



Commonwealth Local Government Forum Statement on Zimbabwe

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum, CLGF, expresses its support for the Leaders of the Southern African Development Community, SADC, in seeking to find a peaceful solution to the political situation in Zimbabwe which will reflect the wishes of the people of Zimbabwe following the March 2008 elections.

Once a political settlement has been achieved in Zimbabwe, the international community should mount a major effort to assist the country to restore its economy, encourage the return of exiles, ensure essential services to the community and assist political stability.

The Commonwealth family, working with the UN and other development partners, should take an initiative in defining what assistance is needed for Zimbabwe's reconstruction and development. Building on the precedent of the support given to the new South Africa in 1994, it should assist the early convening of an international donors' initiative designed to marshal the necessary resources.

CLGF notes the outcomes of the Zimbabwe local government elections provide an overwhelming democratic mandate to the newly-elected councils. These councils have a key role in addressing poverty, tackling the UN Millennium Development Goals and providing basic services to their communities as well as ensuring good governance at local level.

CLGF recalls the positive impact of its Local Democracy Enhancement Programme, undertaken in Zimbabwe in cooperation with southern African local government partners between 2004-07 which brought together local leaders of different political parties in joint efforts. This has resulted in city development plans which provide the basis for future support to Zimbabwe's local government. When circumstances permit, CLGF commits itself to working with local government in Zimbabwe to support national reconstruction, development and strongly promote local democracy and good governance.

CLGF, 15 April 2008