



(Africa Section)

COLLOQUIUM: THE COMMONWEALTH IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM.

" Going into the 21st Century: Decentralisation, Democratisation and Empowerment at the Local Level"

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Introduction.

The ending of the 1990s has seen more changes to governance through the emphasis on decentralisation, participatory democracy, transparency, partnership development and other concepts including diversity, as globalisation becomes more topical. This means this change must be managed carefully in order to achieve our goals. The next millennium should ensure sustainability, consolidation and improvement of new ideas.

My vision as a practitioner is of a strong independent and self-sufficient local government sector in all nations, based on broad popular support, pursuing all its activities in accordance with the highest ethical standards of accountability and stewardship; a governing sector able and willing to lead the way towards a better world for us all to live in.

In the past few years we have experienced profound and unprecedented changes in our world. Democracy is sweeping like a tidal wave all around the globe (as once mentioned by Harold MacMillan with reference to decolonisation in Africa). Market economy and regional economic integration are tearing boundaries enabling free exchange of ideas, goods and people.

In the wake of this process, the number of voluntary organizations (NGOs) including inter-municipal associations of local government, has increased dramatically throughout the world. IULA perceives the local government national associations sector (such as FCM) as an important catalyst promoting democracy. We believe that the empowerment of local governments and their associations is a key to