



## APR Forum Summit held in Sharm El Sheik, Egypt Togo joins the APRM

The 9<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Committee of Heads of State and Government participating in the **African Peer Review Forum** (APR Forum) was held on 29 June 2008 in **Sharm El Sheik, Egypt**, on the eve the African Union Summit. The Forum was attended by thirteen Heads of State and Government, sixteen (16) representatives, and five out of the seven members of the African Peer Review Mechanism Panel of Eminent Persons were also in attendance. One of the highlights of the Summit was the accession of the **Republic of Togo** to the APRM, which made it the 29<sup>th</sup> African country to join the Mechanism.

The Chairperson of the APR Forum informed his peers that the mandate of the seven-member APR Panel of Eminent Persons, which was extended at the last Forum, has expired. Four will be retained in the interim period.

The Chairperson invited the Forum to come up with a final decision on the Legal Status of the APRM Secretariat as “an autonomous institution of the African Union” and that urgent measures should be taken to finalize procedures for the signing of the Host Country Agreement with the **Republic of South Africa**.

Three countries - **Uganda, Nigeria and Burkina Faso** - were slated for peer review at the summit. **Prof. Adebayo Adedeji**, lead panellist for the Uganda review, presented highlights of the Country Review Report, identifying ten cross-cutting issues and nine best practices. **H.E. Yoweri Museveni**, President of Uganda, commended the APR Panel for the outstanding report and agreed on most of the findings and recommendations of the Country Review Report. The President commented, *inter alia*, on macro-economic reforms and trade liberalization, high population growth and poor implementation of policies in his country.

The Forum discussed the report on Uganda and made comments on issues including management of elections, development challenges, corruption and the country's population policy. Uganda has prepared a Programme of Action (POA), which is intended to guide and mobilize efforts for the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the review process.

**Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat**, lead panellist for the Nigeria review, highlighted key governance issues for Nigeria including the management of diversity, over-dependence on oil, endemic corruption, the paradox of pervasive poverty, management of elections and slow progress in the advancement of women. The report featured eleven best practices for Nigeria, notably its commitment to peace-keeping in Africa, the Technical Aid Corps, the adoption of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and the publication of assets by President Yar'Adua. **H.E. Umaru Yar'Adua** acknowledged that pluralism is indeed one of the major challenges facing Nigeria, given the diversity of its huge population, and steps are being taken to address this specific challenge. Nigeria is also implementing measures to improve the electoral process and curtail the endemic corruption in the country. With regard to gender mainstreaming in the national development process, Nigeria is committed to removing clauses that discriminate against women in the Constitution, and to the repeal of all laws and judicial procedures that are prejudicial to women. Nigeria will further endeavour to ensure that at least 30 percent of all appointive public positions are assigned to women.

Due to time constraints, the Forum could not complete the peer review of Nigeria. It agreed to hold an Extraordinary Summit that will conclude the reviews of Nigeria and Burkina Faso and consider the annual progress reports of Kenya, Algeria, South Africa and Rwanda. The Extraordinary Summit will also discuss the overarching issues identified in the reviews to date, including the *Management of Diversity, Xenophobia, Land, Management of Elections and Corruption*.

*Excerpt from the Communiqué issued at the end of the 9th. Summit of the APR Forum, 29 June 2008, Sharm El Sheik, Egypt.*

**The Extraordinary Summit of the APR Forum will be held in Cotonou, Benin, from 25-26 October 2008.**

## **CIVIL SOCIETY WORKSHOP REVIEWS APRM PROGRESS**

### **West African CSOs launch network on APRM**

From 28-30 July, 2008, some 60 civil society participants, including representatives from all 16 West African countries, gathered in **Bamako, Mali** for a three-day sub-regional workshop to discuss lessons learned from the participation of West African civil society organisations in the African Peer Review Mechanism. The workshop was organised by the **Association du Sahel d'Aide à la Femme et à l'Enfance (ASSAFE)**, in partnership with the **UN Economic Commission for Africa, Partnership Africa Canada, AfriMAP** and the **Commission Nationale de Gouvernance du MAEP du Mali CNG/MAEP**.

Participants studied the recent experiences of implementing the APRM in Ghana, Benin, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Mali. Emphasis was placed on the importance of civil society organisations (CSOs) playing key roles not only in the review processes but also in the implementation and monitoring of the national plans of action. The Mali experience, like that of Benin, was considered very positive because of its participatory nature and the culture of dialogue there. Participants concluded the workshop by agreeing to establish a CSO APRM network to support and promote the successful implementation of the APRM in West Africa.

### **Bamako Workshop Declaration**

We, representatives of African civil society organisations, coming from 16 West African countries, which have already joined the APRM or are in the process of doing so, meeting in a training workshop entitled "Lessons learned from the participation of West African civil society organisations in the African Peer Review Mechanism process",

- Having followed the national APRM evaluation experiences in Ghana, Benin, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Mali and the significant role played by civil society organisations in them;
- Having carefully followed the work of CSOs in the countries preparing to be evaluated, namely **Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo**;
- Having noted the interest shown by West African CSOs whose countries are not yet members of the APRM, namely **Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Liberia and Niger**;
- Recognizing that the APRM is able to make an appropriate contribution to the promotion of good governance and of a culture of policy dialogue in Africa;
- Reaffirming that the success of the APRM necessarily depends on the wide and qualitative involvement of African civil society throughout the evaluation process and in the implementation of the national programmes of action;

Agree, based on what African CSOs have achieved so far in the APRM, to gradually establish a West African APRM network, which will be coordinated by the Malian NGO, ASSAFE.

#### **RECOMMEND**

##### **To West African governments**

1. To join the APRM and/or to accelerate the implementation process in their respective countries.
2. To make the APRM the principal reference in matters of governance and socio-economic development.
3. To bring together all state institutions, the private sector and civil society at each stage of the evaluation process.
4. To put in place autonomous national governing councils and provide them with adequate technical and financial resources.

##### **To West African private sector**

1. To develop ownership of the APRM.
2. To establish a dynamic partnership with national and sub-regional institutions in order to promote the APRM.

##### **To technical and financial partners**

**ECA, PAC, AfriMAP** and others:

1. To accompany in an effective way African CSOs involved in the APRM.

**ECOWAS** and **UEMOA**:

2. To encourage countries to join and respect their commitments in implementing, monitoring and evaluating the APRM process.

##### **To West African civil society**

1. To strengthen their own technical and institutional capacity in the four APRM thematic areas: political and democratic governance, economic governance, corporate governance and socio-economic development.
2. To learn from experience gained in advocacy and the independent monitoring of public policy in support of the APRM evaluations.

## Guest Column

## ADDING VALUE TO AFRICAN PEER REVIEW?

On 22 September 2008, the United Nations in New York held a high-level meeting on 'Africa's Development Needs'. Important components were to be the development of governance, and the governance of development. And none is more significant than the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Seven years ago, the APRM was merely an idea. A single sentence in the 2001 document outlining the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad), spoke of "setting up mechanisms for reviewing progress in the achievement of mutually agreed targets and compliance with mutually agreed standards." Today, 29 African countries, representing more than 75% of the continent's population, have voluntarily acceded to this innovative governance self-monitoring system and reform initiative. Togo was the latest to sign up in June 2008. The pace of reviews has improved remarkably in the past year. From a slow start, three Country Review Reports were ready for discussion by participating Heads of State at the last APR Forum meeting in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt in June. The packed agenda meant that that only Uganda's discussion was completed, with the Burkina Faso and Nigeria reports deferred to an extraordinary Forum session later in 2008. This will bring to nine the number of African states 'peer reviewed' - having subjected virtually all facets of governance in their countries to scrutiny by their own citizens, African experts and ultimately fellow heads of state, and come up with plans to plug the governance gaps. This complex system is unprecedented globally. So where has value been added? And how can the process be bolstered further?

**Power to the people.** The APRM requires participating countries to involve their citizens in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their political, economic and corporate systems and socio-economic development policies, and proposing remedies. Guidelines published in 2003 state that "the APRM process is designed to be open and participatory ... the APRM will engage key stakeholders to facilitate exchange of information and national dialogue on good governance and socio-economic development programmes, thereby increase[ing] the transparency of the decision-making processes, and build[ing] trust in the pursuit of national development goals." Though thick with development-speak, this opens up political space for both the governed and their governors. Peer review seeks to make frankness, robust debate, differences of opinion and criticism less threatening and more acceptable in Africa. The more citizens demand better governance, the more it will be supplied. In this sense, the journey is as important as the destination. If carried out fairly, Africa's people will feel they have a stake in this process.

**Identifying the issues.** The diagnostic strength of the peer review reports has been demonstrated. They flagged both the election-related ethnic violence in Kenya after December 2007 and the xenophobic tensions that erupted in South Africa in May 2008. Their recommendations - not being mandatory or enforceable - went unheeded. Analysis of the six publicly available reports (Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, Algeria, South Africa

and Benin) reveals many common challenges, including managing diversity, curbing corruption and strengthening accountability institutions. While the reports seldom reveal new information, they can highlight key areas for intervention, and can potentially sort out the spaghetti bowl of overlapping national reform efforts, setting realistic deadlines, budgets and oversight.

**Sparking reform, and celebrating it.** Early APRM countries (or 'pioneers') are now several years into the implementation of their APRM Programmes of Action (POAs). All can point to concrete governance gains. Ghana has branded the reduction in the size of the cabinet, the passage of a long-stalled bill to protect whistleblowers and promote access to information as direct consequences of APRM recommendations. Rwanda is in the midst of fundamental reforms to its business environment. Kenya points out laws passed, for example on witness protection and public procurement, new funds to foster youth and women's development and a draft national land policy created through consultation. In South Africa, issues flagged in the APRM, such as unregulated private funding to political parties and floor-crossing in parliament, have been slated for reform. Granted, many of the problems identified are complex and it will take more time to discern real change. So showing where and how the mechanism makes a difference is vital. Countries and continental structures should do a better job to document, publicise and celebrate APRM successes - large and small - to maintain momentum, sustain interest, and garner support.

**Tackling technical issues.** As the number of countries acceding and progressing grows, the administrative system will come under increasing strain. At the present pace, it would take another decade to complete the 20 awaiting-review states, not counting any new entrants, or pioneer countries up for their second reviews. Holding the Forum the day before African Union Summits must also be rethought. Some presidents arrive late, the meeting takes place simultaneously with the Nepad Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee, and other urgent business frequently intervenes - such as the Zimbabwe crisis in Sharm-el-Sheikh. And there is no time to discuss the implementation reports of the early countries. This lack of monitoring of progress is serious.

**Revitalising Management.** Reconstituting the Panel - as the inaugural one's mandate is long overdue according to APRM rules - must be speedily resolved to ensure sustainability and continued progress. Strong leadership, with integrity and transparency, will be crucial to maintain trust and faith in a process with tremendous potential.

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## MEDIA WATCH

The **Ghanaian Times** (Accra) reported on 19 June that henceforth, Parliament will study and debate the country's progress report on the African Peer Review Mechanism process to ensure that the government implements recommendations that seek to correct gaps and deficiencies identified in the report. **Abraham Ossei-Aidoo**, Majority Leader and Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, said since the APRM process is a people-centred venture, it is important for the House to be engaged in every stage of the process including its monitoring and evaluation. He announced this in **Accra** when the seven-member National APRM Governance Council presented copies of the second APRM Progress Report (2007) to Parliament for distribution to MPs. Mr. Ossei-Aidoo said as and when the progress report is presented, it would be referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs for their consideration, after which such reports would be debated on the floor of the House.

The **Daily Monitor** (Kampala) reported on 12 July that **President Yoweri Museveni** has defended his right to seek re-election before his peers - describing the lifting of Presidential Term limits in 2005 as a "democratic act". Consequently the Uganda government is unlikely to review the lifting of President Term limits, a move often cited as one of the darker chapters of President Yoweri Museveni's career. In his on-the-record response to an assessment of Uganda's progress on good governance, as part of the African Peer Review Mechanism, the President and his government said "as long as there is a level playing field in Presidential elections competition, the choice of President is left to be determined democratically through majority vote of citizens"... Uganda's response to the issue of term limits follows a recommendation by an external (APRM) panel comprised of eminent persons including the wife of President Nelson Mandela, **Graça Machel** that the country should consider restoring term limits.

The **Concord Times** (Freetown) reported on 16 September the launch of the implementation of the APRM process in **Sierra Leone**. Speaking in Freetown, **President Ernest Bai Koroma** said Sierra Leone has made significant progress in the area of political governance. "I am determined to see that the APRM process is successful in Sierra Leone. Vigorous public debate brings about good governance," he said. President Koroma noted that as long as he stays on as president he would not tolerate any form of abuse of human rights.

## Civil Society APRM Resources

**AfriMAP** has published two new reports on the implementation of the APRM in Benin and Nigeria. The reports analyse in detail the strengths and weaknesses of the APRM process in both countries. Both reports are available on line at: [www.afriMAP.org](http://www.afriMAP.org)

**SAIIA** has an *APRM Toolkit*, available in English and French at: [www.aprmtoolkit.co.za](http://www.aprmtoolkit.co.za)

**EISA** has an *APRM Toolkit for Civil Society*, available in English and Portuguese at:

[www.eisa.org.za/aprm/index.htm](http://www.eisa.org.za/aprm/index.htm)

The **Economic Commission for Africa APRM Support Unit** web pages provide useful APRM reference material: [www.uneca.org/aprm](http://www.uneca.org/aprm)

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### MORE THAN HALF OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE NOW JOINED THE APRM

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**Twenty-nine** countries have formally acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism:

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

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, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Seychelles, Somalia, Swaziland, Tunisia, Zimbabwe and Western Sahara.**

**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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