



**African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)  
Sensitisation Project in Namibia (ASPIN)**

**Workshop for Namibian Parliamentarians  
Thursday 19 April 2018  
National Assembly, Windhoek, Namibia**

**WORKSHOP REPORT**

On Thursday 19 April 2018, the National Assembly of Namibia hosted a workshop on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the roles that members of parliament (MPs) can play in the country's APRM process.

The workshop was organised and presented by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) and the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) as part of the APRM Sensitisation Project in Namibia (ASPIN). It was supported by the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES). Over 50 MPs and parliamentary staff attended.

The participants were warmly welcomed by the **Deputy Speaker of the Namibian National Assembly, the Honourable Loide Kasingo**. She noted that this workshop was timely given Namibia's accession to the APRM in January 2017, and was an opportunity to impart knowledge and learn from what others had accomplished in their respective APRM journeys. She was particularly interested to find out how parliament can become more involved in the APRM in Namibia, and what the benefits of the APRM were likely to be for the country. She noted that the APRM was a useful tool that would enhance the Namibian government's commitment to transparent, accountable and participatory governance, and welcomed the opportunity for the society to introspect and interrogate its strengths and shortcomings, as well as showcase the country's best practices. The Deputy Speaker also observed that the APRM dovetails with three important policy processes in the country, namely Vision 2030, the 5<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan, and the Harambee Prosperity Plan, and can support their envisaged reforms.

**Graham Hopwood, director of the Institute for Public Policy Research** noted that the IPPR had commissioned SAIIA to write a 10-page report entitled *Namibia and the African Peer Review Mechanism: Committing to Improved Governance*, available here:

[http://ippr.org.na/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/17\\_DB\\_APRM\\_WEB.pdf](http://ippr.org.na/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/17_DB_APRM_WEB.pdf)

The IPPR had also partnered with SAIIA to develop the APRM Sensitisation Project in Namibia (ASPIN), to inform civil society about the APRM and work with a coalition of interested organisations to develop a written submission on key governance issues. This submission will be utilised as civil society's formal input into the country's APRM review. He noted that President Hage Geingob had reiterated the government's commitment to the APRM in the State of the National Address on 11 April 2018. The president said: "Namibia is now a full member of the African Peer Review Mechanism, a process that holds through peer review great potential for our political and economic governance processes. Civil society, a critical part of the APRM has already commenced discussions, and the National Planning Commission, as the lead agency shall be mobilised to start implementing a programme of action. Our work in the APRM reinforces the urgency with which we should deal with corruption and poor governance in Africa." Hopwood welcomed the opportunity to also inform parliament about the APRM and work with them over the coming months.

**Steven Gruzd, Head of the African Governance and Diplomacy Programme at the South African Institute of International Affairs** then presented an overview of what the APRM is, how it operates, its structures and stages, and how the various member countries have progressed in their national processes. Please see the attached presentation for more detail.

The first panel discussion looked at how parliaments can become an integral part of the APRM process. Gruzd noted that parliament has a mandate to be involved in the APRM, and should interact with the continental APRM Secretariat when it visits Namibia on its various missions. MPs may be invited to sit on the country's National Governing Council which guide the process in the country and ensures it is open, participatory and credible. Parliament should designate a focal person or committee to deal with APRM issues, including interacting with civil society, holding public hearings, writing a submission and monitoring the implementation of the National Programme of Action (NPoA) that emerges from the self-assessment exercise to remedy governance short-comings. He highlighted the

active role South Africa's parliament played in that country's APRM process in 2005-2006. Please see attached presentation for more details.

**The former speaker of the Lesotho Parliament and member of the Pan-African Parliament, the Honourable Alice Mtlhomi Motsamai** spoke about the APRM process in Lesotho and suggested that a change of government and unstable political coalitions were the reasons for slow implementation. She said that the country was supposed to produce its first progress report in 2011 but did not manage to do so due to national elections. Nonetheless, she said that the APRM was successful in helping the country to promote the rights of women. The country was coming from a situation where there were few women in parliament. This has now changed. She noted several new laws passed after the APRM process.

**Boniface Habana from the Pan-African Parliament** highlighted how the PAP has become more involved in the APRM over the last four years. In partnership with SAIIA and the APRM Secretariat, it has enabled 14 APRM Country Review Reports (CRRs) to be tabled and debated at the PAP, clearing a considerable backlog. PAP has also formed the PAP APRM Network (PAN), driven by the Committee on Justice and Human Rights, to focus on APRM issues. He applauded Namibia for its accession to the APRM and its commitment to conducting a sound and transparent process. He also urged Namibia to ratify the 2014 Malabo Protocol on the PAP.

**Speaker of the National Assembly, the Honourable Professor Peter Katjivivi** expressed his excitement about this workshop, and that the APRM process was gathering momentum, particularly from civil society. He was pleased that Namibia had eventually joined the "APRM family." He said it was important for Namibia to be reviewed by its peers, and could only gain from the experience, and that the APRM was key "to promote a society based on transparency, accountability and participatory governance." Namibia could learn much from countries that preceded it. He welcomed the good attendance from MPs and their interest in the process. He said parliament should develop a strategy and a framework for APRM engagement, mobilise resources and maintain the momentum. He promoted the idea of instituting a parliamentary committee responsible for the APRM and requested that key documentation be sent to MPs. He welcomed the offer to hold further workshops and meetings with parliament as part of future ASPIN events.

In the second panel, **Yarik Turianskyi, Deputy Head of the African Governance and Diplomacy Programme at SAIIA** presented information on key aspects of the APRM processes in Lesotho and South Africa, including cross-cutting issues in their CRRs, best practices and lessons for Namibia. He suggested focusing on issues that civil

society also has expertise in. It is more beneficial to work on fewer issues in depth in developing a submission, rather than to overstretch and try to cover too many issues where expertise is lacking. Both Lesotho and South Africa ultimately ended up producing solid and honest country review reports, but implementation of their National Programmes of Action (NPOA) was lacking. Lesotho did not produce a single progress report. South Africa produced three, but they did not track back to its NPOA. Ultimately, the APRM had little impact in either country.

**Laura Nyirinkindi, an independent consultant from Uganda**, who has been on seven APRM Country Review Missions, shared her experiences. She noted that in Kenya's second review, approximately 95% of the issues raised in the previous CRR had been addressed in law and regulations, with a direct correlation between the APRM and positive governance outcomes. Issues relating to parliament that come up in country reviews include internal party democracy, the roles of parliament, relation to the executive, political dynamics, the electoral system and party funding, among others. She said that this workshop had the largest turn-out of any country she had visited for the APRM, and commended Namibia's interest and enthusiasm. She noted that parliament has proven one of the most important institutions to enhance gender issues and representivity. She said, "Parliament can definitely play a role at all stages of the APRM, but especially in the implementation of the NPOA" through proposing draft laws, monitoring budgets and providing oversight. It may need to assert its interest so that parliament is not marginalised. She recommended that various APRM reports be tabled and debated in the National Assembly.

**Susan Mwape, director of Common Cause in Zambia** comes from civil society, and sits on Zambia's APRM National Governing Council. She described how civil society had to fight for the process to receive sufficient political attention in Zambia, especially in an environment of distrust between government and civil society over constitutional reform. The process was sluggish, as Zambia went through four presidents in rapid succession. She said it was necessary to demystify the APRM and make it understandable to people, and note how it resonates with their everyday lives and concerns. She said that in Zambia, parliament's participation was disappointing. Vocal former allies in the House tended to ignore APRM issues once they moved into the executive as governments changed.

Issues raised in the **discussion** centred on the value of this process for Namibia, questions about its costs and benefits, how the process and NPOA are funded and the mechanics of parliamentary input.

SAIIA will be returning to Namibia, scheduled for June, August and October 2018 for ASPIN work with civil society. It was suggested that for the June visit:

1. The focal point (Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation) and the National Planning Commission be invited to present their APRM plans to parliament.
2. The APRM Civil Society Working Group should have a joint meeting with parliament to share ideas and work plans.
3. If possible, the APRM advanced mission to Namibia should be held back-to-back with these meetings.

The meeting was then formally closed.