



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa



Aide-memoire

Expert Group Meeting

Study on the impact of the African Peer Review Mechanism on governance in participating countries

**30 November and 1 December 2017
Pretoria, South Africa**

Background

The African Peer Review Mechanism is a self-monitoring mechanism aimed at fostering the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated regional economic integration through the exchange of experiences and reinforcement of best practices, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the capacity-building needs of the participating countries. To date, 35 State members of the African Union have voluntarily acceded to the Mechanism, of which 20, or 55 per cent, have completed their peer-review processes and are currently focused on implementing their relevant national programmes of action regarding the Mechanism.

The Mechanism's revitalization programme entered its second year in 2017. The year 2016 was a success by any standard. Thanks to all the hard work done in 2016, the Mechanism, for the first time in its history, is now firmly grounded on a clear legal instrument in the form of the Statute of the African Peer Review Mechanism, which was provisionally adopted by the African Peer Review Forum on 26 August 2016. For the first time in its history, the Mechanism now runs its ambitious programme of activities on the basis of a five-year strategic plan that was adopted by the Forum at the meeting held on 26 August 2016. Lastly, four countries were peer reviewed in January 2017, including the first second-generation review of Kenya. As a result, 20 of the 36 members have been reviewed.

On the basis of the above successes, at the twenty-eighth African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government, it was decided to extend the mandate of the Mechanism to include tracking of the implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the continent's key governance areas, specifically Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Such developments have further solidified the Mechanism's position to drive the governance agenda in Africa and restored confidence in the value and credibility of the process.

Study on the impact of the African Peer Review Mechanism on governance in Africa

Fourteen years after its establishment, the African Peer Review Panel of Eminent Persons requested the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to undertake a study to assess the impact of the Mechanism on the governance landscape in Africa. The timing of this study is opportune in the light of the above developments and the need for a systematic reflection, given that 2018 will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Mechanism.

Given the dynamic nature of countries and recent socioeconomic developments in Africa, it is important to undertake a comprehensive review of the successes and challenges of the Mechanism and the impact that it has had on the status of governance at the country level of the reviewed countries and at an aggregate level of the 36 participating countries.

The study will contain the following elements: (a) an examination of the relevance of the Mechanism for Africa's socioeconomic transformation; (b) an assessment of the preliminary impact of the Mechanism on the governance and socioeconomic development of the 17 peer-reviewed countries; (c) an assessment of the socioeconomic contexts that impinge on the implementation of the codes and standards set by the Mechanism and that

have an impact on its effectiveness; and (d) recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the Mechanism.

The main goal of the study is to stimulate a careful, comprehensive and analytical rethink of the Mechanism's processes and guidelines that may require further development and streamlining in order to address more effectively some of the key structural and institutional impediments to the democratization process and socioeconomic transformation of the African countries.

On the basis of the objectives, the study is organized into the following chapters:

- Chapter I: Introduction: This chapter will highlight the organizational structure of the Mechanism and objectives of the study.
- Chapter II: Theoretical relevance of the Mechanism: This chapter will contain an examination of the theoretical significance of the Mechanism in transforming African governance and development, how it has already altered the discourse on African governance and socioeconomic development and how it has attempted to empower African States and African populations to become the authors of their own governance and policy on socioeconomic development.
- Chapter III: Methodological approach and empirical findings: This chapter will provide an assessment of the impact of the Mechanism on the governance and socioeconomic development of reviewed countries, while noting the technical challenges faced in conducting rigorous impact analyses.
- Chapter IV: Explanation of empirical findings: This chapter will serve to examine some of the structural, institutional, and political obstacles to proper execution by member countries of the Mechanism's proposed standards and practices.
- Chapter V: Conclusion and policy recommendations: In this chapter, the study will provide some preliminary recommendations to improve the Mechanism's guidance and ways to improve the likelihood of the proper implementation of the proposed standards.

Objectives of the Expert Group Meeting

The primary objective of the Expert Group Meeting is to bring together leading governance experts and representatives of the Mechanism's member States to rigorously review and provide pertinent input to the draft study commissioned by ECA. The current draft has been internally reviewed by the Mechanism's continental secretariat and ECA.

Specifically, the Expert Group Meeting is intended to provide an opportunity for the Mechanism and governance experts to do the following:

- (a) Consider the draft study on the impact of the Mechanism, its structure, content and recommendations on the way forward;
- (b) Critically reflect on achievements and challenges faced by the Mechanism in the broader context of trends on governance in Africa;
- (c) Share the concrete impact of the Mechanism at the country and continental levels;

(d) Advise on how best to improve the quality of the document and enhance the practicability of its recommendations and action points.

Expected outcome

At the end of the Expert Group Meeting, it is expected that the experts will have reviewed and provided comprehensive input to the final draft report for its completion.

Format of the Expert Group Meeting

The Expert Group Meeting will be fully participatory through interactive dialogue and presentations by experts from, among others, the Mechanism's Panel of Eminent Persons, the African Union Commission, the Mechanism's secretariat, ECA, think tanks and independent consultants. The Meeting will be organized in plenary sessions that will address all chapters of the impact assessment study.

Key documentation

The following documents will be shared with the participants:

- (a) Final draft of the impact assessment study;
- (b) Aide-memoire;
- (c) Draft agenda of the Expert Group Meeting;
- (d) Presentations and notable input from experts during the Meeting.

Participants

The following will participate in the Expert Group Meeting:

- (a) Panel of Eminent Persons;
- (b) Members of the Bureau of the Consultative Committee of the Mechanism's national governing councils;
- (c) Chief Executive Officer and staff of the Mechanism's secretariat;
- (d) African Union Commission experts;
- (e) New Partnership for Africa's Development experts;
- (f) ECA experts;
- (g) Independent Mechanism governance experts.

Partnerships

The Expert Group Meeting is co-organized by ECA and the Mechanism's secretariat.

Contacts

Hodane Youssouf
Governance and Public Administration Officer
Capacity Development Division
African Peer Review Mechanism Focal Point
Economic Commission for Africa
Addis Ababa
Tel.: +251-11-544-5486
E-mail: youssouf@un.org

Melaku Desta
Special Adviser
African Peer Review Mechanism
Johannesburg, South Africa
E-mail: Melaku.Desta@aprm-au.org

Rachel Mukamunana
Head of Division Country Review Coordination
African Peer Review Mechanism
Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel.: +27 (11) 256-3413
E-mail: rachel.mukamunana@aprm-au.org