Foreword by the President

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 3rd Issue of the SARO Newsletter, the first one of 2013.

The last quarter of 2012 saw remarkable progress being made towards the reunification of the African municipal movement. This followed the acknowledgement by parties involved in the UCLG dispute that an urgent resolution of the impasse engulfing the organisation was necessary.

The mediation processes led by SALGA have now resulted in all regions in the continent, including Southern Africa, having appointed their representatives on the governance structures of the UCLGA, namely: the Pan African Council, the Executive Committee, the Financial Management Committee and the Presidency.

At the ordinary meeting of the SARO Executive Committee held on 9 February 2013, in Tshwane, South Africa, the region reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring, through its representation in the Executive Committee and Presidency of the UCLGA, that unity remains the institutional foundation and strategic framework for taking forward the African municipal movement.

The basis has undoubtedly been laid for UCLGA towards a sustainable path to unity and stability, with strong focus on the primary task, namely: To serve the peoples of Africa and the general membership of our Pan African organisation.

As SARO, we remain resolute, through the implementation of our Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015, to contribute meaningfully to the fulfilment of the vision of the UCLGA to “Build African Unity from, and Drive African Development through the Grassroots”.

Remarks from the Interim Secretary General

SARO set its agenda for 2013 at its first ordinary meeting of the Executive Committee held on 9 February 2013 at SALGA Offices in South Africa.

The need to set up a Local Government Desk at the SADC Secretariat was overwhelmingly supported. The Desk would among other things provide an institutional framework for bringing the local government agenda to Ministers and Presidents in the region. The voices calling for a pro-active and robust SARO capable of providing beneficial services to its membership, a SARO capable of speaking with greater authority and voice at regional level grew louder and louder subsiding
the Rabat – Pretoria discourse which had pre-occupied previous meetings. The President of SARO Cllr Thabo Manyoni made it very clear that it was time for business and everybody must play his role in ensuring that SARO achieves its objectives.

Given the fact that the Strategic Business Plan and the Lobbying and Advocacy Strategy documents have been approved, the Secretariat will work hard to try and chase the targets.

As a region which should remain seized with matters to do with gender empowerment in the sector which is apauling(sp) at the moment, the Post 2015 MDG debate which seems to be eluding us as a sector and the new menace of Global Warming/Climate Change.

We look forward to a successful 2013.

*Under the Spotlight: the Malawi Local Government Association*

In this second issue of *Under the Spotlight*, we take a closer look at the Malawi Local Government Association (MALGA).

**Legal status and brief history**

The Malawi Local Government Association (MALGA) is an umbrella voluntary organization which brings together thirty five local government authorities in Malawi. MALGA is registered under the country’s Trustees Incorporation Act and has been in operation since 1966 under the name Association of Local Government Authorities in Malawi (ALGAM).

During the period 1966-1996, the Association was managed by an ad hoc secretariat. It assumed the present name in 2001 following a restructuring exercise which aligned its mission and objectives to the democratization processes that were being implemented in Malawi. MALGA was formed because local government authorities believe that there is strength in unity.

**Mandate and membership**

The mandates of MALGA are derived from the association’s five year Strategic Plan. These mandates are:

- Promote good local governance and democratic decentralization in Malawi,
- Lobby and advocate for good local governance and development.
- Bring together all Local Authorities in Malawi to speak with one voice on local governance and development issues.

Currently, the membership of MALGA comprises 35 councils: 28 District Councils, 1 Town Council, 2 Municipal Councils and 4 City Councils.

The Executive Director of MALGA, Mr Charles Chunga, describes the relationship the association and its members as good. He adds: “Members are the major financiers of MALGA through subscriptions. Subscriptions are currently the major source of funds that finances MALGA’s operations.

**Governing and support structures**

MALGA has a robust governance structure consisting of a Council – the supreme organ comprising representatives of all member local authorities, a Board of Trustees, an Executive Committee, A Chief Executive Advisory Group and
the Secretariat, which is responsible for the execution of all policies and programmes and coordination of the Association’s activities.

The Building that houses the MALGA Secretariat

The staff establishment for the MALGA Secretariat is lean with three professional officers only and three support service staff in Administration and Finance. Mr Chunga indicates that the actual staffing level is very low with only two members of staff in place; the Executive Director (himself) and the Programme Officer (Mrs. Lusako Mwenechanya Chikoko). Mr Chunga further explains that the institutional capacity inadequacies which have been triggered by the quantitative shortage of professional officers, the absence of supporting technologies and infrastructure as well as the inability to source and mobilize adequate financial resources have resulted into faltering the most critical expectation as MALGA cannot effectively deliver quality services to its members.

Mrs Lusako Mwenechanya Chikoko, MALGA Programme Officer

Mr Chunga also brought to our attention that local government elections have not been held in Malawi for the past 9 years to elect new councillors resulting in councils operating without councillors since 2005 when the term of office of previous councillors came to an end. Mr Chunga lamented that this absence has deprived both local government authorities and MALGA of an important success ingredient.

**MALGA and its stakeholder community**

At central government level, Mr Chunga indicated that MALGA works closely and has a cordial relationship with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MoLG &RD), National Local Government Finance Committee (NLGFC) and Local Government Service Commission (LASCOM). “Although MALGA does not receive direct funding from the Central Government in the form of grant or subvention, it gets support in the form of rental payment for the office blocks MALGA is currently occupying” added Mr Chunga.

Mr Chunga describes MALGA’s current relationship with the donor community as “encouraging and optimistic”. He explained that in the past, MALGA used to enjoy a lot of support from the donor community. However, this support waned due to the Government’s reluctance to hold Local Government Elections for the past 9 years. Until recently, GIZ Malawi was the only donor supporting MALGA with most of its support focusing on salary subsidy for the Executive Director and the Programme Officer.

Since 2010, MALGA has been implementing a Local Financial Management (LFM) Programme financed by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development through GIZ (formally InWEnt). The programme is envisaged to run for five years (2010-2014). The programme’s objectives: Strengthening national and regional local government institutions; Strengthening local governments in the field of efficient, transparent and pro-poor local finance management; and Cross-border learning and knowledge transfer.

MALGA has just recently solicited funding from Tilitonse Fund to implement a 3 year project on ‘Strengthening Local Government System in Malawi’. The project runs from October 2012 to June 2015 and will be implemented in 8 councils.
Over the 3-year period, this project will, among other things, build the capacity of staff of the targeted councils to undertake participatory planning and budgeting; Capacitate excluded groups (women, youth & people with disabilities) through their networks to demand accountability and inclusion in decision making in councils; and Facilitate networking and information sharing amongst councils in order to improve cooperation and create conducive environment for learning.

With civil society organisations in Malawi, MALGA enjoys “good working relationships”. In particular, MALGA works collaboratively with the National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE) and the Malawi Electoral Support Network (MESN). MALGA is also an active member of the Democratic Governance Sector Wide Approach (DG SWAP).

Insights on the state of local government and prospects for the sector

On the current state of local government in Malawi, Mr Chunga indicates that the process of decentralisation in Malawi has experienced considerable setbacks which have constrained the performance and influence of District Councils to emerge as sustainable, efficient, and accountable service providers. Some of the challenges include the non-functional nature of key institutions meant to drive the decentralisation process, resistance to change, staffing problems at the district and sub-district levels, limited discretionary and donor funding to finance the district development plans, limited capacity of sub-district structures, weak M&E systems and practices, dwindling knowledge and awareness of decentralisation among sector, limited dialogue on decentralisation, limited downward accountability, as well as limited coordination of NSA support to the districts.

With the next local government elections on the horizon and considering that Malawi has gone for eight years without local elected representatives, Mr Chunga highlights a number of challenges that will need to be addressed moving forward:

- Stakeholders, MALGA included, will need to educate the Malawi public on the role of local government and councillors in the run up to the tripartite elections and the difference between councillors and parliamentarians. This is necessary as MPs are currently implementing local development projects in the absence of councillors.

- The Tripartite Elections Bill needs to be harmonised with other legal frameworks such as the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, the Local Government Act and the Local Government Elections Act. Initially, the Local Government Act stipulated that local government elections must be held a year after the general elections. However, this provision was later amended to state “local government elections shall take place after five years on a date to be determined by the President in consultation with the Electoral Commission”.

- To address the capacity problems in local governments, there is a need for institutional, organisational and human capacity development programmes for the local government sector.

- Last but not least, MALGA as the umbrella organisation of local government in Malawi needs to be supported to spearhead most issues mentioned above. MALGA also needs support to become a stronger voice for local government in Malawi.

-Story by Samuel Kaninda -Photos: MALGA

**SARO elects new representatives into UCLG Africa governing bodies**

By SARO Secretariat

The Southern Africa Region of UCLGA (SARO) elected its new representatives into the governing structures of the Pan African local government association for the period 2012 – 2015 during the UCLG Africa Elective General Assembly held in Dakar on 7 December 2012.

The three UCLG Africa organs for which elections were held are: the Pan African Council, the Executive Committee and the Presidency.

The following SARO members were elected into the UCLG Pan African Council:

- Botswana Association of Local Authorities
Association for Local Authorities in Namibia
National Association of Municipalities of Mozambique
Swaziland Local Government Association
Local Government Association of Zambia
Zimbabwe Local Government Association
City of Johannesburg, South Africa
City of Luanda, Angola
City of Maseru, Lesotho

The following three LGAs will represent SARO in the UCLG Africa Executive Committee:

Botswana Association of Local Authorities
Zimbabwe Local Government Association
South African Local Government Association

The South African Local Government Association was elected to the UCLG Africa Vice Presidency for Southern Africa.

At the beginning of the meeting, The Secretary General UCLG Africa, Mr Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, delivered his triennial activity report covering achievements in the areas of advocacy and lobbying, institutional development and capacity building as well as challenges and prospects for the next three years.

**SARO adopts Advocacy & Lobbying Strategy 2012-2015**
*By SARO Secretariat*

The Executive Committee of UCLGA-SARO adopted the regional local government association’s advocacy and strategy and action plan at its meeting held on 9 February 2013 at the National Office of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) in Tshwane, South Africa. This was the first meeting of the UCLGA-SARO Executive Committee after the UCLGA Elective General Assembly held in Dakar, Senegal, on 7 December 2012.

The adoption of UCLGA-SARO’s Advocacy & Lobbying Strategy and Action Plan is the culmination of an extensive process, which followed the Regional Seminar on Developing Advocacy, Lobbying and Communication Strategies held on 26 and 27 June 2012 at Crowne Plaza Hotel in Harare, Zimbabwe. The workshop brought together Local Government Associations from Southern Africa and their regional umbrella, UCLGA-SARO. After the seminar, LGAs, supported by experts of the ARIAL Programme, went on to develop Action Plans to develop their advocacy and lobbying strategies while UCLGA-SARO received support to develop both its Advocacy & Lobbying Strategy and Action Plan.

The main goal of UCLGA-SARO’s Advocacy & Lobbying Strategy is to promote a strong collective LG voice in local governance in the SADC region.

The UCLGA-SARO ExCo also adopted proposals on the prioritisation of identified advocacy issues and the establishment of sub-committees around these issues.

Other strategic documents such as UCLGA-SARO’s Governance Framework, Annual Performance Plan and Budget were adopted and task teams established to deal with outstanding issues towards the finalisation of the documents.

**ARIAL Programme holds Special Session at 6th Africities Summit**
*By Samuel Kaninda*

The 6th Africities Summit was in Dakar, Senegal, from 4 – 8 December 2012. Held under the theme “Building Africa from its territories: which challenges for local governments”, the Summit brought together over 5000 delegates from around the world including African Ministers responsible for Local Government and Decentralisation, mayors, councillors, government officials, municipal officials, development partner, academics, researchers and other stakeholders in local governance and decentralization. Most UCLGA-SARO members attended the event.

Various thematic sessions were held during the first three days of the Summit including a Special Session convened by the ARIAL Programme under the coordination of VNG International. The ARIAL Special Session was held under the theme “How can local government representatives become stronger development partners for donors and national institutions?” This well attended had presentations from East, Southern and West Africa...
sharing challenges and good practices around the theme.

Members of panel included the Head of Unit “Civil Society and Local Authorities” of DG DEVCO at the European Commission, Mr Angelo Baglio; the President of the Association for Local Authorities in Namibia, Cllr Agnes Kafula; the Permanent Secretary of the National Association of Communes in Chad (ANCT), Dr Annaim Abderrahman; the Central Region Chairperson on the Executive of the Uganda Local Government Association (ULGA), Mrs Deborah Kyazike Kinobe; the Senior Technical Officer and Coordinator of UCLGA West Africa Regional Office (WARO), Mr Alhassan Ziblim Al-hassan and Mr Tony Du Sautoy, VNG Associate Expert. SARO Senior Technical Officer, Mr Samuel Kaninda, was the moderator of the session.

The following recommendations were made at the end of the session:

- Local governments should establish appropriate mechanisms for consultation with local stakeholders including individuals, Civil Society Organisations and the private sector in local development planning in line with national development priorities. Particular attention should be given to marginalised local actors

- Local Government Associations should strengthen the capacity of Local Governments to effectively tap into available development opportunities from central government and donors through training programmes and timely information dissemination

- Central governments and development partners should accord due recognition to, and establish strategic partnership with Local Government Associations to enhance the capacity of Local Governments to deliver services to communities and drive local development

The ARIAL Programme delegation at Africities

SARO witnesses the official launch of SWALGA
By SARO Technical Team

The Acting Secretary General of UCLGA-SARO, Mr Francis Duri, attended the official launch of the Swaziland Local Government Association (SWALGA) on 29 November 2012 at the Esibayeni Lodge in Mastapha. The event was attended by all the newly elected councillors, chief executive officers of all the Urban Local Authorities and representatives sister local government associations.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

SWALGA launched officially
By Sandile Malambe – SWALGA Project Assistant

It was a vibrant mood and the excellent attendance, that marked officially launching of the Swaziland Local Government Association (SWALGA) by the Authorities of the land on the 29th November 2012 at the Esibayeni Lodge.
On this marvellous day, the Honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Development, in the voice of the substantive Honourable Minister of Health Honourable Bennedict Xaba, officially launched SWALGA under the theme, “ENSURING EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT”. The Honourable Minister emphasized that the very central component for an effective performance of the organization is the buy-in and support by all member local authorities, where the members are challenged to take full ownership of SWALGA and in doing so commit to unity and the political will be seen to be exhibited.

During this vibrant launch delegates from Authorities of the land, Cooperating Partners, Colleagues and Associate Members poured in to mark this milestone event with some word of support. These were the Government of Swaziland, VNG International, SALGA, ZILGA, CEO’s and Councilors from all our member local authorities. All attendees were surprised with a cap and a t-shirt gift to go out there pride themselves and market SWALGA.

**SWALGA holds General Council**
By Sandile Malambe

SWALGA hosted a half day successful General Council on the 29th November 2012, immediately after the launch. It was equally awesome just like the launch and it is worth mentioning that is was exciting to have it in the presence of our Partners and Colleagues, VNG International and SALGA respectively, who got the feel and taste of SWALGA’s General Council, whereat elections for the new SWALGA leadership were conducted.

SALGA hold its General Council once in five years, within 90 working days after the municipal elections. The elections are conducted on a fair basis wherein all the councillors have equal chances and rights to elect and or to be elected into the Presidential Committee. Hereunder, we present the Presidential Committee as democratically duly elected on the day is presented.

**President – Honorable Cllr Phiwayinkhosi Ginindza (Ngwenya)**
**Deputy-President (1) – Honorable Councilor Mzobanzi Dlamini (Siteki)**
**Deputy-President (2) –Honorable Councilor Ayanda Sigudla (Manzini)**
**Additional Member-Honorable Councilor Sithembile Mazibuko (Mankayane)**
**Additional Member-Honourable Councilor Dumisani Sibandze (Nhlangano)**

**Service level benchmarking for Zimbabwe urban local authorities**
By Chris Musekiwa - UCAZ Communications Officer

The World Bank Mission in Zimbabwe has commissioned a study on service level benchmarking for water and sanitation services in all the 32 urban local authorities in Zimbabwe. A consultant spearheading the study drafted an inception report with service level benchmarks and indicators which were presented to engineers for discussion and their input during a workshop held in September 2012 in Kadoma. The consultant has
now compiled final benchmarks which came out of the September workshop with engineers.

The Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development, the Ministry of Water Resources Management, UCAZ and the University of Zimbabwe are represented in two teams of about eight each. The teams are visiting all the 32 urban local authorities collecting data using questionnaires on waste water, solid waste management and water supply. The data collection visits to councils commenced on 7 January 2013 up to 4 February 2013 after which a workshop to present the findings will be held.

The Solid waste management indicators questionnaire looks at: Property level coverage through door-to-door collection of waste; Efficiency of collection of municipal solid waste; Extent of recovery of municipal solid waste collected; Extent of scientific disposal of waste at landfill sites; Efficiency in satisfactory response/reaction to customer complaints; Efficiency of cost recovery in solid waste management services and Coverage of receptacles among others.

Wastewater Management Indicators questionnaire covers: Coverage of functional toilets; Coverage of sewerage network services; efficiency of collection of sewerage; Adequacy of capacity for treatment of sewerage; Quality of sewerage treatment; Extent of Recycling or reuse of sewerage; Efficiency in satisfactory response/reaction to customer complaints; to name just a few.

Water supply indicators questionnaire deals with: Property level coverage of direct water supply connections; Per capita supply of water; Extent of metering of water connections; Continuity of water supply; Efficiency in satisfactory response/reaction to customer complaints; Operating cost recovery in water supply services and Efficiency in collection of water supply related charges among others.

These indicators are expected to show at what level the local authorities are operating as far as the three service delivery areas are concerned. They will flag out the inadequacies both in terms of human capital and infrastructure. In addition, recommendations will be proffered for improvement.

On the calendar

- SADC AMCOD Meeting, Luanda, 1-5 April 2013: For more information, please visit www.amcod.info or www.sadc.int

- 3rd Assises of Decentralised Cooperation for Development, Brussels, 9-10 April 2013: For more information, please write to LRD4DEV@cor.europa.eu

- SADC Regional PPP Conference, Kasane, 22 – 26 April 2013: To register or for more information, please visit www.bala.org.bw

- CLGF Conference, Kampala, 14 – 17 May 2013: To register or for more information, please visit www.clgf.org.uk

For comments, questions or suggestions,
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