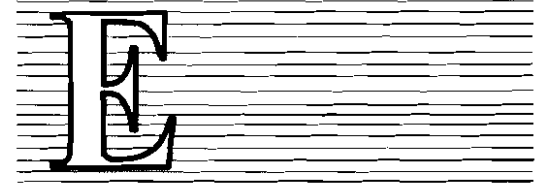




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**GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION DIVISION**

Expert Group Meeting on “Harmonizing APRM-NPoAs and other National Development Plans  
into a Common Medium-Term Expenditure Framework

29 - 30 September 2010  
Kampala, Uganda

**Report**

## **Introduction**

1. In accordance with their terms of reference as strategic partners in the implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Centre for Eastern and Southern Africa and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) held a meeting of high-ranking experts<sup>1</sup> from APRM-completed countries from 29 to 30 September 2010 in Kampala, Uganda.

2. For UNECA and UNDP the meeting was a learning process. It provided an opportunity for APRM national experts to address the key challenges encountered in the different phases of APRM-National Plans of Action (NPOAs) by sharing country experiences. The meeting also enabled them to assess the links between APRM-NPOAs and national development plans (NDPs), as well as between NPOAs and the annual budget, within the context of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). The meeting further enabled participants to validate the findings and recommendations of the case studies conducted by the APRM strategic partners on the same subject.

3. A number of common issues emerged from the presentations and discussion, including: (a) the need to give countries more time to cost the NPOA effectively; (b) the lack of direct links between deepening the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to improve the monitoring of NPOA implementation and codification of the NPOA within the MTEF in order to harness data for its implementation; (c) the relevance of having infrastructure projects in the NPOA, stressing that the APRM is a governance instrument and a process since many African countries are highly dependent on external resources; (d) the need to involve non-state actors in the implementation of NPOAs, as the APRM was not only a government responsibility; and (e) the need for a template/guidelines to which APRM countries could refer in using the M&E process.

### **I. Opening of the Meeting**

4. The meeting was officially opened by Professor Abel Rwendeire, Vice-Chairperson of the Uganda National Planning Authority (NPA), which had co-organized the meeting. He welcomed the participants and the APRM strategic partners (UNDP and UNECA) and thanked them for choosing his country to host the meeting.

5. The following speakers then took the floor:

- Mr. Theophane Nikyema, UNDP Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator for Uganda

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<sup>1</sup> The List of Participants is annexed to this report

- Mr. Antonio M.A. Pedro, Director of the Subregional Office for Eastern Africa (SRO-EA) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
- Maitre Domitilla Mukantaganzwa, Deputy Chairperson of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons
- Bishop Zac Niringiye, Chairperson of the Uganda APRM National Governing Council (UG-NGC)
- Hon. Professor Ephraim Kamuntu, Uganda APRM National Focal Point and Minister of State for Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

6. The representatives of UNDP and UNECA thanked Uganda for hosting the meeting and welcomed the participants. They recalled the role of their institutions in the APRM process and their support for its effective implementation at the national and continental levels.

7. The main points arising from the various speeches were as follows:

(a) The APRM National Plan of Action (NPoA) was a key output and crucial to the success of the APRM at the national and continental levels and should therefore be taken into account throughout the process;

(b) It was stressed that the NPoA was neither a wish-list nor a substitute for other existing plans, such as NDPs and the MTEF;

(c) The MTEF classification should be utilized when designing NPoAs in order to facilitate their implementation through the MTEF;

(d) Local stakeholders had a critical role to play in the establishment, design and implementation of NPoAs. National Governing Councils (NGCs) should therefore involve the whole spectrum of the population. For this purpose, a cordial relationship should be established between civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector and the public sector in order to build consensus;

(e) There was a pressing need to address the issue of funding NPoAs for the peer-reviewed countries;

(f) So far, only 13 countries had completed the process and now implementing NPoAs. The effective implementation of those NPoAs was decisive for the future of the APRM;

(g) The APRM forum addressed problems associated with the implementation of NPoAs by devoting several sessions to the challenges encountered, such as costing and monitoring through appropriate structures, the way forward and the participatory and inclusive nature of NPoAs;

(h) The speakers from Uganda pointed out that their country was a pioneer of the NPoA process and noted the role of the NGC in providing leadership and guidelines. Uganda's NGC had ensured that the NPoA was disseminated to all stakeholders, indicated the implementing agencies and empowered the public so that implementing agencies were accountable. The NGC was a critical institution for the monitoring of NPoA implementation;

(i) Regarding the harmonization of the Uganda NPoA within the MTEF/budget, the NGC worked closely with the national budget team to ensure that the MTEF integrated the NPoA. The NGC also worked with the NPA in order to fully integrate the NPoA into the NDP.

8. Mr. Kojo Busia, Chief of the UNECA APRM Support Unit, welcomed the participants and noted that the main purpose of the meeting were to:

- (a) Discuss the synthesis report;
- (b) Share national experiences, lessons learned and best practices;
- (c) Draw up guidelines/a template on the integration of NPoAs into existing plans and their effective implementation;
- (d) Discuss ways of mobilizing funds for the NPoAs.

## **II. Working Session One**

9. Mr. Adotey Bing-Pappoe presented the aims and main findings of the NPoA Synthesis Report, "Harmonizing APRM-NPoAs and other National Plans into a Common Medium-Term Expenditure Framework: Experiences from Ghana, Rwanda, Uganda and Benin". He outlined the challenges encountered in the four countries studied, which mainly concerned costing, and went on to suggest critical strategic recommendations, which focused mainly on: NPoA design and costing; harmonization and integration; funding sources; and monitoring and evaluation of the NPoA.

10. As the synthesis report made clear, the main recommendations for systematically linking the NPoA to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and NDP were as follows:

- (a) The costing exercise should be given sufficient time to be effective and completed;
- (b) Validation of the NPoA costs should be undertaken by the NGC, ministries of finance and national planning bodies;
- (c) The NGC should identify the lead implementing agencies for NPoA activities and inform them of their roles and responsibilities;
- (d) Clear identification of NPoA source of funding by the NGC in close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance;
- (e) Adoption of a common APRM framework for the progress report by the NGC, which would be based on agreed indicators and targets;
- (f) Integration of the APRM-NGC into the national planning system in order to facilitate the harmonization process of NPoA with existing NDPs;
- (g) Synchronization of the NPoA and N-PRSP life cycles;
- (h) Codification of NPoA activities into the MTEF in order to facilitate the tracking of NPoA expenditures and monitoring and evaluation of its implementation;
- (i) Integration of the PRSP into the APRM-NPoA;
- (j) Identification of NPoA external and internal sources of funding through annual progress reports;
- (k) Linkage between the Monitoring and Evaluation framework of the NPoA and the NDP;
- (l) Providing the NGC with the necessary legal mandate enabling it to monitor and follow up on the implementation of the NPoA;
- (m) Development of a monitoring mechanism of expenditures related to the NPoA by the NGC, national planning body and the ministry of finance.

11. The main points of the discussion of Mr. Adotey's presentation and the Report were as follows:

(a) The integration of PRSPs into NPoAs was questioned since the former are under the control of Bretton Woods institutions and therefore subject to various conditionalities;

(b) The identification of a creative mechanism to mobilize funds for the implementation of NPoAs, such as diaspora remittances;

(c) The need for a common framework/methodology for the design, implementation and reporting of the NPoA in order to assist upcoming countries to design a comprehensive NPoA. This framework should be developed with the support of the strategic partners;

(d) The involvement of CSOs in the implementation of NPoAs was questioned, particularly in view of their limited funding capacities;

(e) The harmonization of NPoAs at the regional level was emphasized as crucial. It was agreed, however, that such harmonization would only be effective if regional peer review were put in place. The experts therefore recommended that the regional economic communities (RECs) should take up this issue and organize regional peer reviews.

### III. Working Session Two

12. The second working session featured presentations by the APRM national focal points on country experiences<sup>3</sup> in costing the NPoA, its linkage with national development strategies, as well as the deficiencies and challenges encountered from initial design to monitoring implementation. The experiences of the following countries were shared: Uganda, Ghana, Algeria and Benin.

13. The discussion that followed the four presentations touched mainly on the following points:

- NPoA preparatory strategy
  - ✓ The identification of a focal point in each MDA and other stakeholders, such as parliament, the private sector and CSO in order to ensure ownership;
  - ✓ The need to hold a validation stakeholder workshop of the NPoA immediately before costing in order to address gaps and shortfalls and gather stakeholder

concerns. The NGC should then integrate the workshop's recommendations and initiate the costing process.

- Costing the NPoA
  - ✓ Establishment of a costing team to work closely with the NGC and MDA representatives (ministries, departments and agencies), in particular with the ministry of finance;
  - ✓ Identification of each cost item of the NPoA with clear geographical location;
  - ✓ Codification of the NPoA into the MTEF by the Ministry of Finance.
- Harmonization of the NPoA with existing policy initiatives
  - ✓ Identification of areas where the NPoA would fit into existing development plans, such as MTEP and NDPs, in order to avoid parallel development paradigms in close collaboration with the Ministry of Planning and/or Ministry of Finance/Economic Development;
  - ✓ Harmonization of NPoA and NDP thematic areas and clusters; the national drafting NDA of the NDP should ensure that NPoA actions are integrated into the NDP format.

14. The participants identified the following challenges:

- (a) Difficulties developing quantitative and qualitative indicators to effectively monitor the NPoA;
- (b) Viewing NPoA as a "living document", rather than as static;
- (c) Repetition of NPoA action points as a result of inadequate definition of APRM thematic areas;
- (d) Involving all stakeholders in order to ensure ownership by the people;
- (e) Limited funding of non-state actors to implement the NPoA, even though they are identified as the main implementing agencies;

- (f) Maintenance of costing files and descriptive information on costing;
- (g) Realignment of NPoA and NDP cycles;
- (h) Mobilization of funds to ensure the implementation of NPoA;
- (i) Realignment of NPoA and MTEF cycles.

#### **IV. Breakout Sessions**

15. A technical paper was presented on the theme of each breakout session in order to share best practices through interactive dialogue.

##### **Group I. NPoA costing: the case of Uganda**

16. The session began with a presentation on Uganda's NPoA costing frameworks, including revisions, double costing, cost corrections, and the role of the main stakeholders (government, NGOs, private sector, parliament etc.).

The report of the session's facilitator contained the following recommendations:

- Allow enough time to develop the NPoA and establish its costing based on the country context;
- Establish an inclusive costing team based on sectoral/MDA, including local authorities, non-state actors, parliament, etc.;
- Build the capacities of the APRM local institutions to understand the process, read a budget, assess reports;
- Identify each item (salary, etc.) to be taken into account in order to ensure an effective costing process;
- Establish a more specific NPoA language in order to facilitate codification within the national budget;
- Compare NPoA objectives/activities with existing national budget activities in order to identify overlaps/gaps;



- Maintain the information and data record of NPoA costing.

**Group II. Linking the NPoA with MTEF and the National Budget: the case of Uganda**

17. The experience of Uganda set the stage for the group discussion. The presenter of the main paper underscored two main issues for his country's integration of the NPoA into the national budget and MTEF, as follows:

- Existing structures;
- Support from political leadership through the Ministry of Finance.

18. The group discussed the case of Uganda and the experiences of other countries that had already gone through the processes and made nine recommendations:

- A clear aid policy was needed that would go from ear-marking to general budgetary support;
- As far as possible, countries should ensure that external budgetary support does not exceed internal;
- Political leadership, particularly by the President, should be at the forefront of the APRM process by appointing focal points in various MDAs. It is also important for the political commitment to be guided by a mature MTEF;
- Improved dialogue was needed between MDAs and the ministry of finance at all levels and stages of planning and formulation of the budget through the production of thematic papers on governance, sector budget framework papers, and budget call circulars;
- An established budget ceiling was needed in order to help set priorities for the implementation of programme activities;
- Homogenous sectoral activities and the institutions concerned needed to be identified and costed appropriately;
- The private sector had to be involved, in particular to support the corporate governance component of the NPoA;

- The involvement of decentralized entities in the costing process of the NPOAs should be encouraged;
- MDAs should be invited to national consultative budget workshops to determine critical activities so that consensus is reached on what guidance to give local government for planning and budgeting processes.

**Group III. Harmonizing the NPoA, national development plan and PRSP cycles for the effective implementation of APRM-NPoA**

19. After the presentation of the technical paper on Uganda's experience, the experts discussed its findings and compared their experiences in harmonizing the NPoA with the national development programmes. They raised the issue of how to integrate the political governance actions of the NPoA into the NDP, since the latter provides mainly macroeconomic frameworks. In this respect, they indicated that the NPoA would improve the NDP in the governance areas, as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are integrated into the NDP for social development.

20. The experts made recommendations based on the technical paper and their country experiences:

- The NPoA should be sent to sectoral ministries in order to incorporate it in the annual budget;
- The NPoA should be the key reference document of the NDP;
- The NPoA cycle should be synchronized with the NDP cycle, depending on their respective lifetimes.

**Group IV. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks for APRM-NPoA implementation**

21. Two presentations were given:

- The M&E Framework in Ghana and how it is aligned to existing frameworks;
- Monitoring and reporting and the development of a Monitoring and Reporting Framework at continental level and the key features of this framework.

22. The participants made recommendations on basic principles for an M&E Framework:

- Monitoring should not be divorced from evaluation because it is the latter that measures the effectiveness of development and governance. In this respect, one overall is needed reflecting key results framework for both continental and national levels. This M&E Framework should guide the format of reports;
- As the APRM reports annually on the implementation of the NPoA, clearly defined annual implementation targets are needed for the APRM;
- The national planning machinery should be responsible for coordination and M&E;
- M&E systems for the APRM should be integrated within national systems in order to be sustainable;
- Equal effort should be given to the development of the NPoA and to the review itself;
- M&E systems should capture the voice of ordinary people in a neutral way;
- Some things could be done without any need for money or resource allocation, e.g. enactment of outstanding laws;
- There should be a baseline overview before M&E in order to highlight the initial situation in relation to the desired targets;
- Where there is a reliable body to perform verification and quality assurance, it should be used to minimize cost; the NPA established in Uganda was discussed;
- As far as possible and to avoid controversy, it was important to use national statistics bureaus to verify data. This would also augment their capacity;
- The NGC should ensure transparency in reporting on NPoA implementation;
- In order for M&E to be an important component, it was crucial to have an M&E unit in the APRM secretariat.

23. Finally, the experts highlighted other major issues, mainly related to implementation of the NPoA at the regional level and made two recommendations:

- Linkages should be found with the pan-African architecture e.g. AGF;
- Regional governance indicators should be taken into account, e.g. those of the East African Community (EAC).

#### **V. Roundtable on Resource Mobilization to Finance the APRM-NPoA**

24. A roundtable discussion was held on resource mobilization to finance the NPoA and key lessons learned from the Ugandan experience. Mahmoud Michael identified the following requirements to aid resource mobilization and to mainstream NPoA and MTEF:

- Explore how best to merge NPoA and MTEF and ensure that the NPoA is properly costed into MTEF in order to facilitate NPoA implementation;
- The private sector should be involved from the outset of the process;
- Improved, consistent dialogue between ministers of planning and ministers of finance through all stages of APRM planning;
- Interaction at all levels; the Ugandan process was aided by the fact that it was very interactive. Spending targets and priorities were communicated to financial authorities. Uganda also had political support at the highest level;
- Move from a project approach to a sector-wide approach in order to facilitate the inclusion of sectoral targets, strategies and costings into the NPoA.

25. The participants concluded that the guidelines and recommendations from the workshop should not be too specific. Much reference had been made to Uganda, but its experience was not necessarily relevant to other countries. Each country had its own unique experiences and processes, and therefore recommendations should be as general as possible in order to be relevant for other countries. The chair noted in conclusion that broader analysis was needed and emphasized that the main goals were sharing experiences and peer learning.

## **VI. Closing Session: Way Forward**

26. The host country and the organizers thanked the participants for their contribution to the meeting and urged them to continue to share experiences on the APRM. They joined the APRM Secretariat in emphasizing that NPoAs should only contain governance projects and programmes and not capital investment programmes. The APRM-NPoA was a governance instrument.

27. They also highlighted the following points that had emerged from the two-day meeting:

(a) The NPoA was not only a national government responsibility, but also concerned non-state actors;

(b) The APRM/NPOA was a governance instrument;

(c) The national costing team should be given sufficient time to undertake proper costing of the NPoA;

(d) The importance of effective codification of the NPoA into the MTEF in order to harness data for its implementation;

(e) Diaspora remittances were a significant part of national revenue and national authorities should therefore find ways of stimulating their contribution;

(f) Finalization of the APRM M & E framework.

28. In order to map the way forward and the challenges faced for monitoring NPoA implementation, the meeting called on the organizers to draft guidelines focusing on lessons learned and to disseminate best practices from APRM-completed countries. The draft guidelines would be shared with all the participants in order to benefit from their comments and suggestions before they were finalized.

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