

## Workshop: Elevating The Debate On Decentralization And Multilevel Governance In Africa

Fairview, Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya  
May 20-22, 2024

### Program description

In December 2021, the Local Public Sector Alliance convened a series of virtual knowledge sharing events on [Decentralization and Local Development in Sub-Saharan Africa](#). Progress on devolution and local governance in the region was found to be uneven, and the extent and pace of decentralization can be described as moderate at best. An initial assessment of the [state of local governance institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa](#) (LPSA, December 2023) indicates that although some countries have devolved regional or local government institutions, decentralization and localization efforts are in need of strengthening and deepening in countries around the region. This is especially true if we wish subnational governance institutions in Africa to be effective and empowered actors in efforts to localize sustainable development and/or to engage in decentralized development cooperation.

The Local Public Sector Alliance—led by LPSA’s Working Group on Sub-Saharan Africa and other Africa-based members of the Alliance—wants to engage with experts and partner organization on how best to support and advocate for more inclusive and effective decentralization and localization in Sub-Saharan Africa. To this effect, LPSA—along with key partner organizations—is organizing the workshop “Elevating The Debate On Decentralization and Multilevel Governance In Africa” which will be held at the Fairview, Hotel, in Nairobi, Kenya, from May 20-22, 2024.

The workshop will explore the following: What are the main opportunities and challenges with respect to decentralization and multilevel governance in Africa? How can subnational governance institutions in Africa pursue more effective interventions to localize sustainable development and engage in decentralized development cooperation? How can bringing together stakeholders from across the continent to engage in knowledge development, knowledge sharing, and evidence-informed policy advocacy ‘elevate the debate’ and promote effective decentralization and localization as a critical precondition for resilient, inclusive, sustainable, equitable and efficient development?

### Program Schedule (Tentative)

	Morning Sessions	Afternoon Sessions
Monday May 20, 2024	<p>9:00 – 10:30 Welcome and opening</p> <p>11:00 – 12:30 Decentralization in Africa: Opportunities and challenges in Kenya and South Africa</p>	<p>13:30 – 15:00 Decentralization in Africa: Opportunities and challenges in countries with emerging devolution reforms</p> <p>15:30 – 16:00 An overview of LPSA resources</p> <p>16:00 – 17:00 An initial assessment of the state of local governance institutions in Africa</p>
Tuesday May 21, 2024	<p>9:00 – 10:30 Decentralization in Africa: Opportunities and challenges in federal contexts: Ethiopia, Nigeria</p> <p>11:00 – 12:30 Decentralization in Africa: Opportunities and challenges in Francophone Africa</p>	<p>13:30 – 15:00 Localizing Development: Limited decentralization and weak MLG as an obstacle to localizing SDGs (and an obstacle to decentralized development cooperation).</p> <p>15:30 – 17:00 Toward a Pan-African Network of Decentralization and MLG Advocates</p>
Wednesday May 22, 2024	<p>9:00 – 10:30 Devolution in Kenya: how can county governments more effectively promote localized sustainable development outcomes?</p> <p>11:00 – 12:30 Devolution in Kenya: Initial lessons for decentralization and localization efforts in the region</p>	<p>13:30 – 17:00 LPSA work planning (2024-25)</p> <p>19:00 Farewell Dinner</p>

## Session Guidance for Panelists

The panel discussions to be held during this workshop focus on the opportunities and challenges encountered in the stated desire by many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to pursue decentralization, localization of development efforts, and/or more effective multilevel governance. For the purpose of the program's discussions, experiences on decentralization and localization in Africa have been divided into four sub-groups: countries with relatively devolved systems (e.g., Kenya; South Africa); populous federal countries with less extensive devolution at the local level (e.g., Ethiopia; Nigeria); and countries with emerging or ongoing devolution reforms (e.g., Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Togo, Zambia). For the purpose of our discussions, the latter group has been divided in discussions on experiences in Anglophone and Francophone countries.

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Given that the workshop's participants are senior practitioners and experts with extensive knowledge in the field, this workshop intends to engage in targeted discussions, rather than serve as an opportunity for participants to present academic papers or present a detailed review of the state of decentralization reforms in each country. Instead, presenters should focus their remarks (preferably without powerpoint presentations) on adding value around the key topics of the workshop. As such, each panelist will be asked to speak for 15-20 minutes (total) by touching on the following topics:

- What is the current dynamic or driving force with respect to the decentralization/localization dialogue and/or reforms (or policy reversals) in your country or sub-region?
- At the margin, what specific interventions could help empower or encourage subnational governance institutions to more effectively pursue sustainable localized development (and/or engage in decentralized development cooperation)?
- How can knowledge development, knowledge sharing, and evidence-informed policy advocacy through a nascent pan-African network of decentralization and localization advocates 'elevate the debate' in your country or context, and promote more effective decentralization and localization as a critical precondition for resilient, inclusive, sustainable, equitable and efficient development?