



Vote of thanks

by **Hon Teima Onorio, Vice-President, Kiribati**

Greetings to you all. I am indeed honoured to have been asked to move a vote of thanks on behalf of members of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum to all our distinguished guests and the Presidents of Sri Lanka and Uganda for gracing us with their presence this evening and for sharing with us their views and experiences on developmental local government.

The main reason for this CLGF conference is to bring together key stakeholders for local government to discuss, share and develop new development agendas for local government and build sustainability and prosperity for people and their communities. There is a lot we can learn from sharing experiences and ideas from all of us who are here for the conference.

I wish to acknowledge and thank His Excellency President Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka for his keynote address on the important role of local government in promoting a voice for people across the Commonwealth.

I also wish to thank His Excellency President Yoweri Museveni for his informative address on how local government works in Uganda and acknowledge the successful decentralisation programme that the government of Uganda is currently pursuing, making sure people are participating in their own affairs. The address given by President Museveni clearly demonstrates that local government can and does have a positive impact on the lives of the ordinary citizens. We were informed that most service delivery indicators provided by the decentralisation programme in Uganda show positive improvements: this sends a positive message to all of us who are passionate about local government that it does have an important role to play in improving the lives of ordinary citizens. We are all inspired by your words.

I would also like to take this opportunity to place on record our most profound and sincere appreciation to His Excellency the President of Uganda, your government, and your people for hosting this CLGF conference and for the courtesies and hospitalities extended to us all. Uganda is indeed a wonderful place to visit and, from what I have seen in the short time I have been here, Uganda is indeed the pearl of Africa.

An event like this cannot happen overnight; preparations for this conference started months ago. We are fortunate to have had backing by a team of dedicated and motivated colleagues from the Ministry of Local Government here in Uganda and staff from the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. The conference has brought all of us who are responsible for the development of local government to this city of Kampala to discuss issues and exchange ideas that will help us improve the delivery of local government services to our citizens and at the same time contribute to the economic, social and environmental development within our local communities through sound and

effective policies and strategies. Sharing and learning is an effective way of bringing development to our communities and that is basically what this conference is providing.

Let me once again thank our speakers for their interesting, inspiring and most wonderful presentations this evening.

I would like to conclude by wishing their excellencies and all of us here tonight every success for the Commonwealth Local Government Conference 2013 and throughout the year ahead. I would like to bestow upon you all the traditional Kiribati wish of health, peace, and prosperity to all.

Thank you