



APRM

REVIEWING A DECADE OF PEER LEARNING  
AND PROJECTING A FUTURE OF GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

17-18 MAY ADDIS ABABA ETHIOPIA

## THE APRM +10: REVIEWING A DECADE OF PEER LEARNING AND PROJECTING A FUTURE OF GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

A CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY

17 – 18 MAY 2013

AFRICA HALL (UNECA)

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA



### THE BACKGROUND

As the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) enters its 10 years of existence, it is a time to celebrate, but also to review the impact of this novel instrument on governance in Africa. While we, as Africans, can pride ourselves at on the gains made thus far and in such a short time span, it is also important to ensure that the APRM does not lose momentum given that the consolidation of institutions and processes are lengthy. There are some signs that in certain quarters its voice has been ineffectual and that recommendations flowing out of the review missions and which have been captured in the National Programmes of Action (NPOAs) have been ignored or dismissed. APRM's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations coupled with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of the Organisation of African Unity/African Union (OAU/AU) gives us the opportunity to look back with a view to interrogating and projecting a future for the mechanism in addressing governance issues of the day. This is with a view to better profiling the African Peer Review Mechanism, finding synergies and inter-linkages especially with other organs and structures of the AU.

## **RATIONALE AND PURPOSE**

The APRM was established on 9 March 2003 by the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). APRM is a mutually agreed-upon instrument for self-monitoring by the participating member governments of the AU. 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 practices, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity building (APRM base document available at [www.nepad.org](http://www.nepad.org))

Since its inception, the APRM has made significant progress in terms of the number of countries that have acceded, the rolling-out of the review exercise, the deepening of the review process, as well as the level of participation and engagement of stakeholders. Indeed, membership of the mechanism has grown steadily since 2003. Currently, 33 countries have voluntarily acceded to the APRM. These countries are: *Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zambia*. On 26 January 2013, Tunisia and Chad signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Technical Assessment Missions, thus making them the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> countries to voluntarily accede to the mechanism.

Of these, 15 countries have completed the self-assessment and have been peer reviewed. They are: *Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Algeria, Benin, Uganda, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique, Lesotho, Mauritius, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone*. The Country Review Report of Zambia and the second Country Review Report of Kenya are ready for peer review by the APR Forum. The Country Review Mission to Tanzania was also successfully fielded in March 2012. Both the Country Review Reports of Tanzania and Zambia were tabled at the recently concluded 20<sup>th</sup> Summit of the AU.

The NPoA is central to the APRM. NPoAs stem from the review exercises and provide, among other things, opportunities for the participation of citizens in policy debates. The lead up process to the NPoA fosters national dialogue, an interrogation of deficiencies in governance, and enables a platform for the exchange of practical ideas on how domestic problems can best be solved locally.

Despite 10 years of existence and the successes realized in several quarters, the APRM has largely been enclosed in a 'black box', the recommendations flowing out of the review exercises, either shelved or not given the attention they deserve.

Consequently, the conference will focus on appraising the achievements/non-achievements of the Mechanism in its first ten years. Given that NPoAs are at the fulcrum of the process but have, unfortunately, been dismissed in several instances, it is imperative to interrogate how civil society can hold member states accountable through the monitoring of NPoAs and other commitments by APRM member states.

In addition, the APRM may have to contend with other instruments such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG). This is especially in light of the current development where 16 countries have now ratified the Charter, compared with 33 who have signed up to the APRM. Questions on the continued life of the APRM abound. For instance, what value does the Charter add? Is there a major departure or can the two coexist? Whereas the APRM is an instrument to which States voluntarily accede, the Charter is compulsory once States have ratified it. It is thus important to understand why some States have not ratified the Charter? Could the APRM be a vehicle to assist with the ratification of the Charter? To what extent can States allow the implementation of the Charter but also reinforce the APRM at a national level? A critical question would be how the Electoral Management Bodies can be better strengthened to fulfil the requirements and pronouncements of the standard ACDEG and the APRM.

With the Charter coming into force, a significant role for the Pan African Parliament (PAP) as the third pillar of the envisaged governance architecture comes to the fore. Questions that arise are: How can legislative rules and principles as outlined in the Charter be aligned with PAP's mandate? How can the PAP better engage with the APRM recommendations?

Many countries still face an uneven development alongside the paradox of growing wealth creation especially with the discovery of natural resources in many contexts. It can be feared that without fully interrogating, understanding and finding critical inter-linkages to safe guard emerging economies, wars and conflicts will continue unabated. The discursive space provided by the conference is thus appropriate to interrogate how APRM can be interlinked to the Peace and Security Commission of the AU.

Discussions have hardly touched upon the kinds of synergies one would expect between the African Union's Commission Department of Political Affairs and the various organs and structures of the AU specifically the APRM. This also goes for institutions that offer funding. The conference will seek to understand the rationale and standpoints vs. inter-linkages of these to the APRM.

Above all, the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the OAU/AU further provides us an opportune time to reflect on the achievements/non achievements of the mechanism linking these specifically to the successes/nonsuccesses the OAU and especially the AU has recorded over the years.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

AfriMAP, EISA, SAIIA and the Oxfam Liaison office with the African Union have agreed to collaborate to organise a conference, **The APRM +10: Reviewing a Decade of Peer Learning and Projecting a Future of Governance in Africa**. The conference is to be held just ahead of the APRM colloquium and the OAU/AU 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in May 2013. It is intended to take advantage of the interest in the APRM and OAU/AU celebrations not only from civil society organisations (CSOs) but also from other African institutions and AU organs.

The aim is to draw together a critical mass of African CSOs from across the continent to discuss the progress made by the APRM, the roles and experiences of CSOs, and the future challenges that the APRM faces, both at a national and continental level.

The objective is to gather civil society representatives and members of the mechanism's implementation structures and representatives of the continental (AU) governance structures to undertake an appraisal of progress to date and to chart the way into the second decade of institution-building of the mechanism.

### **THE SCOPE OF THE CONFERENCE**

The conference is envisaged to run for **TWO** days from 17 – 18 May 2013. There will be a plenary session, round table discussions, panels and working group sessions. The conference will focus on the following broad areas:

- **Review of the achievements/non achievements of the APRM in its first decade**
- **An appraisal of the APRM in its second decade of existence**
- **Reflections on the APRM in the Emerging African Governance Architecture and**
- **Projecting a future for the Mechanism**

### **OUTCOME OF THE CONFERENCE**

The outcomes of the discussions and recommendations will be captured in a communiqué, which will be presented to the APRM structures, policy makers and relevant stakeholders for consideration. The communiqué will not be a declaration, rather a reflective document for discussion with the APRM structures, policy makers and relevant stakeholders

Adoption: This communiqué will also serve as a guide for a wider CSO strategy in heightening the APRM's visibility, rejuvenating interest in the mechanism, and operationalizing monitoring plans and tools by CSOs (AMAT and other similar tools) to hold state actors to account on their deliverables and national commitments.