



Mr. Rodrigo da Rocha Loures, President, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Parana (Box) addressing the India-Brazil-South Africa Local Governance Forum Meeting in Curitiba. Panelists on the dias include Dr. Rama Naidu of Democracy Development Program, Durban (extreme right), Honourable Mayor of Durban, Mr. Obed Mlaba (second from right) and Dr. George Mathew, Director, ISS (second from left)

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Latin America Shows the Way

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For long, Latin America hit international headlines for all the wrong reasons—machismo, military coups and guerrilla warfare. However, with the deepening of democracy, the region has moved towards inclusive politics, women's empowerment and the mainstreaming of the indigenous populations. In a region of a traditionally strong patriarchal culture, women now occupy fairly high percentage of seats in national parliament, state assemblies and local councils. The average proportion of women in Latin American parliaments rose from 8 % in 1990 to 18 % in 2008. The progress in local councils is equally impressive. This progress is even more notable in Central America. Not long ago, the tiny Central America was falling off the global map. Today, its progress towards gender mainstreaming and inclusive politics is impressive by all accounts. For instance, in El Salvador, 29 women mayors were elected for the period 2009-2012, compared to only 13 women mayors in 2000-2003.

At the national level, Central American countries have elected women Presidents. Laura Chinchilla was recently elected President of Costa Rica. Chinchilla became the third woman President to be democratically elected in the region, after Presidents Mireya Moscoso in Panama (1999-2004) and Violeta Chamorro in Nicaragua (1990-97). In Costa Rica the number of women in national parliament has gone up from 15.8 to 36.8 per cent, in Panama, from 8 to 15.3 per cent and in Honduras, from 9.4 to 23.4 per cent, as per the survey carried out by the United

Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, between 2006 and 2009.

The quota laws in various Latin American countries have greatly helped the cause of women's empowerment, besides other factors. In 1996, Costa Rica approved a law, requiring a minimum of 40 per cent of all candidates to be women in elections to national parliament. In 2009, this was increased to 50 per cent. Honduras, Panama, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay also have quota laws.

Latin America has also taken steps to make polity more inclusive. The indigenous people of Latin America have asserted their strength by calling for new practices of plurinational, participatory and inter-cultural democracy. Ecuador and Bolivia have adopted new constitutions by granting substantial rights to the indigenous populations at local, provincial and national levels. These included right to non-forfeitable ownership of communal lands. The indigenous people have begun to benefit from decentralized governance. Democratization has opened up spaces for the marginalized sections. Constitutional rights have become focal point for indigenous mobilization. Thanks to indigenous activism, the new constitutions in Colombia and Brazil enshrine a number of indigenous rights. Latin America has done well. There is a lot that the region needs to do for better governance. Besides, there is still a hum of prejudice in the background and representation of women in the top elections of administration remains low. ■

What's New

Taiwan Legislature passes Local Government Act

The Taiwan Legislature passed the Local Government Act in January this year. The passage of the Act in the legislature witnessed clashes and scuffles, with the ruling government forcing through the Act using its majority in the House. The opposition party views as unconstitutional the proposal to allow more than 50 villages and township Mayors in the newly merged and upgraded areas, to continue as district chiefs. They demand the chief executives of the new areas who will be elected later this year to have the authority to appoint all district chiefs. The ruling government is merging Kaohsiung

City with Kaohsiung County, Tainan City with Tainan County, Taichung City with Taichung County, and upgrading Taipei County's administrative status to become Xinbei City. While elections for the new chief executives will be held by the end of this year, the Mayors of the villages and townships will be replaced by district chiefs. According to the proposal, 56 or about half of the mayors will automatically be appointed as district chiefs unless otherwise they were implicated in vote buying and corruption or have served a full two terms.

South African report reveals varied challenges facing local governments

The South African Institute of Race Relations has released one of the largest and broad analyses of local government performance backed with quantitative examples. The report has looked at about 80 indicators from 52 metropolitan and district municipalities. The indicators range from demographics, education, employment and housing, access to basic services, transport, social security, health, and crime. The objective of the report was to get an insight into local government performance and also an opportunity for thorough

comparisons between local governments and municipalities. The report which has been received with huge curiosity and interest has been given to all members of the Parliament, the provincial legislatures and councilors in the country's eight largest urban municipalities and also to the media. The report reveals that the challenges in front of local governments are very varied, for example, certain municipalities carry out their roles significantly better on certain indicators than others.

The Global Fund for Cities Development

The Global Fund for Cities Development will be launched on 7th October 2010 in Barcelona at the first Meeting of its Board of Directors. It is being set up to help local authorities in their urban development projects. The GFCD is initiated by the Metropolis, the World Association of Major Metropolises, through the Metropolitan Section of the United Cities and Local Governments. The GFCD seeks to have the local economy at the core of urban development and

urban planning. It also seeks to include the population and local economic stakeholders from project conception to implementation. It has evolved an innovative approach which would be complimentary to the approaches used by financial bankers. This include analysis of the contents and effects of urban planning programs, supervision of technical assistance between local authorities and performing the financial engineering work involved in project implementation.

International Conference on Innovative Cities

The International Conference on Innovative Cities was held from 10 to 13 March in Curitiba, Brazil. This was an initiative of the Federation of Industries of Paraná (FIEP) and promoted by the City Halls of Curitiba, Lyon (France), Bengaluru (India) and Austin (United States). With the institutional support of the United Nations, this conference saw more than 70 experts from across the world discussing ways for a more innovative, prosperous and humanized construction of urban environment. The conference drew on the successful experiences in urban planning, sustainability, mobility, management and

public policy which have helped transform cities into prosperous economic, social and environmental development. The objective of this global conference was to develop bilateral partnerships and a multilateral, global network of actors involved in urban development and innovation, promoting a permanent exchange of innovative technologies among connected cities. The conference worked on four themes: the revival of cities, the reinvention of government from the cities, the governance of development in cities and city network and networks of cities.

European Commission Call for proposals from Local Authorities

The 'Second Water Facility' endowed with a budget of 200 million euros has been launched by the European Commission. This is part of the 10th European Development Fund and is open to local and regional authorities in EU and ACP countries. The objectives of the Water Facility are: to help achieve water and sanitation Millennium Development Goals; and to contribute to improving water governance and management of water resources and to the sustainable development and maintenance of water

infrastructure. To achieve these objectives, two different calls for proposals have been launched. These are: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion with an allocation of 1110 Euros; and Partnerships for Capacity Building with an allocation of 2,40 million Euros. The former proposal is open to ACP and EU local authorities, non State actors and international organizations; and the latter to ACP and EU water sanitation utilities, local authorities and other water sector actors.

Proposed Municipal Reconstruction Program for Haiti

In response to the widespread destruction in Haiti due to the devastating earthquakes, the municipal organizations in Canada, France and the Netherlands are joining together to provide funding and expertise for a municipal reconstruction programme in Haiti. This would be for a multiyear period and the budget is estimated to be 30 million Euros. The alliance members involve the Canadian Federation of Municipalities (FCM), VNG International (The International Cooperation Agency of the Netherlands

Association of Municipalities) and Cities Unies France (CUF). A scoping mission to Haiti would be carried out as part of this program following which the program design would be drafted. It is envisaged that the whole program would be carried out in coordination with the Haitian local governments, the Government of Haiti and the international donor community. The Netherlands Municipality has already donated over 1.5 million Euro and expertise to the VNG International Municipal Reconstruction Fund.

Costa Rica brings draft Law on resource transfer to Municipalities

The Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica approved a draft law on Transfer of Powers and Resources to Municipalities on 4 March. The bill provides for ten per cent of the national budget to be allocated to local governments. This is to

enable them to take on new responsibilities, enhance public investment in tune with the needs of the area and improve service delivery. The Bill is perceived to be an important step in decentralization in Costa Rica.

Seoul Design Declaration

The World Design Cities Summit was held in Seoul on 23rd and 24th February 2010. The Summit was hosted by the Seoul Metropolitan government. It was attended by around 32 municipal leaders, policy makers and other leading officials from across the world. The theme for the Summit was 'A City Makes a Leap Forward with Design'. The Summit provided a platform for the municipal leaders to showcase the impact of design on the competitiveness of

cities in the 21st century. To this end, several case studies and successful design policies were presented on urban development, business and the quality of life. The Summit culminated in the signing of the Seoul Design Declaration by participating cities. The goals of the Declaration were: cities will create designs for everyone; cities will enrich the citizens' lives through design; and cities will create sustainable designs.

The Euro-Mediterranean Regional and local Assembly Launched

The Euro-Mediterranean Regional and local Assembly (ARLEM) was launched in Barcelona on 21 January 2010. ARLEM is envisaged to be a permanent, joint assembly which will bring together local and regional authorities from the three shores of the Mediterranean. It is composed of 84 members. The European Union delegation is composed of members of the Committee of Regions (30), and representatives of European and international associations engaged in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation (10). From the partner countries, the national governments would

appoint regional and local authorities from the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. In the inaugural session, the mayors of participating cities highlighted the need 'to go beyond existing traditional diplomatic relations by launching concrete cooperation programmes on issues such as de-pollution of the Mediterranean; maritime and land highways; civil protection; alternative energies; higher education and research, Euro-Mediterranean university; the Mediterranean business development initiative'.

Mayors sign Migrant Integration Charter

At the Integrating Cities Conference held in February, the mayors and deputy mayors of major cities of Europe joined together to sign the Migrant Integration Charter. The charter will set out their vision on migrant integration. The event is hosted by the Mayor of London, EUROCITIES and the European Commission at the London City

Hall. With more than 150 participants, this conference is seen as the largest debates on migrant integration in the capital. By signing the charter, the cities commit to ensure their best as policy makers, service providers, buyers of goods and services and employers, to provide equal opportunities and non discrimination for migrants.



■ The Big Story ■

What local governments can do to end violence against women

Violence against women, a severe case of violation of women's human rights, is a pressing issue which demands concerted attention of the local governments. Observed since historic times through the subordination and devaluation of women, violence against women continues to be a challenging problem cutting across countries, regions and continents and manifesting itself in various forms and magnitude. Pro-active steps are required of local governments to help prevent and address this issue.

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) defines violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Article 2 of the Declaration states that 'Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following: (a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation; (b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution; (c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

Despite the domestic and international legal instruments to prevent violence against women, statistics reveal that this issue continues to be a challenge to the right to life, liberty and freedom of women and girls. The UNIFEM Fact sheet on Violence Against Women Worldwide indicates that one-third of women murdered each year in the United States are killed by their intimate partners;

in India, 22 women were killed each day in dowry related murders in 2007; women and girls constitute 80 per cent of the estimated 800,000 people trafficked every year, with the majority (79 per cent) trafficked for sexual exploitation; approximately 100 to 140 million girls and women in the world have experienced female genital mutilation; more than 60 million girls worldwide are child brides; approximately 250,000 to 500,000 women and girls were raped in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Very often, with the linkages to family honor, cultural practices, stereotypical roles of women and men etc. which are embedded in the mindsets of people, addressing the issue has not been an easy task. On the other hand, often times it has become the very reason for non interference by states and governments as it falls within the so called 'private sphere' of the family.

A major reason for violence against women stems from the general devaluation of women. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), in Article 5(a), states that States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.

Given its proximity to the community, local governments have a potential role in preventing and addressing this issue where local governments can play a pro active role. Measures to prevent and address the issue of violence against women should increasingly be reflected in the agendas of local government action. They should be in a position to evolve and implement appropriate local sanctions or responses against the incidence of such types of violence. They need to mobilize communities to fight against this issue, provide referral services to victims and run continuous educational programmes against violence against women.

There are examples of initiatives taken by local governments in addressing the issue of violence against women. One such noteworthy initiative has been the commitment taken by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, to put an end to domestic violence against women. The campaign to end violence against women was launched by the Council of Europe in November 2006 and aimed at raising awareness on the issue and developing measures for preventing and combating it along with member states' governments, parliamentarians, local and regional authorities, NGOs and civil society. An important element in the campaign was that while all concerned actors should play a constructive role in combating violence against women, the best would be the authorities at the grassroots level who deal with the direct effects of such violence and could design and implement tailored measures.

For Doris Solis Carrion, the first woman Vice Mayor of the municipality of Cuenca, Ecuador, violence against women has been a core issue in her work (UNIFEM). According to her six out of very ten women are victims of domestic violence at home. Through her tireless work on the issue, she is credited to have instituted the Cuenca's Equal Opportunities Plan which ensures gender mainstreaming in all public policy, strengthening the system of social, legal and health services for battered women, education and sensitization campaigns for law enforcement agencies drafting municipal laws which would commit local governments to eradicate violence against women. In addition the Municipality of Cuenca has established a hotline, psychological assistance programs and a shelter for abused women.

Last year the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), invited applications from local governments for a program on networking for preventing violence against women before it occurs. The requirements of the local government applicants were that, they should demonstrate experience in primary prevention projects or programs or have active municipal plans that promote the prevention of violence against women. A grant of \$95,000 was made available for the successful applicant for the activity that

would be for a twelve month period. The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, a statutory body with an independent chair and board of governance was established by the Victorian Parliament. It acts on behalf of the Minister for Health for fulfilling its statutory responsibilities.

The first Gender Justice and Local Government Summit Awards held in Johannesburg, South Africa helped bring to light the efforts by numerous councilors in ending gender based violence. The awards were given under seven categories and included prevention of gender violence at local level (how do local councils work to ensure that gender violence does not occur); what local councils can do to advance legal literacy, work with police etc; what is the kind of support around gender violence at local level; and what are the good practices in lobbying for a gender violence prevention budget in Municipalities strategic plans. There were 103 entries, 69 by women, 34 by men from 9 countries. Five women and four men were declared the winners. A major aim of the event is to showcase the best practices by local councilors for empowering women and ending gender based violence.

Violence against women is not a random phenomenon. It occurs frequently and manifests itself in ugly ways and proportions. What is at stake is the basic humanity of the woman. To work toward social justice, local governments cannot risk ignoring the question of gender based violence and women's human rights.

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THE
BIG
STORY

Second IBSA-LGF Meeting in Curitiba

The second meeting of India Brazil South Africa Local Governance Forum (IBSA-LGF) was held in Curitiba, Brazil on March 13, 2010 on the sidelines of the International Conference of Innovative Cities (IC-IC 2010). It was inaugurated by Mr. Rodrigo da Rocha Loures, President of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Parana. Incidentally, the Parana Chamber of Commerce and Industry was the main sponsor of IC-IC 2010. He welcomed this civil society initiative as “timely” which will go a long way in supplementing the work of IBSA Dialogue Forum and underlined the role of the three major developing countries in stabilizing the global financial architecture and democratizing global politics. Mr. Loures expressed confidence that civil society will play a far bigger role in future.

Mr. Obed Mlaba, Hon’ble Mayor of Durban, along with Councilor L M Mhlongo-Ntaka, Senior Manager Shelley Gielink of Durban Municipality; and Dr. Rama Naidu, Executive Director, Democracy Development Programme, Durban, represented South Africa in the meeting. Mr. Mlaba clarified that he was participating in the meeting in his individual capacity. In his address, the Honorable Mayor of Durban said that “as young democracy, we are very vigilant, as to who we work with.”. He underlined the imperative need to ensure that the poor in South Africa do not get compromised. He expressed the hope that this civil society forum “will work for the poor.” Dr Rama Naidu also stressed that it is important to see things from the perspective of the people, how they want to be governed. The elected representatives in the local governments must sit with them, listen to them and keep the common people at the centrestage of development.

Besides Mr. Loures, those from Brazil who participated in the meeting included, among others, Mr. Cezar Schirmer, Hon’ble Mayor of Santa Maria; Mr. Roberto Paranhos do Riobranco, President, Brazil-India Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Cezar Augusto Busatto, Secretary of Political Coordination and Local Governance, Santa Maria; senior officials of Curitiba Municipality, including Ms. Lara de Lacerda Santos Rodriguez, Head, Department of International Relations. About 40 representatives from Brazil participated in this programme.

Mr. Roberto Paranhos do Riobranco favored youth exchange programme under the auspices of the IBSA LGF as “they are the leaders of tomorrow”. Mr. Cezar Busatto, while recalling the inaugural meeting in Delhi, complimented the Institute of Social Sciences for this “visionary idea”. He spoke not only of the challenges faced by this platform but also local government institutions the world over. He decried the “top-down” approach and the tendency to scuttle local government initiatives.

Dr George Mathew, Director, Institute of Social Sciences, Delhi, made a presentation and explained the rationale for the IBSA-LGF as also its vision and future agenda. According to Dr. Mathew, IBSA LGF is the ideal forum for south - south cooperation for learning from the experiences of grassroots democracy, people’s participation in planning, development, gender equality and many other related issues. Exchange of ideas, success stories through publications, websites, conferences, exchange visits must take place on a regular basis. The possibility of establishing an IBSA University for local governance was also mooted by Dr Mathew. Seven delegates from India including Mr. Abdul Gani

Khan (Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir), President, Association of Local Governance of India (ALGI); Mrs V Sukanya, President of Vellimalaipatinam Panchayat, Tamil Nadu state; Mrs Madan Kaur, District President, Zilla Panchayat, Barmer, Rajasthan state; Mr P P Soti, Member, State Planning Board, Government of Chhattisgarh; Dr Manu Kulkarni, Urban Specialist, Bengaluru, Karnataka State and Dr Ash Narain Roy, Associate Director, ISS participated in the programme.

The first meeting of IBSA-LGF was organized by the Institute of Social Sciences in January 2008 in Delhi with the support of Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Ministry of Urban Development. Several mayors from South Africa and Brazil besides mayors and panchayat presidents from various parts of India had attended that meeting. Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, then Union Minister for Panchayati Raj and Mr. S. Jaipal Reddy, Union Minister for Urban Development had addressed that gathering.

IBSA-LGF is a civil society initiative that complements the IBSA Dialogue Forum and provides a vehicle for bringing grassroots institutions, democracy activists, experts and practitioners of local democracy of the three IBSA countries together.

The Curitiba meeting decided that one municipality and one civil society organization in each country would take the IBSA-LGF agenda forward.

Brazil

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1. Durban Municipality

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The meeting decided to hold the next IBSA-LGF meeting in South Africa within a year, which will be hosted by Durban.

On 15th March the Indian delegation along with Mr. Rama Naidu from South Africa were received by the Hon'ble Mayor of Porto Alegre Municipality Mr. Jose Fogaca and the City Hall officials. The City Hall arranged a very meaningful programme for the visiting delegation on 15-16 March, including an interactive session on Participatory Budgeting and a field visit. ■

- Ash Narain Roy

Global News

Abu Dhabi Municipality wins Greenery Prize

In a fierce competition that involved participation of Arab metropolises and capitals, the Municipality of Abu Dhabi won the Greenery Prize of the 10th Arab Towns Organization Award which was held in Doha, Qatar in February this year. The Arab Towns Organization Award instituted in 1983 with permanent Head Office at Doha, is given every three years based on the nominations received from Arab Universities, scientific institutes, research centers and municipalities of Arab towns. The Greenery award is given to an Arab city that has a well developed scientific plan focusing on expanding and maintaining the greenery, initiating new plantations suited to the local habitat and

attending to both the beautification of parks and the security of the visitors. The Municipality of Abu Dhabi was chosen for this year's award for conserving and maintaining the plantation in the city; expanding the greenery areas; adopting an integrative approach by securing the cooperation of different sectors; and for undertaking maintenance and upgradation work in line with the heritage, tradition and suitability to local habitat, despite the harsh environmental conditions unfavorable for plantation growth. Presently the Municipality is working towards striking a balance between the greenery areas and the population density that conforms to the international standards of urbanized housing.

Kuwait Municipality to host GCC Municipal Conference

The fifth GCC Municipal Conference will be held in Kuwait during 18-20 April 2010. Ahmad Al-Subeeh, the Director General of Kuwait Municipality and Head of the Organizing Committee stated that the Gulf Municipal Meeting will primarily focus on thrashing out the weak and strong points of executive municipal activities. The Municipal conference will have

lectures by key speakers and specialists, working papers, researches, discussions and debates as well as field visits. The conference will provide space for presentations of Gulf Municipal experiments with the aim of drawing up various practical recommendations for a quantum shift in the GCC Municipal domain.

Reservations and Women

A revealing study in the American Political Science Review has shown that reservation of seats in elections results in the women winning more than the designated quota. Relying on data from a Municipal Corporation in Mumbai the data shows that, for example if a Municipal ward reserved for a woman in one election and de-reserved in the next, it was five times more likely that a woman would be elected to that ward. The period of the study conducted by a Stanford

University political scientist was the elections of 1997 and 2002. The researcher observes that reservation meant not only more women being elected, but it also influences many women to stand for elections in future. An interesting data is that while 73 per cent of the Municipal wards which were previously reserved for women but were open in the next elections, showed at least one female candidate in the second time around.

The League of Municipalities of Philippines supports Earth Hour 2010

The League of Municipalities of the Philippines has been advocating for all Filipinos and especially the local government units to observe the Earth Hour celebrations which fell on 27 March 2010. Supporting the celebrations, the LMP employees switched off lights in their homes for one hour starting 8.30 pm on 27 March. In addition they played a critical role in spreading

awareness among a large section of Filipinos to observe the Earth Hour. In 2009, the Philippines topped the earth Hour celebrations in terms of the participation of local government units. 647 local government units switched their lights off in the 2009 celebrations. Country wise too, the Philippines ranked first in 2009 in terms of public participation.

Morocco's Initiative on Regionalization

Morocco has initiated a regionalization process which seeks to provide the regional authorities, major decision making powers. It is believed that this initiative will boost

the decentralization process in the country which is in a nascent stage. A twenty two member expert committee has been formed to design a regionalization programme for Morocco.

The World Cities Summit 2010

The World Cities Summit 2010 will be held from 28 June to 1 July 2010 in Singapore. The theme for this four day event is 'Liveable and sustainable Cities for the Future'. The summit will focus on leadership, governance and building liveable and

sustainable communities. The Summit provides a platform for practitioners, policy makers, leading experts in the field to identify innovative solutions for the most pressing challenges facing cities today.

Unions against Local Government Pay Freeze

Unions in the United Kingdom are agitated over a proposal by the local government employers for a pay freeze. UNISON, Unite and GMB are the three unions in the forefront advocating against the pay freeze of their 1.6 million employees. What provoked the Unions was

the failure of the local government employers to negotiate with them prior to bringing in the pay freeze. The unions had earlier submitted to the employers a claim for an increase of 2.5 per cent and a minimum increase of UKP 500.

Beijing restricts Local Government Loans

Concerned over the ability of local governments to pay back debts, Beijing is increasingly tightening its control over loans that are issued to local governments. Orders to that effect have been given to banks and especially to stop loans to investment vehicles established by local governments. It is felt

that such companies tend to sidestep the rules which prohibit local governments from getting into a debt and has the backing only of the future revenue of local governments. This move is seen as part of the larger measures by Beijing to slow down bank lending.

Punjab Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2010

The Punjab Assembly, Pakistan passed the Punjab Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2010 in January. This Bill provides for the provincial government to appoint administrators and exercise the functions and powers of *nazims*, *naib nazims* and councils in the province. The Law Minister stated that this arrangement was brought in to enable the conduct of a free and fair local government elections. Meanwhile, the Sindh Assembly too passed the Local government

(Amendment) Bill 2010 in February. According to this Bill, local government polls would be held on a party basis within 120 days and would be supervised by the administrators. Independent parties can also take part in the elections. The government administrators would be appointed as per the new Amendment Bill, in place of the existing city, district, town, *tehsil* and union council governments.

World Mayor Prize 2010

City Mayors is presently calling nominations for the 2010 World Mayor Prize. The candidates should be city leaders who excel in qualities like leadership and vision, management abilities and integrity, social and economic awareness, ability to provide

security and to protect the environment, and the ability to foster good relations between communities from different cultural, racial and social backgrounds. The candidates for the prize are expected to sign up to the Code of Ethics.

Ambassadors for the Year of Women in Local Governments 2010

Twenty one ambassadors have been announced for the Year of Women in Local Governments for its 2010 celebrations. This was announced by the National Steering Committee. The ambassadors will be responsible to undertake the role of champions and role models for the advancement of women in local government. They will also have to make a valuable contribution to the success of the Year of Women in Local Government 2010. The focus for this year is to enhance the awareness of the opportunities,

benefits and need for increasing the participation of women in leadership and management roles within local government. This includes both elected representatives and paid personnel. The objectives of this year are to raise awareness of the significant role women play in the effectiveness and long term health of local government; foster commitment to local government becoming an 'employer of choice'; encourage councils to establish targets to increase women's participation in decision making, management and leadership training.

Financial reconstruction plan for bankrupt Japanese city

The Japanese municipality of Yubari which went bankrupt by 2007 is making renewed efforts to revive itself. With an approval from the local assembly, the Yubari municipality has put into action a new financial reconstruction plan. This new plan, while building on the earlier efforts by

the municipality to recover from its debts, also aims to clear the Y32.2 billion debts over a period of 17 years. Yubari is the only municipality in Japan that was bankrupt. However, 21 other municipalities were also said to be in severe financial crisis.

25 years of Seattle Municipal Archives

The Seattle City Council is celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Seattle Municipal Archives in March. The Municipal Archives which was founded in 1985 has historical records from all agencies of city government, legislative records and photography documenting all city functions, among others. It manages over two linear miles of textual records; 1.5 million photographic records; and large collections of motion picture film, video, audio recordings, maps and published

documents. On the occasion of its anniversary, the Seattle Municipal Archives is holding two public programs. The Archives website is www.cityofseattle.net/cityarchives. The Archives makes available copies of legislation, archives of previous meetings and news releases on <http://www.seattle.gov/council/>. The Council can also be followed on Twitter at twitter.com and on Facebook at Seattle City Council.

Southern Africa Local Government and Gender Summit and Awards

The first Southern Africa Gender Justice and Local Government Summit was held from 22 - 24 March 2010 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The theme for the summit was "365 Days of local action to end gender violence: what works?" and had local government councilors and officials, ministries of gender representatives, ministries of local government, local government associations,

gender activists, civil society organisations, international partners and other interested individuals or groups participating in it. The summit showcased what works on the ground in empowering women and closing in on gender violence and provided further incentive to local governments to work concertedly on the issue.

Gorai, Mumbai Suburb's success story

Until recently, Gorai, in the western suburbs of Mumbai, was home to about 2.3 million tonnes of garbage. The open dump had a height of about 26 meters, about as high as a five-storey building. Nearly 1200 tonnes of garbage was being dumped daily at this open dumping ground. The foul odour from the dump had created a serious health hazard for the residents in nearby colonies. A court order in 2007 shut down the dump site. An innovative public-private partnership led by the Mumbai Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai has transformed the face of this dump site. Large and deep underground pits have been dug up into

which the residual waste is put in between scientifically layered geotextile material and high density polythene sheets to ensure complete and airtight closure. The onsite conversion of methane gas is carried out using flaring systems, and the area is developed so as to provide a green cover over the dump site. Gorai is the first dump site closure project in India to be registered at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Mumbai Corporation has already received a carbon advance worth millions of US dollars. Its total carbon credit earnings are expected to be worth more than the cost of the project.



Election News

Local elections in the United Kingdom

The local elections in the United Kingdom are scheduled to be held on 6 May 2010. This election would most likely be held alongside the 2010 general election which should be held on or before 3 June. Direct elections would be held in England for all 32 London Boroughs, all 36

Metropolitan Boroughs, 78 second tier district authorities, 19 unitary authorities and various Mayoral posts. With the structure and boundary reviews going on, the elections to Devon, Norfolk and Suffolk are likely to change.

Malawi to conduct Local government elections

The government of Malawi has conveyed that the local government elections will be held this year. A recent Bill passed by the Parliament giving powers to the President to decide the time of local polls, is now awaiting

the President's assent. Concerns have been raised by the civil society and traditional leaders over the provisions of the Bill as they fear that it would lead to dictatorial leadership and democratic uncertainties.

Dutch Local Elections

The recently concluded Dutch local elections, saw a big defeat for the Left wing Socialist party. The big winners were the Democrats and the Freedom party. But surprisingly large percentage of votes were won by the Independent parties and candidates. The Labor party however

maintained its position as the largest national party in local politics. Though the independent parties and candidates won a large number of vote share it was not enough to get them on to the vote front as a strong force.

No need for local elections, says Malaysia's Prime Minister

In what can be best said as a bizarre development Malaysia's Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has said a firm 'no' to requests to hold local government elections. The Prime Minister has said that elections to local bodies in the country "were unnecessary". Addressing the media the premier said that the elections would lead to unnecessary 'politicking' and would not really serve the interests of the people at large. This stance has infuriated many and there is demand now to have the Prime Minister backtrack so that elections can be held to thwart the rampant abuse of power in local councils. The

Penang state government has also asked the Prime Minister to have local elections in the country. Penang's Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng contested that according to the country's constitution; the Elections Commission was allowed to hold local elections in addition to parliamentary ones.

Furious opposition politicians have condemned their prime minister's autocratic stance as undemocratic and cowardly. They have argued that local government elections can end unwanted politicking and put a check on the corruption that is taking place resulting in amassment of huge wealth by dishonest officials.

Waiting for Local Elections in Bhutan

Another country that is facing delay in conducting local elections is Bhutan. Elections which have been long delayed is in the news and in debates and various conferences. The chief election commissioner has also been under pressure to give a definite date for the elections. Bhutan will be electing about 1,200 *gups*, *tshogpas*, *mangmis*, *thrompons* and *thromde tshogpas* during the local government (LG) elections. It has been more than two years since the term of the previous officials expired and day to day administration is being done in an ad hoc

manner which has resulted in too many complexities in the *gewogs* (block, or group of villages). The main reason cited for the delay in conducting elections by the CEC is that the Local Government Bill is yet to become an Act. It is expected that the parliament will soon decide on the demarcation of boundaries and the delimitation of the voters list and also come out with the other procedures that can lead to early local polls. All this hinges on how soon the LG bill becomes an Act.

Municipal elections in Lebanon

Lebanon is all set to have municipal elections in May. And as a precursor, Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) is campaigning for some amendments in the current municipal elections law while stressing that the elections should be held on their due constitutional date. The main purpose of the initiative is aimed at achieving high levels of citizen participation and to bring the local elections on the same important plank as the parliamentary one. There are also suggestions for long term reforms but this may not be linked to the upcoming municipal elections. Lowering the voting age to 18 is one of the other main issues. These proposals by LADE will be debated and discussed along with other regional officials who have been assigned with the organization of the municipal elections, including preparing draft amendments. Regarding the amendments, they intend to include some pressing reforms

in order to improve the necessary conditions and mechanisms to hold the municipal elections and their outcome at the same time making sure of the consistency of these reforms regarding the general reform principles in Lebanon and the world in general. Some of the other points relating to the proposed amendments relate to lowering the risk of potential tensions that could crop up from the local competition in the municipal elections outside the framework of local development programs; to contribute to the improvement of the municipal representation; to contribute to the provision of "human resources" needed to increase the efficiency of and productivity of municipal councils; to improve the neutrality of the electoral process; to preserve vote secrecy as one of the fundamental rights of the citizens and to ensure the right to vote for all citizens without any discrimination.

More and more States in India providing 50 per cent reservation for women

Orrisa in India is the latest state (province) to have 50 percent of its seats in local bodies reserved for women. It follows Bihar, Chattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand in this landmark move. Denying that all this initiative for affirmative action is a token gesture, most of the champions behind this argue that it is a definite way of improving and establishing gender equity in society. The states of Tirpura and Kerala are also planning to have 50

per cent reservation soon. The outcomes of providing reservation for women have shown that women tend to perform much better than their male counterparts and there are many instances where women have won from non-reserved seats and won. As the rural local bodies see more and more women being elected it is also throwing a healthy challenge to the hitherto male dominated power centres in the institutions of government.

Fears about local elections in Georgia

In Georgia, which will be having local elections soon, there is a growing demand for UN supervision of the elections. About 21 opposition parties in Georgia have requested the UN to supervise local elections fearing efforts by its President to derail them. The Georgian President is largely seen as a one man ruler and this is the reason of the opposition parties' despair. The President and his supporters and the larger

international community have dismissed this as a storm in a tea cup. One of the main plans of the debate is what should be the threshold for victory, should it be 30 per cent or 50 per cent? Other divisive issues are the size of the local councils, constitution of the Central Electoral Commission and the composition of the Central Electoral Commission.

South Korean local elections

South Korea's political parties are getting ready for local elections which will be held in June to elect new mayors, municipal councilors and regional government leaders. The local elections are being viewed as a mid-term popularity assessment of President Lee Myung-bak. Significantly, the elections will decide the leaders in 16 metropolitan and provincial governments that include Seoul, Incheon and the Gyeonggi Province.

The Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon has already confirmed that he would be running for a second term and those who would be pitted against him would be the ruling Grand National Party three-term lawmaker Won Hee-ryong, the Democratic Party legislator

Kim Sung-soon and five-time borough office chief in Seoul, and Roh Hoe-chan, previous lawmaker and head of the minor opposition New Progressive Party. Prominent among those who will be looking to fight elections to continue in their posts are Incheon Mayor Ahn Sang-soo. The disturbing news is that though there a lot of debate and discussions on the forthcoming local elections the public interest has begun to wane due to corruption allegations. The ministry responsible for local and regional government has revealed that in Seoul metropolitan area, of the 66 heads of municipal and provincial government elected in 2006, about 28 were prosecuted for corruption and electoral law violations.

Smart Vote for Smart City of Bengaluru

Bengaluru in south India is India's high-tech capital. It hosts the world's top companies. During the recent city elections, Bengaluru's interactive city magazine Citizen Matters used an innovative tool to gather and compare candidates' profiles in the various wards. Thus the citizens could dig out their names in the voter rolls, the location of their polling booths and the antecedents of their candidates. In Koramangala neighbourhood, a group of doctors, lawyers and software professionals calling themselves "Smart Vote" gathered to dedicate time each week to

smooth the election process. The Smart Vote set up a system by where all a registered voter had to do was text or email. The voter then got a personalised email or SMS providing the ward number, serial number, polling booth and the location. The software also spotted and removed duplication in the electoral rolls which were useful in eliminating proxy voting. The software came to the rescue of several candidates who could not find their names on the voters list at the time of filing their nominations.

Triennial Elections in New Zealand

The triennial elections to local bodies in New Zealand will be held on 9 October 2010. The elections which would be through postal vote will be held under

the provisions of the new Local Electoral Act 2001, the Local Electoral Regulations 2001 and the Local Government Act 2002.

Local Government Election Calendar

Date	Country	Type of Election
March, 2010	Italy	Provincial and Municipal Election
May, 2010	The Philippines	Local Election
May, 2010	Tunisia	Municipal Election
May, 2010	Muslim Mindanao	Local Government Election
May, 2010	Dallas (Texas)	Mayoral Election
May, 2010	Dominican Republic	Municipal Election
June, 2010	Republic of Korea	Local Election
July, 2010	Palestine	Municipal Election
July, 2010	Indonesia	Mayoral Election
September, 2010	Burundi	District Election
September, 2010	Venezuela	Local Council Election
September, 2010	Afghanistan	District Election
October, 2010	Poland	Local Election
October, 2010	Greece	Municipal Election
October, 2010	Hungary	Municipal Election
October, 2010	Mauritius	Municipal Election

CONFERENCES

- ◆ **The Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations** will be held on 24th and 25th April 2010 in New Delhi, India. The Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, has been organizing this conference from 1994 onwards to mark the historic day when the 73rd Constitutional Amendment with the provision of not less than one-third seats reserved for women became Part IX of the Indian Constitution on 24th April 1993. More than 600 women elected representatives from rural local governments are expected to participate in this conference from across the country. The theme for this year’s conference is ‘To End Violence against Women and the Role of Local Government Institutions’. The two-day programme will have several plenary sessions and group discussions on various aspects of violence including CEDAW, Domestic Violence Act, HIV and AIDS and Trafficking of Women focusing on the role of rural local government institutions in addressing these issues.
- ◆ **Local climate Local Change Conference 2010 in Blue Mountains City Council, Australia:** The Blue Mountain City Council is organizing a conference on climate change focusing on efforts of local communities in adapting to and mitigation of climate change. The conference mainly targets professional practitioners, local, state and federal government officers, academics, community climate change organizations, eco-ambassadors and the general community at large. Putting into context various issues like the effect of climate change on local communities, how local communities and councils are tackling climate change and emphasizing the importance of cross-learning, the conference is being advertised as an ‘how to’ tool for the local communities. Further it will also be a forum that is showcasing the Australian Frontline Community Action happening at the local level.
- ◆ **The 2010 European Local Government Conference** on ICT and local government transformation in Europe will be held from 7 to 9 June 2010 in Berlin, Germany. The conference will focus on European local government transformation strategies, experiences and projects which will lead to higher quality and cost savings in administration.
- ◆ **Resilient Cities 2010** will be hosted by the ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, the City of Bonn and the World Mayors Council on Climate Change from 28 -30 May 2010 in Bonn, Germany. This would be the first edition of the annual global forum on urban resiliency and adaptation to climate change.
- ◆ **The 2010 Healthy Cities Conference** will be held on 12th and 13th July 2010 at the Stamford Plaza Brisbane. The conference would focus on the causes, effects and solutions related to population health, sustainability, natural resource management, transport, climate change and urban design.
- ◆ **The 18th Annual Leadership Summit:** Leading the Charge of Leadership in Local Government will be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from 23-25 September 2010. This is organized by the National League of Cities’ Leadership Training Institute and is designed to help participants to enhance their understanding and success of their leadership roles and responsibilities.

NETWORKING



The International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) founded in 1913, is credited to be the oldest and largest global local government association. It has membership from over 100 countries from across the world. Advocacy, facilitating exchange of experience and information between local governments and capacity building programmes are its major activities. Working closely with the United Nations and other international bodies, the IULA tries to ensure that the voices of the local governments are heard on the international stage.

Energie-Cités is the association of European local authorities for promoting local sustainable energy policies. It was founded in 1990 and is located in Brussels and Besancon. It represents more than 1000 towns and cities in 26 countries. The City of **Heidelberg** presently holds the **Presidency (2009-2011)**. The **Board of Directors** of Energie-Cités comprises 11 European cities.

China Association of Mayors was formally founded in August 1991 with original membership of 54 Mayors from cities across China. It is dedicated to facilitating urban development including the organization of urban issue research, training of Mayors in improved urban administration, organization of seminars and discussion for improving inter-city mayor communication and facilitating international city cooperation. The association also takes upon itself to report the suggestions of local cities and mayors to the higher authorities in the government.

The Women Mayors' Chapter of the China Association of Mayors was founded in 1991. It works towards improving the quality of women mayors and promoting urban development through various activities, studies, publicizing the achievement of women Mayors and building the good image of women Mayors.

The Association of Mexican Municipalities (La Asociación de Municipios de México - AMMAC) is the local government association in Mexico. It was founded in March 1994 and has a membership of around 250 members from around the country. Their activities include: recommendations to improve the legal framework affecting municipalities; training and experiential learning; library, bookstore and document archives focused on municipal issues, research and technical assistance; international cooperation; etc.



News in Brief

- The City of Cape Town has launched a pilot anti-corruption campaign against fraud in the acquisition and allocation of Council housing. The residents have been given time from 8th to 31st March to report any cases of corruption or irregularities. The allegations would be thoroughly investigated and recommendations would be made to the Council where necessary.
- State and Local Government Revenue in the US will stabilize in 2010. According to INPUT an authority on government business research, 2010 will be the turning-point for state and local government fiscal conditions during this recession. This is said in the report titled, 'State and Local Fiscal Outlook – Turning the Corner in 2010'. The report says that the major state and local revenue sources, including property taxes, general sales taxes, personal income taxes, and other taxes and fees have begun to stabilize in second half of 2009. Moreover, three of these four categories saw significant improvements in their year-over-year rates of decline.
- A Hard Budget constraint for Local Governments in USA: State Municipalities and local governments in the USA are big employers and are collectively the nation's biggest source of jobs. In the past decade they added about 2 million jobs and helped the country with a cushioning effect during the latest recession that hit the world economy. With USA's job market still not recovering as expected and state budget season coming soon, there are fears that local governments and municipalities will have to make hard choices. With state tax revenue falling to 11 per cent according to reliable estimates the gaps in the state budget needing billions of dollars to be filled, it is a tough time for the municipal and local governments fiscally. Reliable analysis shows that even if new taxes and fees are resorted to it will only help in raising about less than half the amount required. What this will lead to is that municipalities and local governments will look at tough and uneasy options of not hiring people for jobs, probably benefit cuts and also in some extreme cases lay people off their jobs.
- The Shanghai Municipal government and the Datang Telecom Technology and Industry Group have signed a strategic cooperative framework agreement. As per the agreement, the Datang Telecom Group will make Shanghai its prime industrial development base; cooperate with universities and research units in Shanghai, lend support to Shanghai's high tech industrialization plans, among others.
- Twelve of Bolivia's 327 Municipalities voted in favor of indigenous self government during the recently held presidential and legislative elections. If put into action, the indigenous self government will give them control over natural resources and greater say in the decision making powers on funds transferred from the centre, and in its disbursement. It would also allow for legal disputes and crimes in those municipalities to be tried in traditional courts.
- The next municipal elections in Ottawa will be held on 25th October 2010. This would be for electing the mayor of Ottawa, Ottawa city council and the Ottawa-Carleton Public and Catholic School Boards. Elections to the other municipalities in Ontario will also be held in October 2010
- The New Jersey Local Government Desk book published by the New Jersey Law Journal is now available for Municipal Officials and Attorneys. The New Jersey Law Journal has published this useful hand book along with the New Jersey League of Municipalities. The latest edition by Thomas P. Scrivo is a fully revised and up-to-date book and its contents range from detailing the business of running a town from the perspective of its local government bodies and town officials to information regarding the town's procedural and regulatory obligations. The book which is in plain and simple language is very useful for town officials and personnel, council members, municipal attorneys and managers, planning boards and others.

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