

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

## **Civil Society Working Group Meeting**

**25 July 2018**

**House of Democracy, Windhoek, Namibia**

On 25 July 2018, a Civil Society Working Group Meeting was convened to discuss the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and how civil society can become meaningfully involved in the Namibian APRM process. The intention was to assist civil society in Windhoek to identify 12-15 major governance issues, for possible inclusion in their civil society written submission to the APRM.

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). Over 25 civil society members attended.

By way of introduction, Steven Gruzd, Programme Head of the African Governance and Diplomacy Programme at SAIIA, gave an introduction to the APRM and Namibia's accession to the mechanism in January 2017. He said that governance needs to be taken seriously in Africa and the APRM is a great tool through which to do that. It is a voluntary process centered around four broad ranging thematic areas: Democracy and Political Governance, Economic Governance and Management, Corporate Governance and Socio-Economic Development.

Steven then presented briefly on how the APRM process works and how the civil society working group fits into that. The APRM is an important platform for civil society. Steven's recommendation was that civil society should not tackle the whole APRM questionnaire, which runs to 105 pages. Rather, it should pick up to twelve issues, explain why they matter, decide what evidence to make use of, and make recommendations on how to solve or ameliorate the identified problems. For more on the APRM in Namibia, see <http://ippr.org.na/publication/namibia-african-peer-review-mechanism/>

Graham Hopwood, director of the IPPR, then spoke about the institution's long involvement with the APRM. For most of that time, the government of Namibia did not appear interested in joining. Namibia's ascension to the APRM in January 2017 is an opportunity for civil society to be placed at the centre of the process. It has an opportunity to make input, shape the process and will be involved.

Cayley Clifford, Research Scholar at SAIIA, presented a brief recap of the civil society workshop held in Windhoek in April and introduced the governance issues identified then.

The participants were then asked to write down their top three governance issues and provide evidence for each.

In discussion thereafter, the following issues were submitted:

- 1) Weak separation of powers between the executive and parliament: **executive dominance** in Namibia undermines this. Weak opposition, mistrust of civil society.
- 2) Lack of access to **land for agriculture and housing**: eight other participants had also included land as a key issue. A member of civil society from the Shack Dwellers Association also spoke about the lack of availability of land tenure.
- 3) **(Youth) unemployment** crisis: Six other participants also included youth unemployment as an issue.
- 4) **Institutionalised corruption**:
- 5) **Lack of policy coherence**: good policies exist but they don't work well together. This results in poor political and economic management. There is also poor monitoring and evaluation in the government processes and a lack of independent monitoring. There is also lack of capacity and leadership to implement policies: Namibia's policies are not all that bad. For example, it has a decent national housing policy but its stipulations are ignored and some have no idea that it exists. Lack of accountability: monitoring and evaluation, and poor government coordination.
- 6) **Slow law reform process**: laws are outdated and Namibians have trouble accessing legal representation
- 7) **The role of government**: leveraging state assets. The role of government after 28 years of independence surely should be different. Namibia's high wage bill is unsustainable
- 8) **Access to information**: important for the state and people. Citizens don't know enough about policy development because it is not a democratic process. It is closed and often written by outside consultants. The absence of access to information makes it hard for people to access other rights. Government should also invest further in data collection.
- 9) **Corporate citizenship is failing**: the collective effort to address problems. 'Enterprise Namibia' - effort needs to come together under one umbrella, for example, Corporate citizenship should be at the forefront of that effort but there is a lack of mentorship.
- 10) **Manufacturing and mining**: Namibia imports even its basic foods.
- 11) **Education**: Middlemen between university and financial institutions are problematic. Bursaries and student loans should be moved to the universities. Moreover, the curriculum doesn't answer the human capital problem in Namibia. The government has prioritised professionals over vocational training.
- 12) **Healthcare**: access to quality healthcare for the disabled. Policy information is lacking. Disabled people don't know they can have access to free health care or where those services are located.

- 13) **Domestic violence:** protection, safety and mental health for women. The number of social workers in Namibia is decreasing. This is related to issues faced by vulnerable groups.
- 14) **Inequality of society, poverty** and the policy framework that is trying to address it: there is complete misalignment.
- 15) **Migration and stateless people:** citizenship is defined so narrowly in the Constitution.
- 16) **Management of natural resources:** especially water and policies around dams. Water is being pumped out of the Orange River and money is being spent on structures that will not address the problem where it is located. Water governance is a key challenge. This includes governing common water systems with neighboring countries and the blue economy.
- 17) **Digital divide** between rural and urban areas

Steven then briefed the participants on the practical aspects of the APRM and developing a written civil society submission, using former SAIIA colleague, Terence Corrigan's paper, a step-by-step guide to constructing an effective submission [http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/pubs/books/aprm\\_boo\\_corrigan\\_20080630\\_en.pdf](http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/pubs/books/aprm_boo_corrigan_20080630_en.pdf)

Steven also presented the governance issues identified through SAIIA's desktop research, namely **access to information, corruption, the judicial process, ethnic divisions, land, gender equality, and a dominant party system.**

In the second session, facilitated by Graham, the above points were condensed into larger issues and placed in a table detailing the evidence and the resources that could potentially be drawn upon, and the civil society member or group responsible for drafting some material on that issue.

| Issue                                     | Evidence/Resources   | Person/Group Responsible for draft |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Separation of powers, executive dominance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tim Hughes: 'SADC Parliaments' paper</li> <li>• Andre: 'Agenda for Change' paper</li> <li>• This section should be a critical review of the current system/structure</li> <li>• Possible constitutional amendments or review?</li> <li>• Local Government should also be reviewed.</li> </ul> | Prof Andre du Pisani               |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Land                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Conference in early October, which will produce information</li> <li>• Organised according to: access to urban land, land for agriculture, women's land rights, inheritance, and land audit.</li> </ul> | <p>NUST<br/>Alison<br/>John Mendelsohn<br/>UN Habitat</p>          |
| Unemployment and Research and Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Out of school youth</li> <li>• NSA Report</li> <li>• Ministry of Education and UNICEF report</li> </ul>  | <p>National Youth Service<br/>LRRRI Micheal Mcuba</p>              |
| Corruption                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> <li>• Failure of the ACC and prosecutor general</li> <li>• Problematic procedure</li> <li>• Data available from banking sector (NAFISA, the Auditing Company)</li> </ul>                 | <p>IPPR<br/>NID<br/>Journalists from the Namibian</p>              |
| Lack of policy coherence                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and Evaluation</li> <li>• Structural issues</li> <li>• Lack of capacity</li> <li>• High public wage bill</li> </ul>   | <p>IPPR</p>  |
| Access to information                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation</li> <li>• Rural/urban divide</li> </ul>   | <p>Action Namibia<br/>Editor's Forum<br/>Media Ombudsman: John</p> |
| Education                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCHE Reports on higher education</li> </ul>  | <p>NIED<br/>NQA</p>  |

|                                 |  |  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
|                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GIZ Reports on vocational training</li> <li>• Policy from TUKNA</li> <li>• Institutional audits from Uni of Namibia</li> <li>• Issue of adult education</li> <li>• Students with disabilities</li> <li>• Urban/rural education</li> <li>• Teenage pregnancies, early childhood development</li> </ul> | <p>NTA</p> <p>Electoral Commission</p> <p>UNICEF State of the Children Report – Namibia 2015 (human resource plan)</p> |
| Healthcare                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the disabled</li> <li>• Treatment at hospitals</li> <li>• Sexual reproduction and sterilization</li> <li>• Enquiry into the health service</li> <li>• Mental health (DHS results) (Shaun Whitaker)</li> </ul>   | <p>NAPA</p> <p>Namibian Women’s Health Experts</p> <p>TONATA</p>   |
| Gender based violence           |  | <p>Legal Assistance Centre</p> <p>Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare</p>   |
| Inequality and Poverty          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social welfare</li> </ul>   | <p>Same groups as unemployment</p>   |
| Corporate Citizenship           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate governance umbrella</li> <li>• Emphasis on corporate citizenship</li> </ul>   | <p>Steve</p>   |
| Governance of natural resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Mining</li> </ul>   | <p>Steve</p> <p>Chris Brown</p>  |

|                  |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|
|                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue and green economies</li> <li>• Manufacturing</li> </ul> | Chamber of Environment<br>LSE Research<br>Ministry of Water and Agriculture |
| Judicial Process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to information</li> </ul>                             | LSE   |

The way forward: the IPPR will drive the process. In the coming weeks, Graham will contact the relevant people and ask them to write short descriptions of the issues identified and send through key source materials. The deadline for drafts is the end of August 2018. Participants should contribute about 1000 words + at a time but they may also submit shorter pieces, while maintaining a bibliography.

Another meeting will take place prior to the writing. SAIIA's next visit is scheduled for 3-7 September 2018 at this point.