

# The APRM MONITOR

NEWS AND VIEWS ON THE AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM

Number 1



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## CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES REVIEW APRM PROGRESS

*Addis Ababa Workshop Debates Civil Society Involvement in the APRM*

A workshop on the theme of “**The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and Civil Society**” was held at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa on January 17-18, 2006. The workshop was organized by the **Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA)** and **Partnership Africa Canada (PAC)**, in collaboration with the **Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)**. Presentations were made about the implementation of the APRM in Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa and the role of civil society in the APRM was reviewed. The 55 participants came from African civil society organizations, the African diplomatic corps, African institutions and international organizations.

Presentations underlined the value of the APRM process in promoting a wide and open national dialogue and up to now, the countries that have embarked on the review process – **Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, Mauritius and South Africa** – have found the experience constructive. Civil society has managed to play a significant role in the evaluations undertaken so far. Of course, the reviews are just the beginning of the process and it is essential that all stakeholders remain involved to help implement the national plans of action resulting from the evaluations.

The workshop recommended that African governments redouble their efforts to involve all stakeholders in the APRM, including parliamentarians. Adequate resources have to be made available and African governments must play their part in ensuring that the initiative is adequately funded and, at the same time, that it remains an African-led initiative. Participants called on African governments to develop good communications tools to regularly inform the public about the APRM.

The workshop also called on African civil society to strengthen its capacity with respect to democratic, political, economic and corporate governance. African civil society must increase its cooperation with government and with the private sector, and it must create new opportunities to dialogue and strategize with respect to the APRM. The private sector has to become more engaged, and international donors must support the efforts being made by both African governments and civil society.

Civil society organizations at the workshop agreed to establish a network and collaborate on initiatives with respect to the APRM. See Addis Ababa APRM Workshop *Civil Society Declaration*, page 2.

## WHAT IS THE APRM?

*A key pillar of NEPAD*

“The primary purpose of the APRM is to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration through sharing of experiences and reinforcement of successful and best practice, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity building.”

**APRM Base Document:**

<http://www.nepad.org/2005/files/aprm.php>

## HOW DOES THE APRM FUNCTION?

The **APR Heads of State Forum** is the highest decision-making authority in the APRM. A **Panel of Eminent Persons** oversees the review process to ensure its integrity, to examine review reports and to make recommendations to the APR Forum. The **APRM Secretariat**, based in South Africa, provides technical, coordinating and administrative support services for the APRM.

**African Peer Review Mechanism Organisation and Process:**

<http://www.nepad.org/2005/files/aprm.php>

## MORE COUNTRIES JOIN APRM

*Half of African countries have now joined*

Twenty-three countries had formally acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism before the January 23-24, 2006 **African Union** summit in Khartoum:

**Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.**

The Khartoum summit provided an opportunity for three new countries which had expressed their intentions to participate in the APRM, namely **Sao Tome & Principe, Sudan and Zambia**, to formally accede to the APRM.

Countries that have yet to join the APRM are:

**Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Seychelles, Somalia, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Zimbabwe and Western Sahara.**

## ADDIS ABABA APRM WORKSHOP

### *Civil Society Declaration*

Addis Ababa, 18 January, 2006

We, representatives of African civil society organizations, meeting in Addis Ababa on January 17 and 18, 2006 in a workshop organized by the Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA) and Partnership Africa Canada (PAC), in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), on the theme of "The African Peer Review Mechanism and Civil Society",

- Having examined the challenges that the APRM addresses and its contribution to the strengthening of good governance, and having reviewed the APRM experiences of Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa;
- Recognizing the political will of African heads of state and government to promote good governance in Africa by fully involving civil society and the private sector in the implementation of the APRM objectives;
- Recognizing that the APRM offers a real opportunity to promote policy dialogue between all national actors and to strengthen good governance;
- Reaffirming that the APRM's success depends on the wide and effective participation of African civil society in the whole evaluation process and in the implementation of national action plans;

Recommend:

#### **TO AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS**

1. That they promote ownership of the APRM by the people and allocate sufficient financial resources for it to remain an African instrument serving African interests;
2. That they involve all state institutions, and especially parliaments, in all the phases of the APRM process;
3. That they fully involve civil society and the private sector in the national structures supervising the APRM evaluations, and in the implementation of action plans;
4. That they develop, through the APRM Secretariat, a dynamic communications strategy to encourage a good understanding of the APRM by all development actors, particularly by ensuring the regular updating of the APRM website and by creating other communications tools for disseminating information on the mechanism;

#### **TO THE AFRICAN PRIVATE SECTOR**

5. That it support existing mechanisms for dialogue and become more involved in the APRM national evaluations, as well as in the implementation of action plans;

#### **TO AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY**

6. That it create its own opportunities for dialogue and discussion in order to identify common objectives and plan strategies to strengthen its participation in the APRM;
7. That it strengthen cooperation with governments and the private sector in order to identify problems as well as solutions respecting national, regional and pan-African interests;
8. That it strengthen technical and institutional capacities in the area of democratic, political, economic and corporate governance;
9. That it develop networks within African civil society to work on NEPAD and the APRM;
10. That it bring to the APRM evaluations the experience gained through advocacy and the implementation of national development policies;

#### **TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

11. That it acknowledge and support the efforts of African governments with regard to the APRM;
12. That it support the wide and effective participation by African peoples in the APRM process.



The Addis Ababa workshop agreed to organize further workshops at the national and regional level in Africa. It asked a core group of organizations to coordinate this work during 2006, namely: ▪ Comité de Liaison des ONG du Congo (R. of Congo) ▪ Christian Relief and Development Association (Ethiopia) ▪ NEPAD Committee (Kenya) ▪ South African Institute of International Affairs (South Africa) ▪ AfriMAP - Open Society Institute ▪ Partnership Africa Canada (Addis Ababa)

## GHANA APRM REPORT PRESENTED TO APRM FORUM

Prior to the January 23-24 AU Summit in Khartoum, the final report of Ghana's APRM review was presented to the APRM Forum on January 22. Ghana is the first African country to successfully complete the different stages of the African Peer Review Mechanism. The five stages are:

- Countries undergo a comprehensive **national self-assessment** exercise involving all relevant constituencies. The **assessment report** and **draft programme of action** are then sent to the APRM.
- The APRM Secretariat makes a **country review visit**.
- The country review team prepares a **draft report**.
- The APRM chairperson communicates the **recommendations** to the head of state and government of the country under review.
- The **country report** and **action programme** are publicized.

The final review report for Ghana has yet to be made public, but according to a report by the Economic Commission for Africa, "the Ghana review report submitted to the African leaders listed **capacity constraints, gender disparity, corruption, lack of decentralization and land issues** as the main governance concerns in Ghana. Other problems included chieftaincy, unemployment, external dependence, and the brain drain.

But the report also identified several best practices in Ghana worthy of emulation by other countries, including success in **consolidating democracy**. It noted there had been three successful elections and transfers of power since 1996, and that there are institutions for stakeholder dialogue such as an **Annual Governance Forum, the People's Assembly, and National Economic Dialogue**. The report also commended Ghana's contribution to regional peacekeeping.

In response to the issues raised in the report, Ghana has prepared a fully costed (at \$5 billion) and time-bound programme of action, dealing with each of the issues raised, as well as monitoring and evaluation processes. In a presentation to the heads of state in Khartoum, **President John Kufuor** indicated that his administration had already committed \$50 million for land administration policies. He also said he had set up "a special ministry" to help resolve the chieftaincy problem. Furthermore, he added, the government had submitted a bill for a national identification system and had set up a Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. The results "are better macroeconomic conditions and debt forgiveness of about \$7 billion," he stated.

In the area of fighting corruption, he said the government had taken a number of measures including repealing the libel law to make it easier for news media to expose corruption, enacting the anticorruption act, and conducting civic education. Ghana has also launched a Local Government Institute aimed at building capacity in local governance.

Finally, President Kufuor stated that he would turn the Independent Ghana APRM Governing Council into a permanent

body so that it could continue monitoring implementation of the programme of action.

The ECA's **Executive Secretary, Abdoulie Janneh**, who attended the APRM Forum in Khartoum, noted that "The peer review of Ghana is an important milestone for the improvement of governance in African countries". He added that "The ECA has been instrumental in providing support to the APRM process. Ghana and Rwanda are the first two countries to complete the self-assessment exercise and their action programmes were due to be heard in Khartoum. However as the Rwandan president was not present, only Ghana was subjected to the final stage in Khartoum"

Source: *Economic Commission for Africa: www.uneca.org*

### AFRICAN UNION KHARTOUM SUMMIT

At the January 23-24, 2006 summit of the African Union in Khartoum, **President Olusegun Obasanjo**, Chairperson of the African Union, stated that "it is noteworthy that the culture of good governance is gradually gathering fervour in Africa. With an increasing number of countries acceding to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) of **NEPAD**, one fundamental factor in the march towards sustainable development is being attained. The onus of sustainability therefore resides with us. While congratulating those of us that have committed ourselves to this process, I urge those who have not, to find the positive reasons to accede to APRM. The APRM process has served to improve the image of Africa."

At the Khartoum Summit, much time was devoted to the debate over whether **Sudan** should assume the "chairmanship" of the African Union, given the ongoing turmoil in Darfur. In the end, it was agreed that the **Republic of Congo** would take on this role for 2006, with Sudan taking over in 2007. Sudan used the occasion of the AU Summit to announce its application to join the APRM.

### *The APRM Panel of Eminent Persons*

The APRM has a **Panel of Eminent Persons** that oversees the process and ensures its integrity. The members of the panel that attended the Khartoum APRM Forum were:

- **Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat, Chairperson of the APRM Panel**
- **Prof. Adebayo Adedeji**
- **Prof. Mohammed Babes**
- **Dr. Dorothy Njeuma**
- **Ms. Marie-Angélique Savané**
- **Dr. Chris Stals**

## MEDIA WATCH

The **Agência de Informação de Moçambique - AIM** (Maputo), reported on January 23, 2006, that the General Secretary of NEPAD, **Firmino Mucavele**, declared that Sudan's decision to join the African Peer Review Mechanism has created an opportunity for Africans to assess from within the problems of the largest country on the continent and help solve them. "Sudan's membership of the APRM means a lot", said Mucavele. "It means we have the opportunity, from inside, to assess, criticise and learn from each other". Mucavele said that currently the methods and procedures used in the APRM are undergoing evolution, in order to find ways of speeding them up. "This is a new process", he said. "We're not used to it, but we're developing the capacities for it... Some countries are pessimistic and some are optimistic", he admitted. "But the most important thing is that we're in this together".

**AIM** reports that Sudan's membership of the APRM is regarded by some observers in Khartoum as just a gambit to ensure that Sudanese **President Omar Al-Bachir** becomes the next chairperson of the AU. That prospect is regarded with dismay by some of Sudan's neighbours, notably Chad, and by all those horrified at Sudan's dismal human rights record. Even the decision to hold the summit in Khartoum was polemical, given the violence in the western Sudanese region of Darfur, regarded in many quarters as genocidal, and the links of those mainly responsible, the Janjaweed militias, with the Sudanese army.

**BuaNews** (South Africa) reported on January 30, 2006, that a member of the APRM's Panel of Eminent Persons has expressed delight with the progress South Africa has made regarding the African Peer Review Mechanism. "It is great to see South Africa at work with the process of self-assessment because at the beginning the country was slow to get on board," said Dr Stals. "The APRM process involves everyone in a country, not just the government. Identify problems and shortcomings of the government and then give recommendations at the end," he said. He gave a word of advice to South Africa to minimise political domination and interference in the process to avoid delays. "In other countries the process has been delayed by unnecessary political interference," said Dr Stals.

The **Concord Times** (Freetown) reported on February 1, 2006, that **President Kabbah**, during the opening of a one-day consultative conference on the African Peer Review Mechanism, summoned his **Deputy Minister of Finance, Joe Kallon**, to explain the involvement of civil society in the budget preparation throughout the country, stating that they are "even required to monitor and report any irregularity". In his keynote address, President Kabbah explained that his government has made major achievements in the area of democracy and corporate governance.

## REPORTS

*"The African Governance Report 2005"*, UN Economic Commission for Africa, March 2006. The report surveyed experts and households in 27 African countries to gauge citizens' perception of the state of governance in each country. There have been significant improvements in political governance indicators. However, people's rights continue to be violated, opposition parties lack access to resources and security, and electoral commissions are not well resourced and lack full independence.

On economic management and corporate governance, progress has been registered in public financial management and accountability. However, tax evasion, corruption and lack of transparency pose serious challenges.

A key improvement in accountability is the number of privately owned media. Challenges remain, such as strengthening judicial systems, boosting the effectiveness of the civil service and better integration of traditional institutions into the governance system. The report is available at: [www.uneca.org](http://www.uneca.org)

*"South Africa: Justice Sector and the Rule of Law"*, Open Society Foundation-South Africa and AfriMAP, February 2006. The report provides a comprehensive audit of justice sector performance in post-apartheid South Africa. The report is broadly positive about South Africa's commitment to independence of the judiciary, while recognizing a need for continued vigilance to ensure it remains. Both the main report and a shorter discussion paper are available at: [www.afriMAP.org](http://www.afriMAP.org)

*"Between Hope and Scepticism: Civil Society and the African Peer Review Mechanism"*, Partnership Africa Canada, October 2005. The report examines the involvement of civil society in the APRM process in Ghana and Rwanda and situates the APRM – and the NEPAD initiative – in an historical context. The report provides an overview of the APRM process and contains a large number of recommendations for government, the private sector and civil society alike. The report is available in French and in English (translation) at: [www.pacweb.org](http://www.pacweb.org)

**The APRM MONITOR** is a periodic newsletter on the implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). It seeks to promote the active involvement of African civil society in the APRM process in order to strengthen the APRM and ensure that it promotes better governance and leads to lasting benefits for Africa.

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