Progress Report

on the

Implementation of the
African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)
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I. Introduction, Background and Context

1. The overall aim of this parliamentary document is to review the current state of implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The paper focuses on the origins and vision behind the initiative, its achievements registered so far, the challenges facing it and opportunities and lessons learned from this uniquely African governance initiative. The document also aims at informing the Committee for Popular Participation and Public Governance (CPPG) about the strategic links and continuity between the APRM and the overall work programme of the Governance and Public Administration Division (GPAD) of the Economic Commission for Africa, including the division’s flagship publication, the African Governance Report (AGR), and the African Governance Forum (AGF).

A. New Partnership for Africa’s Development

2. In 2001, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) was launched and officially adopted as Africa’s development vision by the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU).\(^1\) NEPAD was created as a vision and a framework for addressing Africa’s myriad development and governance challenges. Key among NEPAD’s noble principles included: (a) Good governance as a basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and socio-economic development; (b) African ownership and leadership, as well as broad and deep participation by all sectors of society; (c) Anchoring the development of Africa on its resources and resourcefulness of its people; (d) Acceleration of regional and continental integration; (e) Building the competitiveness of African countries and the continent; (f) Forging a new international partnership that changes the unequal relationship between Africa and the developed world; and (g) Ensuring that all partnerships with NEPAD are linked to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other agreed goals and targets. The four main priority programme areas of NEPAD include (a) peace and security (b) democracy and good governance (c) regional cooperation and integration and (d) capacity building.

3. More recently, the integration of NEPAD into AU has led to establishment of the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA) as a technical body replacing the former NEPAD Secretariat. While retaining its essential mission and vision, the NPCA Action Plan identifies four main intervention priorities in the area of governance as follows: (a) supporting democracy and the democratic process; (b) supporting good governance; (c) promoting and protecting human rights; and (d) furthering economic and corporate governance. The major operational vehicle for implementing the NPCA governance agenda is the APRM.

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\(^1\) Declaration on the New Common Initiative, AHG/Decl.1 (XXXVII), 2001 (Lusaka); Declaration on the Implementation of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), ASS/AU/Decl.1(I), 2002 (Durban).
B. The African Peer Review Mechanism

4. The APRM - a key component of NEPAD - was adopted by African Heads of State and Government as a systematic peer learning and self-assessment mechanism based on the NEPAD foundational document, the “Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance” adopted in Durban, South Africa in July 2002. It is a mutually agreed instrument voluntarily acceded to by AU member States as an African self-monitoring mechanism. The APRM is often described as “Africa’s unique and innovative approach to governance” with the objective of improving governance dynamics at the local, national, continental and international levels. Since its adoption, the APRM has become the most visible achievement of NEPAD in promoting good governance in Africa.

C. ECA Strategic Support to the APRM

5. ECA was designated a strategic partner institution in the NEPAD/APRM process, along with AU, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the very onset of the APRM in 2002. At the initial conceptual stage, each strategic partner institution was responsible for one thematic area of the four pillars of the APRM, namely, Political, Economic, Corporate and Socio-economic Governance. ECA support to the APRM process has covered not only economic governance but also socio-economic and political thematic areas due in part to expansion of ECA substantive work in all aspects of governance in Africa. To respond systematically to the growing demand for technical support from the APRM Secretariat, ECA put in place the necessary institutional arrangements in September 2006 with creation of the APRM Support Section within GPAD.

6. Through the coordinating functions of the APRM Support Section, ECA has provided extensive technical and strategic support to the APR Panel of Eminent Persons, the APRM Secretariat and the APR participating countries at each of the five stages of the review process: Country Support Mission; drafting of background documents and participating in the Country Review Missions; drafting of final Country Review Reports; undertaking studies and workshops focusing on the implementation of the National Programmes of Action (NPoA); and organizing APRM peer-learning opportunities through workshops for all stakeholders including civil society, national and pan-African parliamentarians as well as National APRM Focal Points. ECA strategic support has been indispensable to implementation of the APRM thus far.

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2 Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance (Declaration on Democracy and Governance), AHG/235 (XXXVIII) Annex I, art. 15.
D. The Strategic Relevance of the APRM in GPAD Governance Work

7. The APRM brings together the GPAD analytical and operational work in support of governance in Africa. At its very conceptual stages, ECA was requested by the NEPAD Steering Committee to lend its expertise to developing the guidelines for promoting good economic and corporate governance in Africa. This mandate fell squarely on the shoulders of the Governance Division of ECA which at that time was in the process of developing economic and corporate governance indicators for its flagship publication, the African Governance Report (AGR). This mandate resulted in an ECA publication in 2002 entitled “Guidelines for Enhancing Good Economic and Corporate Governance in Africa” which became the foundation for the questionnaire of the Economic and Corporate Governance thematic pillar of the APRM.

8. In addition to the above, ECA pioneering work in creating Africa-specific indicators on governance helped to formulate the comprehensive questionnaire for the APRM Country Self-Assessment Report (CSAR). The AGR methodology for data collection, country validation workshop for draft Country National Reports and the use of local National Research Institutions (NRIs) were all adapted to the implementation methodology. In many of the APRM participating countries, the NRIs became the Technical Research Institutions (TRIs) for the national self-assessment reports. As the country experiences have shown, the self-assessment and validation processes have built on the successful partnerships with local research institutions that were established by the AGR 2002.

9. Given the context above, the last two biennium work programmes of GPAD have increasingly responded to the demands of the APRM process, in terms of analytical work and advisory services to member States. In this regard, GPAD produced a parliamentary document entitled “Strategies for Promoting Effective Stakeholder Participation in the African Peer Review Mechanism,” which served as one of the issue papers for the Third Session of the Committee on Human Development and Civil Society (CHDCS) held in Addis Ababa 25-27 April 2005.

10. Emerging governance issues from the implementation of the APRM process are feeding into the current work of the Division. To complete the feedback loop, the on-going AGR III will have a thematic focus on the issue of ‘Diversity Management and Elections in Africa.’ This is one of the cross-cutting issues flagged by the APRM reports as a critical pre-condition for good governance in Africa. Consequently, ECA has devoted the next issue of the AGR to deepen analysis of this issue, isolate best practices and experiences from African countries and make policy recommendations for addressing the challenges. The links between the AGR and the APRM process have proven to be strong.

II. Political and Developmental Vision behind APRM

A. From Non-Interference to Non-Indifference

11. The AU Constitutive Act (2002) signified the willingness of African States to relinquish a substantial degree of sovereignty in pursuit of continental political and economic integration. This marked a clear departure from the OAU stance whereby the sovereignty of African States
was paramount. The creation of AU inaugurated a new principle of “non-indifference” whereby the internal affairs of each Member State were the collective responsibility of all member States. It also marked the increasing awareness among African States of the need for commonly shared values to shape and determine individual and collective actions.

B. NEPAD and the Search for a New Development Paradigm

12. The creation of NEPAD showed that African leaders realized that previous development paradigms and strategies had failed and that they needed to take the leadership role in designing the necessary reforms to improve the development situation in Africa. It also epitomized the emphasis on the need for African ownership of policy reform based on the recognition that externally imposed conditionalities were insufficient and were a defective means of achieving reforms.

13. NEPAD, thus, inaugurated a decisive new approach by linking poverty reduction and development to issues of a political nature such as democracy, human rights and good governance. Using the tool of the APRM, African States voluntarily agreed to accede to a self-imposed scrutiny by other African States in a commitment to improving governance systems, policies and developmental practices. The document outlining NEPAD mentioned “setting up mechanisms for reviewing progress in the achievement of mutually agreed targets and compliance with mutually agreed standards.”

C. What Makes the APRM Unique?

14. The APRM constitutes one of the most ambitious and innovative governance exercises undertaken in Africa and provides important opportunities for public policy dialogue. Its approach is unique in both its scope and breadth, because the comparable OECD is limited to a sectoral review of member States and the consultation process involved is technical but not political in nature. The initiative is the first of its kind in Africa, and indeed in the world. It takes a comprehensive view of all aspects of a country’s governance system. It marks a paradigm shift by providing a new mechanism and with a participatory process that identifies governance deficiencies, verifies the adoption, consolidation and prescription of appropriate policies for the achievement of the socio-economic and political objectives of NEPAD.

III. APRM Structure and Processes

A. APRM Continental Structures

15. The APRM is composed of a set of bodies that support and coordinate implementation of the review process both at the continental and national levels. At the continental level, APR structures include the Committee of Participating Heads of State and Government (APR Forum), the Panel of Eminent Persons (APR Panel), and the APR Secretariat.

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4 Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance (Declaration on Democracy and Governance), AHG/235 (XXXVIII) Annex I, art. 18.
Forum of Heads of State and Government of Participating Countries

16. The highest decision-making body in the review process is the APR Forum, which is composed of all Heads of State and Government of participating countries. The APR Forum considers and makes recommendations for the review reports on the member States and authorizes publication of the APRM reports. It is also responsible for nomination and selections of members to the APR Panel.

The Panel of Eminent Persons

17. The APR Panel is the executive body of the APRM, in charge of directing and managing its operations. It leads and oversees the country review processes and provides ad hoc guidance to the country teams to ensure the integrity of these processes. The Panel is ultimately responsible for the contents of the report. The APR Panel is composed of five to seven Africans of “high morale stature and committed to the ideals of Pan-Africanism”, who have distinguished themselves in areas relevant to the work of the APRM such as political governance, macro-economic management, public financial management and corporate governance. They are nominated by participating countries, short-listed by a Committee of Ministers and appointed by the APR Forum to reflect a regional, gender and cultural balance.

The APR Secretariat

18. The APR Panel is supported in its operation by a secretariat based in South Africa, in charge of providing “secretarial, technical, coordinating and administrative support” to the APRM process. It is headed by an executive director who is supported by a team of experts in the four review areas. Among other functions, the secretariat maintains an extensive database on political and economic development in participating countries, prepares background documents for the peer-review teams, and tracks the performance of individual countries. It is also responsible for constituting the APR Country review teams to conduct the country visits, and the composition of which is intended to ensure a “balanced, technically competent and professional assessment of the reviewed country”.

Continental and National Structure

APR Forum of Heads of State (30)

APR Panel of Eminent Persons (7)

APR Secretariat

Technical Partners

Country Review Team

Focal Point

National Governing Council

Government

Civil Society

Business

National Secretariat

Research Institutions
B. APRM National Structures

19. At country level, each country is required to establish a national coordinating structure as well as a national focal point to ensure smooth coordination and communication between the various APR institutions.

APR Focal Point

20. At the national level, each country is required to set up a national mechanism to play a communication and coordination role and serve as a liaison between national and continental structures. The form and profile of the focal point is left to the discretion of the participating countries, but it is recommended that it should be composed of high-level officials reporting directly to the Head of State or Government and with access to all national stakeholders.

National Coordinating Structure

21. Each country is also required to set up a national coordinating structure, often in the form of a National Governing Council, in which key stakeholder groups are represented, including government, civil society and the private sector. This body is responsible for conducting the country’s self assessment through a “broad-based and all-inclusive” consultation of key stakeholders in the public and private sectors. Countries have a relative margin of discretion as to how they implement this requirement.

Review Process

22. According to the various official documents, APRM reviews can be conducted in four major situations: a) when a country officially accedes to the APRM process (base review); b) follow up reviews which are meant to be conducted every two-four years; c) upon a special request by an APRM member State; and 4) at any moment when early warning signs suggest an impending political, economic or social crisis in an APRM member State. The APRM covers 91 indicators in four governance areas: Democracy and Political Governance; Economic Governance and Management; Corporate Governance; and Socio-Economic Development. The review process includes country self-assessments based on a questionnaire, expert review teams, and on-site visits by expert review teams which consult with government, private sector and civil society representatives, organizes active plenary discussions and revision of country reports and action plans by the APR Panel. Specifically, the review process involves five major steps as follows:

Stage 1: Preparations of the Country Self Assessment Review and Report

Stage 2: Country Review Mission by APRM Panel and External African Experts

Stage 3: Compilation of a final Country Review Report

Stage 4: Submission to the APR Forum for Heads of State Peer Review

Stage 5: Report made available to the Public and tabled at pan-African institutions
C. APRM and the African Governance Architecture

23. In line with the African Union Strategic Plan for 2010-2015, the AU Commission has been mandated by a declaration adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State to facilitate the establishment of architecture for the promotion of good governance on the continent. The envisioned African Governance Architecture (AGA) will consist of three pillars: (a) a set of norms that constitute a governance vision for the continent; (b) a set of governance institutions and organs with a mandate in governance; and (c) an interactive mechanism and processes to constitute an African Governance Platform to give operational expression to the governance agenda.

24. Although not all AU member States subscribe to the APRM, it could serve as one of the core frameworks for upholding and deepening the shared values of the AU. The process of peer review is premised on the establishment of institutions, structures and systems that are based on AU-shared values, codes, norms and standards in political, economic and social governance, human rights, the rule-of-law, and the socio-political culture. The mechanism seeks to emphasize the interdependency of democracy and development and their mutual reinforcement. Viewed in the context of Constitutive Act of the African Union, therefore, the APRM embodies and seeks to promote three fundamental values of the African Union: Freedom and Human Rights, Participatory Development, and Accountability.

IV. Implementation Progress to Date

A. Implementation Progress: Process and Engagement

25. Since its first mention in the NEPAD official documents in 2001 and the subsequent adoption of the accession of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2003, the APRM has made considerable progress in terms of the number of countries acceding, the rolling-out of the structures, institutions and organization of the review process, as well as the degree of active participation and engagement of stakeholders, both nationally and continentally.

26. Participation in the APRM process rate has been growing steadily since 2003. By July 2010, twenty-nine countries had voluntarily acceded by signing the MoU - representing about 75 per cent of the continent’s population. Member countries include Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zambia. Others, including Cape Verde and Burundi, are considering joining, with the former already submitting all accession documents except the signing of the MOU.

27. The pace of country reviews has also increased since the early days of implementation in the three pioneer countries of Ghana, Rwanda and Kenya. As of July 2010, thirteen countries have been “peer reviewed” including, Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Benin, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Algeria, Uganda, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique and Mauritius.
29 APRM Countries

- Algeria
- Angola
- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Gabon
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mozambique
- Nigeria
- Rep of Congo
- Rwanda
- Sao Tome
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- Sudan
- Togo
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia
Table A. Country Status in the APRM Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status as at January 2011</th>
<th>Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countries waiting to conduct 2nd Country Self-Assessment</td>
<td>Ghana and Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries implementing 1st NPoA</td>
<td>Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda and Mauritius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country that has completed Country Self-Assessment and awaits Peer Review</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries that have received 1st Country Support Mission and have thereby commenced Self-Assessment process</td>
<td>Tanzania, Zambia and Sierra Leone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries that have acceded but are yet to receive 1st Country Support Mission</td>
<td>Angola, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Malawi, Mauritania, Sao Tome &amp; Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries yet to accede to APRM</td>
<td>Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Dem. Rep. of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Namibia, Niger, SADR, Seychelles, Somalia, Swaziland, Tunisia and Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morocco has suspended its membership in AU (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table B. Current Status of Countries under Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Status as at January 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>• Completed 4 years of NPoA implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• About to commence 2nd Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>• Completed 4 years of NPoA implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• About to commence 2nd Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>• In 2nd year of implementing NPoA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1st progress report submitted to Continental Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>• In the 1st year of implementing the NPoA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1st progress report to be submitted to Continental Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>• In 1st year of implementing NPoA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1st progress report awaited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>• In the 1st year of implementing NPoA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1st progress report to be submitted to Continental Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>• Awaiting Peer Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>• Country ready to receive review mission in February 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28. Other countries such as Ethiopia, Zambia, Tanzania and Sierra Leone have reached advanced stages of review with some of them expected to complete the process in the course of 2011. The mechanism has registered remarkable success in that the majority of African countries have now embraced it and the reviews conducted thus far have earned the reputation for professionalism and integrity, forthrightness and are being taken seriously by the participating countries.

29. Despite this progress, a significant proportion of the acceded countries have yet to set the review process in motion due to a number of reasons, including lack of political will and capacity, logistical challenges and the frequent preparations for an election which take priority over all other governance concerns. While the growing numbers of members in the APRM is a notable achievement in and by itself, the remaining number of acceded countries ‘sitting on the fence’ with no serious signals to kick-start the review process could dilute the initial enthusiasm and

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6 Adotey-Bing Papoe, Op. Cit. p. 6
effectiveness of the mechanism overall. These countries, however, have the benefit of the experiences of the pioneers and are better informed of the dynamics of the implementation process and could learn from their peers.

30. Another level of progress made in the implementation of the APRM process is the innovations seen in the setting up the national structures and institutions and in the marshalling of organizational capacity for undertaking the country self-assessment processes. Although country experiences have varied both in terms of political will and commitment to allow participation and engagement of stakeholders, there is invariably a certain amount of respect for the rules and regulations underlying the “APRM game” as it were. In the end, the nature and quality of civil society participation in the APRM process is directly linked to the political context in each country.

31. The quality of the process has differed from country to country. In some countries, governments have dominated the process, raising concern about the objectivity of the process. A few countries have fully complied with the precepts of the APRM process with no blatant government attempts to manipulate the process. Generally, three models of APRM structures and processes have emerged, with Ghana and Rwanda as two distinct models and that of South Africa somewhere in between the two.

32. In Ghana, the Governing Council for the self-assessment process was composed of a small group of distinguished individuals working through independent research institutions. This model allowed for freeing the process from political manipulation and promoting strong involvement of citizens and civil society groups. This led to production of a robust self-assessment and a detailed plan of action that was subsequently adopted by the Government. The Ghana National APRM Governing Council has been given the responsibility for monitoring implementation of the national POA.7

33. South African experience with the APRM process was not as exemplary in terms of direct civil society engagement in the process. The initial National Governing Council set up by the Government was predominantly staffed by senior government ministers, until the Country Support Mission team urged the Government to set up a more representative structure to drive the APRM process. While technical support agencies involving research institutes were appointed along the way to compile technical reports for each of the four APRM focus areas, the reports were not based on extensive national surveys but rather on public calls for submissions using the CSAR questionnaire. The strength of the South African model was that it introduced some innovations to the process but was able to make changes once concerns from the APRM Panel were raised during the Country Support Mission.8

34. The Rwanda review process has been described as being essentially government driven. The self-assessment process was conducted by technical teams under the direction of Government

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and the NEPAD Secretariat although a number of civil society organizations (CSOs) expressed appreciation at the nature of the CSAR in the context of the usually closed system.\(^9\)

35. Regardless of the weaknesses of the various models adopted by each country for the APRM review process, there is little doubt that at the national level, the process has widened political space to involve citizens in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of governance and development policies and to propose remedies. The APRM has contributed to the quality of national dialogue between government and non-government actors by way of inclusiveness and meaningful engagement.

B. Implementation Progress: Harmonizing the NPoAs and Other National Development Strategies

36. The main output of the APRM national process is production of the National Programme of Action (NPoA) whose purpose is to identify governance areas that need to be improved and to mobilize the country's efforts to implement the necessary reforms and contribute to enhancing the state of governance and socio-economic development. The APRM guidelines stipulate unequivocally that the resulting NPoA from the APRM process should: be designed by all stakeholders with firm commitment from government; cover major gaps and deficiencies identified in the APRM process; set parameters for costing and time-frames; and allocate monitoring and implementation responsibilities. These objectives can be achieved only if NPoAs are fully integrated into the existing national development plans or strategies.

37. The implementation of NPoAs has progressed rather slowly due to a number of challenges confronting APRM participating States. One such challenge is that the relationship of the NPoA to other existing national development plans, in particular to national Poverty Reduction Strategy papers (PRSPs), is not clear. For most countries whose main development strategies depend on the World Bank- and IMF-sponsored PRSP, the problem is even more complex since this requires integrating the NPoA into the PRSP in the context of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).

38. The APRM Strategic Partners have been requested to provide technical support to countries to integrate their NPoAs with other national development strategies. In response to this request, the AfDB, ECA and UNDP organized a consultative meeting in Tunisia in March 2007 to discuss support for implementation of the NPoAs of Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda (three pioneer countries in the APRM at that time). The meeting identified a number of capacity and institutional challenges facing APRM participating countries in harmonizing and integrating their NPoAs with existing national development strategies. These challenges included the following:

a) Analyzing and costing of the NPoA to avoid duplication with the PRSP;

b) Evaluating the links between the NPoAs, the MTEF and existing national development strategies and plans;

c) Investigating the financing instruments, particularly the budget and MTEF and mobilizing resources to fill the gaps;

d) Linking systematically to (PRSP in terms of funding and costing in the context of the national budget (MTEF);

e) Examining the Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks for APRM-NPoA implementation.

39. The APRM Strategic Partners undertook a number of case studies of the NPoAs that showed that in a number of countries the NPoAs bore more resemblance to pre-existing government plans with up to 50 per cent or more of the NPoAs comprising projects that were already a part of existing national plans. This led to problems of duplication and double costing as the case studies showed. The cost of the NPoAs in different countries was significant: while the programme cost represents 3.4 and 0.2 per cent of the GDPs of Nigeria and South Africa respectively, the same is not true for countries such as Ghana, Benin, Kenya and Uganda, where the range is from 5.6 to 13 per cent of their GDPs. The implication is that while it would be relatively easy for South Africa and Nigeria to self-finance their NPoAs, the same could not be said about Ghana, Kenya, Benin, Rwanda and Uganda.

Table C. - The Cost of the NPoAs (US$m)$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Democracy &amp; Political Governance</th>
<th>Economic Governance &amp; Management</th>
<th>Corporate Governance</th>
<th>Socio Economic Development</th>
<th>Cross Cutting Issues</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>2,236</td>
<td>1,120</td>
<td>3,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4,946</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>5,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1,594</td>
<td>1,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>2,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2,750</td>
<td>1,583</td>
<td>4,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda$^{11}$</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>4,036</td>
<td>5,858</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


40. The relative cost of the NPoAs therefore raises issues of the extent to which the APRM would increase the dependency of African countries on donor support, the very idea that NEPAD was created to decrease. The mobilization of external resources for NPoAs has been taken on individually by APRM States and so far, there is no systematic approach to treat it as a collective effort. The 2009 Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness Report published by ECA and the OECD called upon development partners to support the APRM NPoAs through a coordinated effort, by aligning their support for APRM-NPoAs within the context of the PRSPs. ECA and other strategic partners have advocated that such support should be in the form of a regional Trust Fund which would be in accordance with the Paris Declaration, which emphasizes that efforts should be made to ensure that African countries own their development agendas.

41. Despite the challenges, in some countries, participatory processes have been instituted for monitoring implementation of the NPoAs. Ghana presents a best practice case which is being emulated by many other countries. The challenge of decentralization of the APRM process necessitated establishment of district oversight committees in all the 170 districts of the country. The functions of the district oversight committees at the district level include (a) integrating the committee members, and through them the communities in the districts into the ownership structure of the APRM; (b) representation of the Ghana APRM Governing Council; (c) dissemination and advocacy activities on the APRM; (d) monitoring and evaluation of the APRM national process; and (e) the presentation of periodic reports on their APRM-related activities to the district assembly. By decentralizing the country APRM process in this way, the Ghana APRM Governing Council has created APRM awareness throughout the country, generating grassroots-based constituencies and a groundswell of popular support for and investment in the APRM.12

42. This approach initiated in Ghana has been adopted in Benin, Kenya, and Uganda whilst Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso have indicated their interest in using a similar framework to monitor the APPRM-NPoA. The approach appears to have had three main effects: first, it has raised the profile of the APRM in the popular conscience of civil society and community organizations; second, it has tended to make reporting of the implementation of the NPoA about public perception and participation in the process; and thirdly, it has shifted the locus of debate from the capital where national CSOs and NGOs often dominate to the regional and local levels where they do not have so much presence.13

C. Implementation Progress: Diagnosing Cross-cutting and Emerging Systemic Issues

43. One of the most significant achievements of the APRM has been its potential to diagnose systemic and structural issues that confront most African States in their governance systems. These issues require a holistic approach in the search for solutions because of the wider impact they have on the quality of governance in all its dimensions. Generally, the APRM Country Review process has unveiled four of the major systemic issues: (a) Managing Diversity (b) Corruption; (c) Land Resource Management and Governance (d) and Elections. One important

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13 Ibid. pp. 10.
value added from the APRM process in flagging these systemic issues is that it allows opportunities for African leaders and their citizens to have open and frank discussions and analysis, and find collective solutions through the sharing of best practices and peer learning.

44. Managing Diversity: Nearly all the peer-reviewed countries have challenges in managing diversity, which is reflected in the form of race, ethnicity and/or religion. These countries stand to gain from the full potential of diversity by managing it at political, economic and social levels. The APRM reports see this as a formidable pre-condition for ensuring democratic and well-governed States in Africa.

45. Land, Resource Management and Governance: The issue of land and resource management and governance was seen as highly contentious and political in nearly all APRM countries. The APRM reports show that the participating countries have large populations with no access to land, which is vital for the livelihoods of the citizenry. Management of land distribution and the security of tenure are at the forefront of the land situation. Despite its centrality, several African countries have not articulated a comprehensive land policy, or taken the impact of land governance into account their development and poverty reduction strategies, or allocated sufficient resources for land development and management. The consequences of poor planning and management of land use continue to manifest in land degradation, abject poverty, food insecurity, war and famine.

46. Corruption: Nearly all of the APRM countries reports identified corruption as a major governance problem that cuts across all the thematic areas examined under the APRM Country Review reports. Corruption poses a serious development challenge for Africa. In the political realm, it seriously undermines democracy and good governance. In elections and in legislative bodies, it reduces accountability and representation in policy-making if unchecked; and in the judiciary, it erodes the rule of law. Corruption undermines fair-play, justice and equal opportunities, equity and non-discrimination, which are underlying principles of human rights. In the economic realm, corruption generates economic distortions in the public sector by pulling public investment away from priority sectors and into projects where bribes and kickbacks are more plentiful. Corruption lowers compliance with construction, environmental, and other regulations; reduces the quality of government services; and, increases budgetary pressures on government. In corporate governance, it undermines economic development by increasing the cost of doing business through bribes, the management cost of negotiating with officials, and the risk of breached agreements or detection.

47. Elections and Electoral Management: The APRM country reports raised the issues of elections and electoral management in Africa. Although undisputed elections are becoming increasingly evident in Africa, the results of many elections have been disputed. In fact, some recent elections have been plagued with serious irregularities, thus failing the true test of democracy which, among other factors, involves peaceful regime change in free and fair elections. With the exception of few notable countries, both the electoral system and process of elections, the former being the organizational infrastructure for managing elections, and the latter the precepts and procedures of elections, are not up to scratch. The reports generally noted an emerging trend is also the qualitative decline in the conduct of successive multiparty elections, coupled with the low and declining level of participation.
48. While these issues are not entirely new, the overriding message from these systemic issues has been that ignoring them could be costly and damaging to a country’s governance system as well as to the project of nation-state building that is still on-going in many African countries. While the APRM is not a panacea to all African governance problems, it is showing that by overcoming leadership challenges — including vision, commitment, continuity and technical capacity — the process can make a tremendous contribution towards identifying and addressing many such systemic issues underlying African governance problems.

D. Assessing Overall Progress: Initial Results and Impact

49. Although the APRM is still at early stages of implementation, there are signs of impact in terms of governance gains from countries that have inaugurated the process and engaged in reforms processes. In addition, the APRM is contributing in a very significant manner to open discussion of hitherto taboo subjects regarding governance within the continent. The short- to medium-term effects are discussed below.

50. Showcasing and highlighting best practices of governance within African has tremendous impact on peer countries within the APRM mechanism. The ‘best practices’ that are meant to be highlighted in each report are a way to celebrate achievements and to enhance the constructive and non-punitive character of the APRM. Each country review report therefore contains brief mention of ‘best practices’ both in terms of unique national approaches to addressing governance challenges or contributions to regional public goods including peace, security and socio-economic development. Thus, we have for instance, Ghana being praised for a deepening democratic culture; South Africa for its unique “decentralized governance system”; Kenya for decreasing its dependence on foreign aid; Rwanda for outstanding achievements in social services and gender equality; and Nigeria for contributing to regional peace and security in West Africa. These best practices foster opportunities and a conducive environment for systematic mutual learning and exchange based on participation, openness and trust within and between countries, while internalizing and mainstreaming lessons learned, new thinking and best practices.

51. The APRM reports are serving as an early warning system of impending threats to peace and stability in Africa. For example, the APRM report for Kenya had anticipated potential political unrest before ethnic-related violence broke out in 2007, while the South Africa report had warned against xenophobic tensions that erupted in South Africa in May 2008. The dire consequences of the fragility of ethnic balance and tense electoral disputation in Kenya and the explosion of the phenomenon of xenophobia in South Africa soon after that country’s peer review both underline the depth of the APRM in identifying systemic and structural governance issues as well as its predictive value as an early warning system. The diagnostic strength of the mechanism makes it a promising tool to identify key areas of intervention and to set priorities for reform.

52. The APRM is legitimizing the demand for public accountability by the African citizenry and is opening up space for civil society participation in governance processes. This process is leading to an institutionalization of domestic accountability as opposed to external accountability.
in Africa. Historically, accountability in Africa has been directed upward toward donors and central governments and not downward to citizens as tax payers and users of services. Upward accountability is further balkanized when limited local resources are tapped by different donor requirements that demand the creation of parallel systems of accountability. As a result, mechanisms of participation, even when they exist, have often failed to provide the necessary domestic accountability systems. The APRM, if successfully implemented across Africa, will reshape and reverse accountability away from donors to domestic constituencies.

53. Beyond governance issues, evaluation of the APRM suggests positive outcomes towards supporting the achievement of development goals. The APR makes a useful contribution especially with regard to ensuring respect for international commitments including the MDGs. Even if not entirely achieved in practice, the level of citizen participation in the review process and the identification of development priorities come closer to the ideals of ‘right to development criteria’ in terms of process and content than any other similar mechanism. In addition, the APRM makes a notable contribution to the realization of the “African Charter for Popular Participation in Development” popularly known as the “Arusha Declaration,” than any previous attempt in the past. It is facilitating the sharing and use of locally driven initiatives and indigenous knowledge-based development initiatives, as well as policy dialogue.

V. Challenges and Opportunities

A. Continental Challenges

54. As a voluntary continental process, one of the fundamental challenges facing the APRM, globally, is how to ensure continuing enlisting of the AU member states that have yet to sign-up for the process. Twenty-nine countries have so far signed-up for the APRM, leaving twenty-seven AU member states who yet to accede to the process. The initial momentum that greeted the novelty of the APRM and the enthusiasm with its champions mobilized countries to sign-up but this appears to have waned. Thus, without a shake-up, the APRM is in danger of only a relatively small proportion of African countries participating, something that should be of concern to the APRM Forum and all stakeholders.

55. The APRM Heads of States Forum equally seems to be losing steam, with reduced commitment and waning of the initial enthusiasm and dynamism that characterized their work. In the case of the Forum, the peer review at this level has not been “vigorous,” partly because “the

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17 The initial champions of the APRM were President Olusegun Obasanjo or Nigeria, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and arguably, President Kuffour of Ghana. All of these leaders have left office due to term limits or other reasons. There is much speculation that the APRM needs a new crop of Champions to emerge on the political scene.
considered documents [for review, e.g. the Country Review Reports, including the NPoA, and the periodic, half-yearly and annual reports, from already peer-reviewed Member States] had not been fully read by the Heads of State.” In addition, while the APRM Forum provides high-level political back-up for the continental process, it also has obvious limitations. There is still a lingering effect of African Heads of State and Governments’ reluctance to challenge the State sovereignty principle and criticize each other.

56. The continental APRM Secretariat has been bedeviled with weak institutional and organizational constraints despite remarkable efforts in organizing and delivering first-rate APRM Country Review Missions and Reports. Critics argue that the challenges facing the APRM Secretariat relate to both human resource and technical capacity resources and a long-drawn out “programme of restructuring the Secretariat,” at a time when more Member States have acceded to the APRM. There are real fears that unless urgent action is taken to address the problem of the APRM Secretariat capacity, the APRM “risks losing credibility” in the eyes of the participating member States and all stakeholders.

57. There is a pressing need to address problems associated with the APRM Country Self-Assessment Methodology which is viewed by participating States as cumbersome, unwieldy and repetitive, while the questionnaire, though comprehensive, omits some key governance issues such as media freedom and climate change, both of which are critical components of governance in Africa today. The APRM Secretariat has commenced an elaborate exercise of streamlining both the methodology and questionnaire of the APRM process taking into consideration all the criticisms and observations coming from stakeholders. The process is due to be completed in 2011.

58. One of the biggest challenges and major weakness of the mechanism is the lack of effective follow-up particularly, the implementation of the National Programs of Action (NPoAs). There are insufficient resources and capacity to monitor the implementation reports of the countries that have already completed the review process at the continental level. APRM is complex, demanding and time and resource intensive. Although the continental Secretariat is in the process of designing a systematic continental Monitoring and Evaluation System, the operational challenges involved are likely to stretch the APRM Secretariat’s capacity in managing the evaluation process of almost 30 countries.

B. National Level Challenges

59. At the national level, the biggest challenge facing the APRM is the political will to carry through all the precepts and principles contained in the MOU which countries have voluntarily committed to undertake. In theory, the APRM represents a valuable opportunity for civil society to get critical issues onto the national agenda and to engage the State in policy issues affecting the citizens’ interest. In practice, however, the level and extent of participation greatly varies across countries depending on the government’s political will to truly and meaningfully engage all stakeholders in the review process.

60. At the country level, the pace of completing the review cycle has been very slow in many countries, with major variations across countries. While the process took between 8 and 14 months in pioneer countries such as Kenya, Ghana and South Africa, other countries have been slow in setting up their APRM national structures and completing their self-assessments. It has taken some countries (such as Uganda) several years to complete the process, even after receiving the country review mission. There is a need to find ways of shortening the time-frame between receiving the Country Support Mission and completing the entire process.

C. Opportunities for Real Change

61. The APRM, as an African home-grown governance mechanism, is opening the way for greater public discussion of both policy and development governance among ALL stakeholders within the APRM participating countries. For the first time in Africa’s post-colonial history, the APRM is allowing real popular participation – legitimate space to discuss how development policy is being done, what it constitutes and whether or not the needs of the citizens are being met by the chosen strategies and policies. This instrument marks a turning point in reshaping and institutionalizing domestic accountability as a part of contemporary African culture. In contrast to the growing social accountability initiatives that have been undertaken in Africa at the behest of external donors, the APRM has the potential to turn accountability inward by strengthening domestic accountability institutions within the national governance system.

VI. Lessons Learned and Way Forward

62. The first major lesson coming out of the APRM process is that political will at the highest level in the participating country makes all the difference. At the APRM country process level, commitment and political will by the political leadership is important to moving the process ahead, because “if the leadership is not committed, the process will not be robust at the national level”. Therefore, for the APRM to be successful at the national level there is a need for presidential leadership. If the Head of State fully supports the process, the process is more likely to be implemented in a rigorous, open and candid manner at the lower levels.

63. Given the above lessons, government must commit publicly to a set of fair principles that all pledge to uphold in the conduct of the process. Although the political support of the Head of State is clearly necessary for the successful completion of the process, political investment also carries risks: a country review report that challenges the government’s view of specific policies can prove challenging to the idea of an independent review.

64. Consultation with all stakeholders -- civil society, private sector and government – is essential before making decisions on the process and governing structures. Participation of

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20 The majority of these lessons are based on Adotey-Bing Papoe, Op. cit.
citizens will largely depend on the institutional arrangements that member States put in place. These should be inclusive and should not be perceived as representing government’s interests only. Such a perception can be enhanced by taking the following actions:

- Choosing eminent and non-partisan council members
- Allowing non-government leadership of the National Governing Council
- Making the Governing Council process transparent
- Including the media on the National Governing Council and regularly briefing the media
- Allowing enough time for consultation at all stages of the process
- Making a full draft available to enable meaningful validation and post-draft texts on the internet

65. The APRM Forum of Heads of States must find a means to invigorate the APRM continentally by increasing the number of countries that have already acceded but have not gone through the process and reducing the number of countries that have not yet acceded to the APRM. Without continental champions of the APRM, there is a need for an “informal” means of pushing countries to accede and also go through the process soon after accession. One of the selling points of the APRM is its African origins and its collective strategic purpose. The mechanism’s credibility and dynamism would be strengthened with more AU member states participating.

66. Experience with implementing the APRM-NPoA suggests that countries are becoming just as dependent on external sources to implement the normal development plans. While the upstream implementation process of the APRM could be funded from donor Trust Funds sources, countries should be encouraged to finance the NPoAs with their own resources as much as possible.

67. Given the above lesson, a seamless integration of existing National Development Plans (NDP) into the APRM-NPoA at the very beginning of the APRM process is necessary. The planning, sensitization, designing and costing of NPoAs should get as much priority as the self-assessment phase of the APRM. The NPoA should be implemented by government ministries through partnerships with a range of bodies – ministerial agencies, state institutions, business organization and civil society bodies.

68. Experiences from the pioneer countries have shown that decentralizing participatory monitoring systems to monitor and evaluate the APRM-NPoA is the most efficient and effective way to manage all the information on both the implementation and outcomes of the APRM process.