



Distr.: General

E/ECA/CGPP/3/3  
7 February 2013

Original: English

**UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

---

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

Third Meeting of the Committee on Governance  
and Popular Participation

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
20-21 February 2013

**APRM and the Quest for a Developmental State: the Role  
of Civil Society Organizations in implementing the  
National Programme of Action**

**Acronyms**

|         |                                               |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------|
| APRM    | African Peer Review Mechanism                 |
| CRM     | Country Review Mission                        |
| CSOs    | Civil Society Organizations                   |
| ECOSOCC | Economic, Social and Cultural Council         |
| IMF     | International Monetary Fund                   |
| NEPAD   | New Partnership for Africa's Development      |
| NGC     | National Governing Council                    |
| NGO     | Non-governmental Organizations                |
| NPoA    | National Programme of Action                  |
| PRSP    | Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper              |
| UGMP    | Uganda Governance Monitoring Platform         |
| UNECA   | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa |
| UNDP    | United Nations Development Programme          |

## Table of Contents

|     |                                                                                                                                    |    |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| I.  | INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND .....                                                                                                  | 1  |
| A.  | Governance and the developmental state.....                                                                                        | 1  |
| 1.  | Comparative assessment of the poverty reduction strategy and the NPoA<br>in the context of civil society engagement in policy..... | 2  |
| 2.  | The National Programme of Action under the APRM .....                                                                              | 5  |
| 3.  | Empirical evidence of the strategic role of civil society organizations<br>in the NPoA process.....                                | 6  |
| 4.  | Civil society, the National Governing Council<br>and the formulation of the NPoAs .....                                            | 7  |
| B.  | Lessons learnt: Challenges and opportunities for success .....                                                                     | 8  |
| 1.  | Challenges faced by CSOs in the NPoA.....                                                                                          | 9  |
| 2.  | Successful strategies utilized by civil society engagement in the NPOA.....                                                        | 10 |
| C.  | Governance architecture to support the monitoring role of CSOs: Emerging best<br>practices and lessons learned .....               | 12 |
| D.  | Prospects of the NPoA in fostering the developmental State .....                                                                   | 14 |
| II. | CONCLUSION.....                                                                                                                    |    |

## **I. Introduction and background**

1. The purpose of this parliamentary document is to review the state of implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), in particular, the National Programme of Action (NPoA), and the role that civil society can play in ensuring that NPoA is comprehensively implemented. The document assesses these important concepts and processes in the context of the developmental state, illustrating the potential of APRM to foster and propel States towards achieving this status by building and gainfully utilizing important partnerships with civil society. The paper examines the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF)-sponsored Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) as a comparative approach to governance mechanism, from which lessons could be drawn. It also underscores the unique architecture, concepts and principles in APRM process that seek to avoid some of the potential pitfalls that beset PRSP and other existing governance mechanisms in Africa.

2. The paper further looks at some of the strategies that civil society has employed in various APRM country processes and what strategies have worked well and can be improved on. It also addresses challenges that civil society organizations (CSOs) have faced in the pursuit of good governance through the APRM process. The prospects for the future of CSOs participation and NPoA as a tool for constructing a developmental state are propounded in the paper, with a view to informing policy makers on areas that may need strengthening and re-orientation.

### **A. Governance and the developmental state**

3. APRM background documents recognize the role of good governance in “creating well-functioning and accountable institutions - political, judicial and administrative - which citizens regard as legitimate, in which they participate in decisions that affect their daily lives and by which they are empowered” (Kofi A. Annan, Partnerships for a Global Community (1998)<sup>1</sup>.

4. This is an express recognition of the concept that democracy and good political governance are fundamental to realizing citizen individual and corporate rights and ensuring that Governments account to the citizenry. Good governance is a basis and prerequisite for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

5. Democratic governance, as a concept and practice, is paramount to the achievement of the developmental state. It focuses on the nature of leadership and citizen interactions and dynamics, the functionality of political, social and economic institutions in place and the appropriateness of policies and legal frameworks to foster development, particularly social and economic development outcomes<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup>APRM Self Assessment Questionnaire Section 1-Democracy and Political Governance.

<sup>2</sup>Meyns and Charity Musamba (eds) “The Developmental State in Africa: Problems and Prospects”, INEF Report 101/2010.

6. The developmental state has been defined as a state that is “capable of deploying its authority, credibility and legitimacy, in a binding manner to design and implement development policies and programmes for promoting transformation and growth, as well as human capabilities”<sup>3</sup>. It has been characterized as having at least four features: development-oriented political leadership; autonomous and effective leadership; production-oriented private sector and performance-oriented governance<sup>4</sup>. This parliamentary paper argues that these concepts and principles are clearly reflected in the instruments and orientation of APRM process and subsequent implementation of NPoA.

7. The notion of the developmental state as defined above supports the APRM emphasis on fostering democratic frameworks at country levels, to ensure social and political inclusiveness. This requires the mobilization of stakeholders around a nationally owned development framework, including its vision and targets. The processes around NPoA, as designed by the APRM, are illustrative of traction towards the manifestation of the developmental state. In comparison with the PRSP approach, the theory of the developmental state places the citizen at the heart of public policy in order to provide a sense of ownership over the national developmental agenda and not merely to formalize their participation in the development process.

8. Furthermore, APRM has been hailed for having a wholesome approach to development issues, in that it presents governance as a multifaceted concept, captured under four thematic pillars; democracy and political governance; socio-economic development; economic governance and management, and corporate governance. The NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance makes an indivisible link between governance and development, noting that Africa faces grave challenges including the eradication of poverty. The Declaration underscores the need to foster the socio-economic development of the continent through good governance approaches.<sup>5</sup>

# **1. Comparative assessment of the poverty reduction strategy and NPoA in the context of civil society engagement in policy**

9. The PRSP initiative, which was established and supported by the World Bank and IMF for highly indebted poor countries seeking to qualify for debt relief, is significant in contextualizing the actors, content and processes that are fundamental to the successful implementation of such strategies.<sup>6</sup> Although questions persist as to the effectiveness of PRSP in achieving development, it did lay the basis for certain rules of engagement, such as the need for inclusive, broad-based policymaking structures and policies, with civil society as a key stakeholder.

---

<sup>3</sup> UNECA “Economic Report on Africa 2011: Governing development in Africa - the role of the state in economic transformation”.

<sup>4</sup>P Meyns and Charity Musamba (eds) “The Developmental State in Africa: Problems and Prospects”, INEF Report 101/2010.

<sup>5</sup> AHG/235 (XXXVIII) Annex I Paragraph 5.

<sup>6</sup>Said Adejumo, “Governance and Poverty Reduction in Africa: A Critique of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers”, (PRSPs), 2006.

10. CSOs are an essential component in the development process, and the quality and character of their involvement must match up to this role. The place and space of civil society in development have not always been well defined in practice, creating a push and pull dynamic that in many instances does not bode well for participatory governance. In most African countries, people lack access to information on key public processes, institutions and decision-making, hampering their ability to interact with or act on strategic development initiatives. Civil society, as an intermediary, comes in to occupy the space between the citizen and the State, providing much needed agency, and promoting social accountability.

11. The importance of social accountability mechanisms in promoting citizen voice and spaces cannot be overemphasized, particularly those that “seek to directly involve ordinary citizens in processes of allocating, disbursing, monitoring and evaluating the use of public resources”.<sup>7</sup>

12. The theory behind PRSP has been the substantive and meaningful participation of the population, through civil society representatives, who would play a critical role in mobilizing consensus towards sustainable outcomes regarding development initiatives, policies and resources and priority setting<sup>8</sup>. Under PRSP, the process through which poverty eradication strategies are identified and prioritized is just as important as the outcome, or rather, is key to the outcome. In that sense, it was deemed that the more qualitative and wider the public participation, the greater the likelihood of success of the strategies employed and outcomes. However, experience from implementation of PRSPs demonstrates that this objective has not been fully achieved so far.

13. A recurrent theme around the reviews of PRSP, however, has been its problems when it comes to deepening the quality of civil society engagement and participation<sup>9</sup>. In many African States, participation at the local level in governance issues is generally limited despite the existence of frameworks to promote public participation, while ownership of local plans and programmes is usually weak. PRSP in several African countries failed to provide a comprehensive and structural framework for public participation, resulting in bureaucratic Government-led processes and instruments that reflected low consensus or ownership of the populations. This has marginalized the role of civil society in influencing the domestic development agenda. The lack of a clear definition of what civil society participation means has led to limited participation by civil society and narrow consultative processes<sup>10</sup>.

---

<sup>7</sup><http://web.worldbank.org>.

<sup>8</sup> Lazarus, Joel (2008) 'Participation in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: reviewing the past, assessing the present and predicting the future. *Third World Quarterly* 29 (6): 1205–1221.

<sup>9</sup>See Innocent Fred Ejolu, “The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP): A Critical Analysis of the Fundamental Limitations and A Conceptual Framework for Reform”, Maastricht Graduate School of Governance Maastricht University, 2008; Said Adejumobi, “Governance and Poverty Reduction in Africa: A Critique of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)”, 2006, AFRODAD “Civil society participation in the PRS Process: A case for Uganda”, AFRODAD 2002; Moses Isooba 'Civil society participation in Uganda's PRS process: opportunities and dilemmas' CDRN 2005; IDASA “Civil Society Budget Groups and their Participation in the PRSP Process”, Draft Synthesis Report, 2002; R Rowden and J. O. Irama “Rethinking Participation: Questions for Civil Society about the Limits of Participation in PRSPs, Action Aid International, 2004.

<sup>10</sup>Kamruzzaman Palash “Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and the rhetoric of participation” *Development Practice* 19, Volume 1, February 2009.

14. Another drawback of PRSP was the lack of direct CSO involvement in monitoring PRSP. In general, CSOs did not participate in processes such as data collection or policy analysis of review findings, despite their proven capacities to monitor “input, output, outcome, and impact”<sup>11</sup>. Significant and substantive involvement by civil society in the appraisal and analytical processes that governance review processes afford would have helped to promote transparency and accountability.

15. The APRM, in comparison, has highlighted the role and form of participation of CSOs, both in the core documents and through empirical evidence in APRM member countries (see section 3 for empirical evidence). The core documents establish institutional arrangements that take into account the civil society, the private sector and Government as the main actors. Through NPoA, all these players are involved in development planning and policy initiatives that APRM platform provides.

16. APRM framework documents address the issue of social accountability by institutionalizing civil society in its processes and structures as a legitimate, inalienable and vital partner. To avoid rendering NPoA purely technocratic, processes reflecting the biases of bureaucratic elites and civil society participation have been cemented as a fundamental tenet of NPoA. This is an unprecedented role in the annals of development planning processes in Africa.

17. Article 22 of *APRM Memorandum of Understanding* obligates undertaking member States to ensure the participation of all stakeholders, including trade unions, women, youth, private sector, civil society, rural communities and professional associations, in the development of NPoA. While APRM guidelines and base document refers to CSOs as including the media, academia, trade unions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), rural communities and representatives of international organizations, this is in no way meant to be regarded as an exhaustive list, as APRM review processes have shown.

18. The APRM Guidelines for Countries to prepare for and to participate in APRM<sup>12</sup> seek to avoid the ambiguities of PRSP process regarding participation in the national planning processes, and make participation an overarching theme and validation of APRM process. The Guidelines requires NPoA to elaborate the feedback mechanism established to keep local stakeholders involved in the process, including efforts to disseminate information in an easily accessible and understandable manner.

19. Participatory and transparent processes for all stakeholders are emphasized in the Guidelines at all stages, including in the periods of country self-assessment, during Country Review Mission (CRM) and lastly during the implementation of NPoA.<sup>13</sup> These are explicitly recognized as being fundamental to building trust and establishing and clarifying mechanisms for ongoing engagement and empowerment of stakeholders.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> “Involving Civil Society in PRS Monitoring: An Analysis of Critical Gaps in Ghana”, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> NEPAD/APRM/Panel2/country /10-2003

<sup>13</sup> Paragraph 35 (c)

<sup>14</sup> Paragraph 36

## 2. The National Programme of Action under APRM

20. NPoA is a major deliverable and the country's input into APRM process. It aids the national planning process by identifying governance gaps and priorities<sup>15</sup>. Paragraph 32 of APRM Guidelines explains the purpose of NPoA as follows: “The primary purpose of the National Programme of Action is to guide and mobilize the country’s efforts in implementing the necessary changes to improve its state of governance and socio-economic development”.

21. In addition, NPoA serves to present and clarify the country’s priorities, activities undertaken to prepare and participate in APRM and the nature of the national consultations. It also explicitly explains the responsibilities of various stakeholders in Government, civil society and the private sector in the implementation of the programme. By this definition, the participation of non-State stakeholders in the implementation of the Programme is clearly pronounced. To date, 16 African countries have been reviewed under APRM, and the earliest countries to be reviewed have submitted more than one cycle of progress reports on the implementation of NPoA.

22. The fulfilment of the *raison d'être* of APRM is intricately tied to its ability to implement NPoA, which is expected to be integrated or harmonized with other national planning processes. NPoA is meant to build on, incorporate and synergize with the relevant elements of various existing programmes, policies and strategies that address the key APRM objectives, namely, PRSPs, good governance programmes, human rights action plans, gender equity strategies, national development plans, etc. These are areas that civil society traditionally and thematically engages in as part of its mandate.

23. Also, under APRM Guidelines, APRM process is designed to engage stakeholders to facilitate exchange of information and national dialogue on good governance and socio-economic development programmes, thereby increasing the transparency of the decision-making processes, and building trust in the pursuit of national development goals.<sup>16</sup> Having been involved in PRSP country processes, CSOs have the institutional memory and experience to contribute qualitatively to the NPoA. In recognition of this added value, in South Africa for example, civil society and the private sector have been urged to integrate NPoA performance targets in their operational plans and to monitor them.<sup>17</sup>

24. Increasingly, NPoA is being viewed as a fundamental part of long-term development planning, though not without challenges. Experts observe constraints around costing NPoA effectively; the lack of monitoring and evaluation frameworks; the need to integrate NPoAs within the medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) and involve non-State actors in the implementation of NPoAs.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> “The African Peer Review Mechanism: A Compilation of Studies of the Process in Nine African Countries”, Open Society Foundations Publication, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Paragraph 18 (v)

<sup>17</sup> South African Institute of International Affairs, “Scoping Workshop: Development of Capacity in Civil Society to Track Implementation on the National APRM Programme”, 12 October 2010.

<sup>18</sup> UNECA Expert Group Meeting on “Harmonizing APRM-NPoAs and other National Development Plans into a Common Medium-Term Expenditure Framework” 2010 (ECA/GPAD/APRM/TP/11/2).

25. To address this constraint, APRM continental Secretariat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have embarked on strategies and programmes to enhance the capacities of Governments and CSOs to harmonize NPoA with existing development plans. Lessons accruing from this technical support show that APRM countries are constrained by financial and human capacities in seeking to harmonize NPoA into the MTEF and existing national plans, and that a multisectoral approach to implementing NPoA, including civil society involvement is necessary.<sup>19</sup>

### **3. Empirical evidence of the strategic role of civil society organizations in NPoA process**

26. The clear identification of national development objectives, goals and targets must be captured in NPoAs through inclusive approaches. This is the entry point for CSOs, which play an important role in providing evidence-based advocacy, data and monitoring; and also derive value from contributing to fostering an overall enabling environment in which they can achieve major national objectives. In Uganda, the need to monitor the APRM process in the broader context of civil society's mandates was clearly identified from the outset by civil society organizations.<sup>20</sup>

27. CSOs are a vital force, articulating the interests of the larger population. In Uganda, the CSOs were quick to identify the need for their presence to ensure credible processes.<sup>21</sup> In South Africa, civil society organizations identified a set of principles to guide their involvement in APRM process, laying emphasis on the direction, strategies and content of the peer review process and NPoA.<sup>22</sup>

28. The Kenya Progress Report on the Implementation of APRM National Programme of Action 2006-2007 admitted that its implementation required collaborative efforts across movement ministries and agencies, the private sector and civil society. Despite this, in Kenya, no notable movement was reported among CSOs in APRM process, in terms of galvanizing action beyond APRM process and integrating or harmonizing APRM into civil society agenda to achieve sustainable results.

29. Insights from CSO experiences with NPoA suggest that they have added an important dimension by raising the visibility of pertinent issues of the collective populations and their constituent parts. Whatever the arguments and theories about the legitimacy and representativeness of CSOs to act on behalf of the people, civil society does articulate their needs and aspirations. In terms of agenda and standard setting, monitoring and advocacy, civil society adds value to NPoA process.

---

<sup>19</sup>Adotey Bing-Pappoe: "Harmonizing APRM-NPoAs and other National Development Plans into a Common Medium Term Expenditure Framework: Experiences from Ghana, Rwanda, Uganda, and Benin", UNECA 2010

<sup>20</sup>Building a Network to Monitor APRM: Lessons from Uganda, Presentation at a scoping workshop: "Developing Civil Society's Capacity to monitor the APRM", Johannesburg, 12-13 October 2010.

Lillian Muyomba-Research Fellow, Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE).

<sup>21</sup>Conference on "The APRM: Taking Peer Learning to the Next Level" Kampala, Uganda, 20-21 July 2010 Communiqué.

<sup>22</sup>SAIIA Occasional Paper Number 3 "Assessing South Africa's APRM: An NGO Perspective" N Hutchings, M Dimba and A Tilley, 2008.

#### 4. Civil society, the National Governing Council and the formulation of NPoAs

30. CSOs create or seize and occupy important spaces through which they can exercise citizenship on behalf of wider groups and populations. The presence of civil society on the National Governing Councils (NGCs) is an important component of APRM structural framework at the national level. This gives NGC the requisite mandate to oversee the implementation of NPoA. Since civil society participation at this level constitutes the upstream stages of APRM, it kick-starts its crucial formal inclusion in the process. In several countries where APRM structures such as NGCs were maintained, NGCs have played an important role in monitoring the implementation of NPoA. In Kenya, the late and low involvement of CSOs in NGCs resulted in lost opportunities for participation in the process, including NPoA. Not all NGCs or their equivalents were maintained after completion of the Country Review Report and NPoA.

31. The quality of CSO representatives as well as the breadth of diversity varied from one country to another. Commendable efforts were made in some countries to marshal a wide array of CSOs in APRM process. In Benin, the *Commission Nationale Indépendante de Mise en oeuvre du MAEP* (Independent National Commission for the Implementation of APRM) had a significant CSO membership and representation, with substantive participation in the APRM process at the national and local levels.

32. In Burkina Faso, whilst there was a significant CSO presence in the National Governing Council, there were perceptions that the CSOs appointed to the APRM structures lacked representativeness, since they had been designated by the public authorities rather than by civil society.

33. In Ghana, NGC oversees the harmonization of all governance programmes, including NPoA. The Government sought to ensure complete confidence in the APRM process, and constituted an NGC made up entirely of CSOs. It is notable that Ghana conducted one of the highly lauded APRM processes, with a high degree of public participation. As will be illustrated, the implementation of the Ghana NPoA also witnessed unique and far-reaching innovations, no doubt in part due to the focus of the NGC on creating as much citizen participation as possible.

34. Failure to have diverse representation of civil society can result in uneven handling of sectors and public interest issues. In Benin, particularly, CSOs working on gender issues were underrepresented. This low participation was attributed to under-emphasis on gender issues.<sup>23</sup> The original decision by the Government of South Africa to appoint CSO members of the NGC from the national chapter of the African Union's Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) was not well received. ECOSOCC has a very narrow prescription for national CSO membership. The statute establishing ECOSOCC allows for only two CSOs per African Union member State. Subsequently, the Government widened the representation of civil society on the NGC to cover other social interest groups.

---

<sup>23</sup>The African Peer Review Mechanism: A Compilation of Studies of the Process in Nine African Countries.

## **B. Lessons learnt: Challenges and opportunities for success**

35. Analyses of the NPoA process in many countries reveal uneven participation of CSOs in the formulation and implementation of NPoA. The APRM guidelines and base document have not provided sufficient clarity regarding at what stage CSOs commence their participation in NPoA. Most countries complete their NPoAs towards the end of APRM national process, usually after receiving feedback from the continental APRMs.

36. This means that the exercise is usually conducted in crunch time, which does not lend itself to meaningful participation and inputs by CSOs. In many countries, work on the NPoA is summarily performed in order to meet timelines, with little time left for stakeholder participation. This can result in heavily technocratic documents rather than instruments that reflect popular consensus and review. If the experiences from PRSPs are anything to go by, these perfunctory forms of participation are ineffective.

37. At the formulation stage, it is common for Governments to outsource the services of technocrats, experts and specialists - usually technical review institutes- to lead the process, with civil society being consulted once drafts have been developed. While a situation in which all CSOs embark on the drafting of the NPoA evokes scenarios of inertia and impasses, methodologies and strategies could be devised to involve and consult CSOs from the outset of NPoA design process. CSOs should be brought on board as soon as formulation of NPoA starts. CSOs in Uganda, for example, sought to have a say in the selection of the technical research institutes, which formulate NPoAs.<sup>24</sup>

38. Under APRM guidelines, the country support missions are meant to facilitate the common understanding of the APRM processes, documents and instruments, including the draft programme of action by all stakeholders. A contextual translation of this provision would infer that stakeholders should be able to understand the parameters and technicalities of NPoA from the outset. Thereafter, civil society is obligated to see to it that commitments in NPoA are faithfully met.

39. Under the APRM Memorandum of Understanding, the recommendations contained in the Country Review Report are to be integrated into the NPoA. It is up to civil society to exercise vigilance and ensure that the recommendations do not fall through the cracks and that they are reflected in the NPoA.

40. In South Africa, vigilant CSOs felt that important information via oral and written submissions to the Country Review Team was missing in the NPoA, and started lobbying to ensure the inclusion of this information. This approach was unique in itself, as it showed the degree of influence CSO could wield in the APRM process if they were well organized and persistent in their demands.

---

<sup>24</sup>S Tindifa and B M Luutu, "The Implementation of APRM in Uganda: A Critical Evaluation", Open Society Publications, 2011.

## 1. Challenges faced by CSOs in the NPoA

41. **Technicalities of participation:** The presence of CSOs on the NGCs is important, as they contribute to identifying the Technical Review Institutes responsible for shaping NPoA and oversee its formulation and implementation. However, where CSOs do not have an independent hand in nominating representatives to APRM structures, organizations deemed to be politically sensitive might not be adequately represented, as happened in countries like Rwanda.<sup>25</sup>

42. In several African countries, the law regulates the character of civil society, often imposing conditions for recognition, registration and operation. This can act as a caveat to association and participation, hampering important social movements that promote citizen action. In countries such as Ethiopia and Algeria, debates rage about the politicization of the CSO registration processes, which can act as a filter to prevent some CSOs from engaging in political activism. CSOs involved in socio-economic and service delivery activities tend to fare slightly better.

43. In Algeria, only legally registered associations were involved as representatives of civil society. In Rwanda, the domination of Government officials in the Technical Review Institute and the APRM Commission, coupled with low participation by CSOs raised concerns about the quality of inclusiveness and participation of the population in shaping the country self assessment report.

44. Selective CSO participation raises the risk of omitting issues in NPoA that may have been identified by including a wide range of CSO actors, despite politics. For example, the contentious removal of presidential term limits from the Constitution in Uganda was raised in the Country Review Report by CSOs. Despite political sensitivities around this, the restoration of term limits was addressed in NPoA and the implementation of this indicator in the NPoA is being monitored by civil society. This illustrates the power of CSOs in shaping the final country review report and NPoA.

45. **Capacity constraints:** Even with significant Government resource, NPoA processes can be demanding, requiring technical, financial and human resources that stretch capacities. For example, in Kenya, the National Steering Committee for NEPAD appointed in 2006 was charged with monitoring NPoA, PRPS and MDG process. Practically, this means that CSOs have to monitor all these documents, thereby stretching their capabilities.

46. **Consensus building:** National development plans and PRSP processes have in common the fact that policy trade-offs and negotiations have to be made in order to arrive at the priority areas. Challenges abound when the priorities and expectations of Government and civil society, (or even intra civil society) are sometimes diametrically opposed on “hot button” issues. Participation ultimately must be distilled in one prioritized and coated plan. In practical terms, this is not always possible.

---

<sup>25</sup>SAIIA, the APRM: A Compilation of Studies of the Process in Nine African Countries.

47. Regardless of the challenges, there is growing evidence of quick governance gains in countries where civil society participated meaningfully in APRM/NPoA, as will be addressed in the following section.

## **2. Successful strategies utilized by civil society engagement in NPOA**

48. **Strategic engagement by CSOs:** CSOs, in some instances, have been quick to take advantage of the space provided for them in the APRM structures (NGC) and the NPoA. When Governments have been slow to accord them due status, CSOs have agitated for inclusion by right, as was the case in South Africa. In Kenya, Government's decision to co-opt the CSOs to participate in the APRM Task Force led to shaky CSO-Government relations from the outset, but after vigorous CSO lobbying, the situation improved with the appointment of 16 CSOs to the NGC.

49. An important innovation of the CSOs in Kenya was the decision to assign civil society conveners for the four thematic groups. In this way, civil society and the community were mobilized to participate in the APRM process. Such an arrangement offers an opportunity for division of labour to help cope with the huge demands of the APRM and NPoA process.

50. In Ghana, civil society agencies were strategically assigned to each APRM pillar to undertake situational analyses that would feed into the work of the CRM. Burkina Faso had a strong representation of CSOs in the NGC, and these CSOs were involved in generating data to input into the APRM process.

51. **Institutional arrangements:** Country experiences reveal that where CSOs have a clear vision and unified approach towards structured engagement, they garner better consensus on how to engage the APRM/NPoA process, and tangible results are registered. Notable among these was the case of Uganda, where umbrella NGOs; the National NGO Forum and the Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations provided much needed leadership, guiding mobilization and coordination of CSOs towards collective input at national and subnational levels. This strategy mitigated duplication of activities and marginalization of less capacitated CSOs.<sup>26</sup>

52. The best results in NPoA monitoring come from having significant inputs from both CSOs at national and community levels. There is also a synergetic division of labour between think tanks and advocacy CSOs, which do most of the research and policy analysis and also CBOs and service CSOs, which are effective in advocacy and validation of the Country Self-Assessment Report as well as monitoring implementation of NPoA.

53. **CSO monitoring frameworks for NPoA:** Involvement of civil society in APRM monitoring mechanisms can also raise the bar for transparency and accountability. Studies conducted indicate that a high number of the recommendations made in the country review report tend to go unheeded or are not reflected in the NPoAs of many countries.<sup>27</sup> A strong oversight initiative from CSOs in a timely manner during the country review process can ensure that countries respond and adopt comprehensive NPoAs.

---

<sup>26</sup>[www.ngoforum.or.ug](http://www.ngoforum.or.ug)

<sup>27</sup>R Herbert and Steven Gruzd "The African Peer Review Mechanism: Lessons from the Pioneers" South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), 2008.

54. In South Africa, CSOs worked independently and jointly to monitor NPoA process, to ensure conformity between the recommendations of the Country Self-Assessment Report, the Country Review Report and NPoA. One CSO resorted to obtaining legal advice to determine the legality of the actions of Government when it revised the NPoA and failed to share it with the public, NGC and civil society. It is believed that this action may have contributed to the turnaround by Government, which subsequently shared the document and revised it to include some of the missing CSO concerns.<sup>28</sup>

55. In Ghana, NGC appointed four CSOs to monitor the activities of the civil society sector within their designated mandates and areas of operation and to coordinate their monitoring of the implementation of NPoA. Further, the Ghana NGC has complementary structures in all districts that serve as district APRM oversight committees.

56. The committees comprise voluntary associations of civil society and public sector actors, committed to undertaking education and sensitization on APRM, as well as monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Action at the local level.<sup>29</sup> This model has been adopted in Benin too. Ghana has also undertaken novel strategies since its review and NPoA, by embarking on an APRM-related household survey in 2006.

57. Uganda's civil society experience offers useful insights into effective tracking methodologies. The Uganda Governance Monitoring Platform (UGMP) undertook to monitor 32 indicators of NPoA and produced a monitoring report entitled “Is Uganda on Track with Commitments in the APRM Process? A UGMP Annual Governance Status Report for 2009”.<sup>30</sup>

58. By the time of the APRM, the UGMP was already established as a civil society platform of 16 CSOs involved in monitoring good governance and producing annual governance trends research reports, using them to lobby policy makers on governance reforms in the country. The UGMP offered much needed leadership around NPoA monitoring exercise, enabling CSOs to strengthen their data collection and research skills towards joint monitoring.

59. **Technical assistance to NPoA:** Civil society entities with specialized competencies can offer technical expertise in the preparation of NPoA. Research institutes, academia and NGOs played a significant role in this area. In Ghana, three out of the four technical research institutes were civil society research organizations. In Burkina Faso, the *Centre pour la gouvernance démocratique*, a CSO, served as a technical research institute.

60. **Partnering:** In South Africa, the Parliament uniquely undertook a complementary APRM assessment process and held public hearings to receive submissions and information. CSOs made contributions regarding NPoA, there by enriching dialogue and the data collection process. In countries such as Benin, the NGCs were able to link up with their counterparts in Ghana on experience sharing missions that enabled them to boost their capacity to engage in APRM and NPoA.

---

<sup>28</sup>SAIIA Occasional Paper Number 3 “Assessing South Africa’s APRM: An NGO Perspective”, N Hutchings, M Dimba and A Tilley, 2008.

<sup>29</sup> Ghana APRM Third Annual Progress Report: January–December 2008.

<sup>30</sup>[www.ngoforum.or.ug](http://www.ngoforum.or.ug)

61. Partnership approaches with CSOs can help achieve the implementation of NPoA substantively. In Kenya, the initial National Steering Committee for NEPAD appointed in 2006 lacked inclusive membership, as opposed to the subsequent NGC which had significant NGO presence and supervised the development of one of the highly developed methodologies of APRM; the household surveys, resulting in a highly qualitative and quantitative Self-Assessment Report.

**C. Governance architecture to support the monitoring role of CSOs:  
Emerging best practices and lessons learned**

62. APRM stratified the monitoring mechanisms for NPoA at the local, national and regional levels. The APRM Guidelines require a country under review to outline the implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the NPoA and to outline the feedback mechanism established to keep local stakeholders involved in the process, including efforts to disseminate information in an easily accessible and understandable manner.

63. At the country level, NGCs and Government have been free to establish or identify existing structures to implement and monitor NPoA. Civil society has been factored in to some level in these structures. However, not all countries retained the structure of NGC. APRM processes have been designed in such a way that CSOs can participate in monitoring NPoA at the following levels:

**(a) National level**

64. Periodic national progress reports are required after completion of the review process and are useful in helping the APRM stakeholders to assess progress towards implementation of NPoA. Annual progress reports on the implementation of NPoA help the Panel, Forum and national stakeholders to track progress on national commitments contained in NPoA.

65. Efforts have been made at the national level to convene stakeholders to validation workshops and to disseminate progress reports, although most reports evidence a limited outreach. In South Africa, efforts were made to hold dissemination workshops at province level, but this effort did not target a critical mass of society.

66. After reports are presented to the Peer Review Forum, there are no indications of effective downstream mechanisms for feeding back to the national level stakeholders, civil society or Government on resultant deliberations and conclusions.

**(b) Subnational level**

67. In countries where decentralized governance or federalism is practised, it is important to set up monitoring and evaluative frameworks at the local or State level in order to allow for local participation by citizens, and to harmonize local development initiatives with the NPoA agenda and targets.

68. In Nigeria, a joint monitoring and evaluation entity, the APRM National Working Group, was set up to oversee implementation of NPoA. Both CSOs and Government officials are represented in the group. The implementation of the Nigerian NPoA in a Federal context poses a challenge, given the need to integrate the positions of civil society and the private sector with Federal, State and local government, in a highly devolved system of governance. There have been calls to have the States involved in monitoring the implementation of NPoA.

69. In Algeria, the APRM process provided the forum for dialogue between civil society and Government to be held at national and subnational levels. In South Africa, consultations for the annual progress reports to facilitate monitoring and participatory governance have been held in all provinces with stakeholders such as the private sector, civil society and vulnerable groups.

70. Kenya has, in the past, through the NEPAD Secretariat, sought to involve civil society at the central and subnational levels in the monitoring of NPoA through information sharing and awareness-raising on the contents of the report.

71. Given the demands of monitoring, and existence of multiple planning and development documents, the best case scenario to foster comprehensive approaches to monitoring will occur when NPoAs are fully integrated into national planning processes. In Uganda, NPoA has been seamlessly integrated into the National Development Plan (NDP). NDP has adopted a layered approach towards tracking the implementation of NPoA.

72. The monitoring strategy outlined in NDP, has designated community level monitoring to NGOs, noting that they have a role to play in providing information on: (i) delivery of various services; (ii) transparency and accountability of resources accorded; and (iii) challenges and gaps experienced in delivery of various services, in addition to validating outcomes of implementation of the NDP in their respective areas.<sup>31</sup> In the same vein, at the local/household level, citizens have a monitoring role to play in the delivery of target outputs and validating their results.

73. Nonetheless, NDP has not escaped the structural problems that were evident in the PRSP process. While NDP empowers Ugandan citizens to use the monitoring and evaluation results to demand for better service delivery and accountability, it does not outline the participation modalities for citizens, raising the risk of State centric approaches to monitoring.

74. Rwanda set up the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy Sector Working Groups, made up of Government officials, development partners, civil society and the private sector. These working groups seek to align and integrate the programme of action into the various sector programmes.

### **(c) Continental level**

75. APRM guidelines require that in the fifth and final phase, six months after the Country Review Report has been considered by the Heads of State and Government of participating member countries, it should be formally and publicly tabled before key regional and subregional structures such as the Pan-African Parliament, the African Commission on

---

<sup>31</sup>Uganda National Development Plan (2010/11-2014/15).

Human and Peoples' Rights, and the African Union's Peace and Security Council and ECOSOCC.

76. These structures are important in that over the years, CSOs have built major partnerships with them. These continental entities are composed of civil society actors, citizens and stakeholders, who all embrace rights-based approaches and espouse social accountability in their various mandates. This can provide another layer of monitoring NPoA to ensure that APRM leads to real gains for African citizens. However, this framework has not yet been actively engaged by the APRM. There should an opportunity for it to be utilized in future.

#### **D. Prospects of NPoA in fostering the developmental State**

77. NPoA constitutes the critical link between the State and society, and enables communities to construct shared visions, goals and objectives. NPoA also provides the opportunity for APRM member States to return to the era of participatory development planning, after a protracted period of structural adjustment conditionalities that not only diminished the capacity of the State to lead the development efforts, but also alienated civil society in terms of participation.<sup>32</sup>

78. Further, APRM opens up refreshing possibilities for more coordinated and harmonized national development strategies to ensure compliance within regional blocs in Africa and promote joint capacity development through a system of peer review and learning. Best practices in the developmental state model can be shared among countries, while mutual capacity building agreements could be fostered within regional blocs.

79. However, there is a need to clarify the participation modalities for civil society in monitoring and evaluating NPoA. A framework detailing these modalities should be developed at the national and continental levels to provide a uniform approach to monitoring.

80. Capacitating civil society to accomplish its goals is important in ensuring its participation. To the extent possible, Governments should actively provide CSOs with financial assistance, without compromising the integrity of the CSOs in pursuing their mandates.

## **II. CONCLUSION**

81. The APRM framework, principles, processes and substantive content provide a deliberative approach that can enhance State-society linkages for constructing such a developmental State. The APRM pillars, principles and approaches provide a framework beyond formal interpretations of citizenship, to ensure equal access to the State and enhanced participation in governance, by individuals and collectives. This will enable citizens and

---

UNECA Expert Group Meeting on "Harmonizing APRM-NPoAs and other National Development Plans into a Common Medium-Term Expenditure Framework" 2010 (ECA/GPAD/APRM/TP/11/2).

communities to construct shared coherent goals, whose concrete implementation can then be co-owned by the State and agencies toward implementation.

82. At the operational level, NPoA provides a key link between APRM and PRSP and development plans. The involvement of CSOs in these processes serves to fast track and facilitate the establishment of the developmental state. CSO participation is necessary for effective good governance as demonstrated by APRM experience in many African countries. Successes have been registered in countries where CSOs have used the NPoA and APRM processes, platforms and spaces to dialogue, share experiences and coordinate responses and activities.

83. At the same time, it has become clear that for some APRM countries, involved, the real challenge is implementing the NPoAs, while at the same time harmonizing them with the PRSP and other development plans. The preconditions for this include ascertaining by how much the NPoAs had added to the nation's development funding need, determining how the funds to cover the additional costs would be raised and from where, integrating NPoA into the national budget and ensuring that NPoA was actually implemented, monitored and evaluated. In short, it is important to establish that the APRM NPoAs and the PRSP and other development plans are systematically linked and harmonized.

84. APRM and the NPOA approach seek to redefine African politics in terms of a partnership or social contract between critical stakeholders on the basis of their collective or intersecting social responsibility, to protect and advance the public interest. If these principles are faithfully adhered to, they stand to facilitate transformative governance along social or participatory democratic lines to redefine governance in Africa.