

## **East Africa: The Mashariki Innovations in Local Governance Awards Program (MILGAP)**

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In recognition of the growing regional and national commitment to civic engagement, sustainability, and economic development in East Africa, UN. HABITAT, with support from the Ford Foundation, initiated the Mashariki Innovations in Local Governance Award Program in 2002. Currently, the program draws applicants from three nations, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, with the support of the Ford Foundation. UN-HABITAT uses this awards program to disseminate information on good governance and to encourage community participation and replication of successful projects. The MILGAP awards process has two tiers, involving a national and sub-regional stage. Once three projects are selected from each of the three countries involved in the Program, these three compete with one another at the East African regional level for first, second, and third positions.

Awards are presented every two years, with an emphasis this year on eight key assessments: innovation, impact, partnership building, sustainability, replicability, gender sensitivity, youth involvement, and participatory leadership. This round of awards drew 62 nominations in Uganda, 44 in Tanzania, and 61 in Kenya, thanks to aggressive national media campaigns. Applicants included local government authorities, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, NGOs, and research and training institutions. An additional emphasis of the awards selection process was compliance with the U.N. Development Program's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Selected programs addressed such diverse MDGs as poverty, food security, and environmental sustainability.



**Cecilia Kinuthia-Njenga** is a human settlements officer at UN-HABITAT in the fields of local development and governance. She has coordinated a diverse range of regional and national technical cooperation projects, including research and advocacy work on numerous local and urban planning issues in Africa and Asia. She is the founder of the Mashariki Innovations in Local Governance Awards Program (MILGAP), and also serves as the Task Manager of the Lake Victoria Region City Development Strategies Initiative for improved environmental sustainability and poverty reduction. Before joining UN-HABITAT, Ms. Kinuthia-Njenga worked in the international NGO sector and as a consultant in sectoral and macro-economic policy areas. Her research interests include civil society involvement in governance, sustainable economic development, HIV/AIDS health and education, participatory planning, and small and micro-enterprise development.