

Welcome and Opening Remarks

David Jackson initiated the meeting and welcomed those in attendance. He invited *Jenifer Bukokhe Wahkungu* to present the agenda, which was unanimously approved, paving way for a broader discussion.

DeLoG Strategic Direction and Priorities

David Jackson presented the DeLoG Secretariat's priorities for the year. Firstly, the Summit for the Future 2024, taking place in September, and the fourth international conference on financing for development (4FfD), slated for 2025. *David* stressed the importance of ensuring that DeLoG was aligned with these processes, given the opportunity to advance discussions on decentralization and local governments. He drew attention to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which contained an overlooked passage, paragraph 34, opening the door to incorporate the role of local governments in local development in the document's subtext, which will be approved by heads of state.

Second, in terms of the Working Groups, *David* proposed looking at the thought leadership and partnerships around them. He mentioned the Working Group on Finance, a majority of whose members were already engaged in the Malaga Global Coalition for Municipal Finance. Similarly, *David* pointed out that the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW) was presently going on in New York, and the DeLoG membership may want to consider ensuring the Working Group on Gender was involved in that agenda. He asked participants to reflect on how DeLoG membership can influence their institutions in the global fora on post conflict recovery. He stated that DeLoG's working group on local democracy needed to stay engaged, with the broader constituency looking into how to be plugged into the equivalent of the Malaga Coalition, or CSW.

Finally, *David* pointed out that DeLoG was keen to stabilize the funding of the Secretariat and its membership, for DeLoG to emerge more strongly at the end of 2024. The expectation was to develop a five-year plan for DeLoG, centered around the proposed three priorities, which the Secretariat would commit themselves to, at the request of DeLoG's members. *David* then handed the floor to *Amadou Sy*, who presented a timeline of the Secretariat's transition from GIZ to UNCDF, since June 2023 to date, to include upcoming events for the year.

Amadou extended the Secretariat's appreciation to its diverse membership for being patient and supportive throughout the handover process, ensuring a seamless transition and continuity of services. He mentioned that the latest rights of contracts had recently been signed, allowing the Secretariat to publish newsletters, and internet content, thus increasing its ability to leverage a wider audience. He presented the upcoming events and meetings for the year, including: the CSW Commission of the Status of Women 68; the ECOSOC Financing for Development Follow-up (FfD Forum) 2024; the High-level Political Forum (HLPF); the Summit of the Future; and the World Urban Forum. Those in attendance were invited to send the Secretariat any relevant and/or thematic events, to include webinars, e-learning courses, and articles, which would be highlighted on the website.

Secretariat Updates and Work Plan

Nan Zhang provided an overview of the Secretariat's workplan for the year. She mentioned that invitations to a series of DeLoG network meetings, slated every six weeks, had been sent out to all members, with Strategic Support Group and Working Group meetings, scheduled to take place quarterly. The Secretariat would be continuing with some of the GIZ legacy initiatives, namely the DeLoG in Dialogue conversations and the Local Heroes interviews, every quarter, and the Newsletter, which would be published every six weeks.

Working Group Updates

Jenifer invited the focal points of the Working Groups to present their updates. *Ana Maria Vargas Falla* spoke on behalf of the Working Group on Local Democracy. She informed the meeting that she had taken up a full-time position at the University of Lund but was still involved in the advisory group. She discussed the upcoming 2024 ICLD Local Democracy Academy in Lund, Sweden, which had garnered interest from different donors and agencies, working on reconstruction and post conflict recovery in Ukraine. Members were requested to share the invitation to the academy with their networks.

- Action needed: Call for the co-chairs of Working Groups to manage the thematic discussions.

CIB/DeLoG Annual Meeting

Neila Akrimi informed the meeting about the upcoming annual meeting in Barcelona from the 27th to the 30th of May 2024. Themes of common interest were being explored such as democracy, post-conflict reconstruction, crisis fragility, and democratic resilience. She pointed out that the venue had been secured, and a first draft of the program, to include logistical details would be shared with members in due course. *Finn Speulman* echoed *Neila's* appreciation for the collaboration between DeLoG and UCLG's Working Group on Capacity and Institution Building (CIB), and the benefits gained from it.

- Actions needed: Members invited to suggest topics or issues for discussion in the annual meeting to enable the agenda to be shaped.

Open Discussion

The floor was opened for discussion, with participants endorsing the Secretariat's three strategic priority areas. With regards to the working groups, *Jamie Boex* concurred with the need to enhance the collaboration and coordination between DeLoG and CIB, to avoid duplication of efforts. He appreciated the need to have all stakeholders contribute discussions, in a meaningful manner, and encouraged the focus on topics of mutual interest. He pointed out that the Local Public Sector Alliance (LPSA) could assist in filling in knowledge gaps, through knowledge sharing or knowledge development, in addition to donor facing activities. He also suggested building on the existing co-chairs of the Working Group on Gender, instead of replication. The idea of establishing a fourth working group, specifically dedicated to conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction, was proposed, and received positive feedback. The meeting also recognized the need for a new coordinator for the Working Group on Gender and agreed to focus on unfinished business in the Working Group on Local Democracy.

Diana Vakarelska emphasized the importance of the topic on conflict, and fragility for UNICEF, particularly from a local governance and decentralization perspective, with a focus on strengthening resilience, increasing fiscal space, and financing of social services, during conflict and fragility. This included peace building initiatives at the local level.

- Actions needed: Consider the formation of a Working Group on Local Democracy and Post-conflict reconstruction.

Feedback on CIB/DeLoG Annual Meeting

David and *Nan* initiated a discussion about gathering feedback on the topics and issues members wanted to discuss in the upcoming annual meeting. They also considered how the annual meeting could help shape the agenda, review strategic priorities, and possibly involve development partners. *Christian Luy* emphasized the importance of in-person meetings, highlighting the differences in dynamics between online and in-person interactions. In addition, *Serdar Yilmaz* proposed the idea of organizing a high-profile event involving local governments and larger institutions to tackle issues such as climate change and conflict. He suggested this could be done around CIB/DeLoG annual meetings and offered his help to facilitate this. Finally, *Jaime* expressed interest in participating in the annual meeting, as part of the DeLoG network, and offered financial support for the conference. *David* thanked *Jaime* for the offer and noted it for discussion later.

- Action needed: Consider sharing member updates and achievements of respective organizations at the CIB Annual Meeting.