayan region of Tibet for several years. Following this, he took over as party chief of Anhui, the poor and

mainly agricultural eastern province. In an address to Beijing councillors, Guo said he would make air pollution his main target as Mayor of Beijing, stressing the need to clean up the city for the 2008 Olympic games in August. "The task of bringing environmental pollution and traffic congestion under control remain arduous," he said.

## Municipal elections in Kanifing, Gambia

The turnout at the 2008 local government elections in the Kanifing Municipality has been extremely low despite a massive propaganda campaign from both parties involved. Although it was a public holiday, voter turnout was very low by day, and then increased slightly in the evening as people rushed to cast their votes before the time elapsed. Some say that it was the worst voter turnout in the history of election in the country. Indeed, despite being the most populous electoral division in the country, Kanifing Municipality was

a sad sight on Election Day: most of the voters were elderly women, and many queues were no longer than 3 people.

Party agents said even though their parties had campaigned vigorously for the masses to come out in these numbers to cast their votes on the election date this did not seem to have yielded result. They also added that more campaign time would have enabled politicians to inform the electorate about their policies and that the electorate also needed more time to differentiate whom to vote for.

### Ruling party sweeps the polls in Gambian local government elections

Results for the local government elections in The Gambia held on 24 January 2008 show a sweeping victory for the ruling Alliance for Patriotic, Re-orientation and Construction (APRC) party, which took 101 of the 114 council seats in the eight local government councils, in addition to winning the two mayoral seats for Banjul and the Kanifing municipality.

The main opposition, the United Democratic Party, had 29 candidates, the National Reconciliation Party 11, and the National Alliance for Democracy and Development 4. 21 independent candidates, mainly rejected aspirants for the APRC, also joined the race.

After the withdrawal of some independent candidates and the disqualification of one candidate, the APRC had 56 of its candidates being

unopposed and therefore were already declared elected by the Independent Electoral Commission, leaving only 58 seats to be contested.

In those contested seats, the APRC won 45, leaving only 13 seats for the combined opposition. The United Democratic Party won three, the National Reconciliation Party and National Alliance for Democracy and Development took one each and the independents won eight, thus giving the APRC a total of 101 seats.

In the mayoral elections in Banjul and the Kanifing municipality, the APRC candidates, Samba Faal and Yankuba Colley had a convincing win. Samba Faal had 4640 votes while his UDP opponent, Femi Peters had only 1607 votes. In the Kanifing municipality, Yakuba Colley had 19,733 votes while his UDP opponent, Momodou Danso had 8,412 votes.

### Benin enacts law to extend term of mayors, councillors

On 12 February the Beninese parliament adopted a bill extending the term of the current mayors of Benin, with the new law stating that: "the five-year mandate of the communal and municipal councillors elected between December 2002 and January 2003 ends only after the election of the new councillors and their swearing-in."

The initiator of this law, MP Epiphane Quenum, of the Revival of Benin Party, said that this provision was made to remedy the legal breach caused by the postponement of the local elections. "The first Beninese local elections, under the February 1990 democratic revival, was held on 15 December 2002 and the communal councillors were sworn-in in February 2003, thus the local elections should be held on the second half of February 2008," he said. Quenum further explained that the

government was at odds with the provisions of article 6 of the constitution because it deferred the elections to 13 April 2008 due to the political contingencies by the appointment of the members of the Autonomous National Electoral Commission. This provision stipulates, "the vote for the renewal of the communal and municipal councils must intervene 30 days latest before the end of the mandate."

Quenum went on to say that this article demands local elections are held on 17 February 2008 at the latest, stressing that after 17 March 2008, the current mayors will lose their legal existence: "Without a legal adjustment of these two articles, the holding of the elections on 13 April, as decided by cabinet, will create a gap in the law with huge consequences for the population who will not be able to turn to the mayors," he said.

### Price tag on elections in Liberia

Opposition politicians in Liberia are in an uproar over the Supreme Court's announcement earlier this year that forthcoming mayoral elections would be cancelled on cost grounds, with city leaders instead being selected by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Plagued by civil wars, Liberia has not hosted municipal elections since 1985, and many had hoped that the scheduled elections of 2008 would see a

resumption of local democratic norms in the beleaguered West African state. The decision to accord the powers to Johnson-Sirleaf, a former World Bank official and finance minister, was slammed by the official opposition. However, a spokesperson for the court said: "The decision of the supreme court is based on what the government told us - on its complaints that there is no money in the coffers to hold elections."

### Jamaica Labour Party takes control of local government

Jamaica's local government elections were held on 5 December 2007 and it was Jamaica's ruling Labour Party (JLP) took control of nine of the island's 13 parish councils. The day marked the Labour Party's second victory in just three months, after having won the parliamentary election in September. Prime Minister and JLP leader Bruce Golding said the victory was important to the party's drive for local government reform. The JLP and the

Opposition People's National Party (PNP) won eight divisions each in the 16-seat council in the St. Ann Parish, making it a tie. The PNP, which only won Westmoreland and Portmore in the 2003 elections before adding Portland, picked up Hanover and Manchester to go along with Westmoreland.

The ballot was marked by low turnout, with less than 40 per cent of voters taking part.

### Rajoelina set to become mayor of Malagasy capital

Malagasy independent candidate, Andry Rajoelina was elected mayor of Antananarivo after winning 63 percent of the total votes in Madagascar's municipal elections. Hery Rafalimanana, the candidate of the ruling "Tiako i Madagascar" (I love Madagascar) won 32 percent.

Voter turnout in Antananarivo was relatively low at 44 percent, but exceeded that of the last

legislative polls held in September and the April referendum, drawing in 25 percent and 22 percent of voters respectively.

Observers said the success of this independent runner, a 33-year old businessman and communication expert, is the last warning to President Marc Ravalomanana on the waning patience of the citizens.

### Senegal: liberal women for a credible municipal leadership

On 24 February 2008, several members of the Kaolack Urban Federation gathered in the Diamaguène neighbourhood to voice their criticisms of the current leadership and to support the candidacy of the current mayor's adjunct, Ibrahima Diallo.

The protesters complained about several issues, including the sanitary conditions of the frequently flooded peripheral neighborhoods, as well as the

limited accessibility to the areas of Gawane and Nimzatt. The leader of the Catholic Women and the President of the Women Associations Regional Federation expressed the wish that the following local elections be beneficial to Kaolack City and that a credible team be elected, one that listens to the concerns of the citizens and advocates on their behalf.

### A tie in Nairobi's mayoral elections

The mayoral elections of Kenya's capital Nairobi, turned into a pandemonium when the candidates of the opposition Orange Democratice Movement (ODM) and the ruling Party of National Unity (PNU) tied on 42 votes.

To break the tie between the two candidates, Godfrey Majiewa of ODM and John Njoroge of PNU, the Legal officer of the electoral body, Mary Ngethe, proposed the tossing of a coin to decide the winner. Following this the government councillors walked out of the voting hall in protest, causing

further confusion. At one time, Ngethe announced Majiewa as the winner amid protests from government councillors.

The electoral code in Kenya does not provide for a re-run in such a circumstance. However, Nairobi's City council clerk, George Gakuo, said in the absence of an immediate decision, the matter had to be referred to the local government minister, Uhuru Kenyatta, who may have to call for fresh elections.

### Algerian government bans radical Islamic party from local elections

The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was once again banned from participating in local elections in Algeria, which took place on 29 November 2007, making this the second instance in which the party has been banned from the political process since its members were granted amnesty in 2006 under the National Peace and Reconciliation Charter.

The interior ministry dropped the names of all FIS candidates from electoral lists, and thwarted efforts by the party to integrate into other parties' lists or form independent rosters. Party leadership called on President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to allow

them to run, under the spirit of the Peace and National Reconciliation Charter, but to no avail.

Interior Minister Noureddine Yazid Zerhouni vowed not to authorize members of the dissolved FIS, claiming they are responsible for the security crisis of the 1990s that resulted in 200,000 casualties and 20 billion dollars in economic losses. He also opposed the establishment of a new political party to replace the dissolved one, saying he would not consider a radical Islamist party as long as he was interior minister. The National Liberation Front won a narrow victory in Algeria's local and regional elections, taking 30% of the seats in local assemblies.

### Trouble for 6 parties in Sierra Leone

Six of the seven political parties that contested last year's general election in Sierra Leone risk being barred from filling in candidates for the July 5 local government elections for failing to submit their expenditure returns for the last poll to the National Political Parties Commission (NPPC). The parties concerned are the ruling All People's Congress (APC) and the main opposition Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP).

The Commission's Act requires all parties to declare their assets 21 days before the election, and 60 days following the certification of the

electoral results, they must submit their party's total expenditures. Thus far, the NPPC has received no reports from the six parties except the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC).

The 5-day extension given to the other parties has now expired and the Head of the Commission will soon speak to the issue. According to sources close to the Commission, "the country's Supreme Court is to be brought into the matter which has the authority to ban the defaulting parties from contesting the local municipal elections."

## Delayed municipal elections in Egypt

Egypt's municipal elections have been delayed to April 2008, and although the cause of the delay was to allow time for amendment of the electoral law, they will be held accordingly to the old law.

Under the new law, candidates will be elected from a list, a change from the old system of uninominal representation. The new system has been developed to enhance representation of religious minorities and women. The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Moufid Chéhab, maintains that the new law affects the whole State's structure, as it would transform local governments into "real parliaments." The amendment of the electoral law implies a change of other laws to

decentralize the political system, hence the government's decision not to push forward the municipal elections again.

Traditionally controlled by the NDP, the municipal elections are taken very seriously by opposition parties today. The 2005 constitutional amendments force the independent candidates to gather signatures from 250 delegates from the People's Assembly (65), the Consultative Council (25) and the Municipal Councils (140) to compete the legislative elections. Thus the municipal elections have gained a new strategic importance for opposition parties who wish to lessen the NDP's stronghold on municipalities (99.5% of the seats in Municipal Councils).

Local Government Election Calendar 2008 (select countries)	
Country	Type of Election/ Month
Egypt	Local elections (8 April)
Benin	Communal and Municipal elections (13 April)
Gabon	Local elections (27 April)
London (UK)	Municipal elections (1 May)
Equatorial Guinea	Local elections (4 May)
Serbia	Local and provincial elections (11 May)
Senegal	Local and regional elections (18 May)
Cape Verde	Local elections (18 May)
Schleswig-Holstein, Germany	Communal elections (25 May)
Romania	Local elections (1 June)
Sierra Leone	Local elections (5 June)
Somaliland	Local elections (1 July)
Malawi	Local elections (September)
Finland	Local elections (26 October)
Israel	Municipal elections (November)
Slovakia	Municipal elections (December)
Madagascar	Local elections (December)

## CONFERENCES

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**The Forum of the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty** took place in Athens on 26-28 March 2008. The theme this year was 'local democracy to fight poverty.' The World Alliance of Cities against Poverty (WACAP) unites cities that have decided to mobilise all sectors of society, from individuals to governments, to work towards eliminating poverty both at home and abroad.

**Suburban World? Global Decentralisation and the New Metropolis** will take place in Reston, USA on 6-8 April 2008. The conference will examine the new metropolis in the context of global decentralisation. As urban form changes, new research and policy have to be crafted to meet the challenges of sprawl, congestion and affordable housing. This conference will explore these and other issues in the American as well as international context.

**European Cities Integrating Migrants: from Amsterdam to Zagreb** will take place in Brussels on 7 April 2008 at the Committee of the Regions. Organized by the European Network of Cities for Local Integration Policies for Migrants, the conference will revolve around questions of how best to implement migration and housing policies at the local level.

**The First World Conference on City Diplomacy** is being hosted by the City of the Hague on 11-13 June 2008. The primary focus of the Conference will be on the role of local government mediation in on-going conflicts. Participants will examine situations where local government has played a crucial role in creating the necessary conditions for agreements at a higher political level, as well as the potential role of local governments in mediation efforts.

**The Mayors Conference** will take place in Zaragoza, Spain on 23-25 June 2008, this year's theme being **Local Action for Biodiversity**. The Mayor's Conference will provide a space for local leaders to be heard on the international stage through networking opportunities with key representatives from national governments and UN representatives. The High Level Segment of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity will take place simultaneously. An intervention on behalf of local governments will be part of the High Level Segment.

**The 16th European Social Services Conference**, entitled 'Shaping the Future of Local Services in Europe,' will take place in Paris, France on 2-4 July 2008 and will focus on the role of local services in the context of rapidly changing, often problematic and sometimes divided communities. The conference will examine these issues looking at the experience of a number of European countries to see how local services can best respond to social challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**The 8th European Conference on e-Government**, takes place in Lausanne, Switzerland on 10-11 July 2008. Key themes include: democratic renewal, the transformation of service delivery, community leadership and citizenship integration.

## Miscellaneous

- ◆ The Tashkent municipal council of the “Kamolot” Youth Movement and Children’s Organization “Kamalak” has organized a Youth Forum, which was recently inaugurated in Tashkent. Three hundred and fifty young men and women at the Tashkent youth organizations took part in the event.
- ◆ In a recent address to the UN General Assembly, former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg made a plea to the world community to act without delay on climate change, repeating his demand for a carbon tax in the United States. In addition to this, he announced a plan to reduce the New York’s use of tropical hardwoods. Mayor Bloomberg pointed out the cases of London, Stockholm and Singapore as congestion pricing success stories that serve as models for New York. “Not only will the congestion pricing we proposed reduce the carbon emissions produced by autos, it will also clean our air, make our economy more productive and finance the new transit lines that we desperately need.”
- ◆ The UK government recently launched a new initiative to help migrants ‘fit in’ in their new communities. Community secretary Hazel Blears believes that in order to avoid unwanted behaviour from new immigrants, newcomers need assistance from local councils to ease the transition to their new communities. The scheme will involve dissemination of information for immigrants that includes advice on assessing local services as well as social rules such as “not littering, not spitting and queuing in shops.” According to a review conducted by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, initiatives such as this are needed in order to help councils manage the changes that occur in their communities due to the influx of new immigrant residents.
- ◆ On December 16, 2007, the National Dialogue Days on decentralisation and land organisation ended in Nouakchott, Mauritania. The aim of the program was to find the best methods for a global balanced national development. After 3 days of work, the participants made their recommendations, one of which was the need to define precisely the relations between the Ministry of Decentralisation and Land Organisation with ministries in other technical areas. In addition, they recommended changes to the local government electoral system. The Minister of Arts and Tourism, Mr. Madinev applauded the real political will of the president towards decentralisation.
- ◆ Increased recovery of waste (i.e. the use of waste materials after their initial discard, including recycling and the use of combustible materials for energy) and diverting waste away from landfill play a key role in tackling the environmental impacts of increasing waste volumes. A recent study reveals that recycling and other material recovery operations are expected to increase from the current level of 36 % to around 42 % by 2020. Limiting or avoiding growth in waste volumes would further reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector and deliver other benefits to society and the environment.
- ◆ The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the European Federation of Public Services Unions (EPSU) have adopted a set of guidelines to help local and regional governments promote gender-based equality within their administration and services. Local and regional government employ hundreds of thousands of employees, which is why EPSU and CEMR have drafted a set of guidelines to support local and regional initiatives on equality. EPSU and CEMR members are encouraged to adopt a joint, long-term and sustained approach to equality. The guidelines include five practical steps to draw up action plans and also provide examples of the issues that should be addressed in the action plans, including recruitment and terms and conditions of employment, equal pay and job evaluation, and reconciliation of work and family responsibilities. These guidelines have been drafted by The CEMR/EPSU working group based on meetings held on 27 April and 9 November 2007.

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