THE AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM

Lessons from the Pioneers

Ross Herbert and Steven Gruzd

SAIIA

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FOREWORD

No publication could be as timely as Ross Herbert and Steven Gruzd's *African Peer Review Mechanism: Lessons from the Pioneer Countries*. This comprehensive and thought-provoking resource comes at a time of heightened interest in governance as a key element in African development strategy. A refreshingly candid, deeply penetrating and thoroughly informed account of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process, this illuminating volume is the first full-length book of its kind, indeed the first academic study to delve into this novel process so deeply. The sheer range is impressive, extending across all aspects of the APRM process. Herbert and Gruzd's work provides a well-researched look at the historical relevance, contextual background, theoretical constructs, and persuasive rationale for the APRM process.

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, Africa has been going through what may be termed a major governance revolution, a revolution that is quite different from the struggle for political independence. Political independence has always been viewed by African leaders as a vehicle for the development of the economies of their various countries. But as economic independence does not automatically follow political independence, there is a new struggle in governance to achieve this goal. For there emerged many post-independence leaders who typically believed that they could rule over societies on their own terms without having to consult and include their citizens in political governance. Some of them even turned the presidency into a lifetime position, while one-party political systems flourished on the continent. By the late 1980s, most African states found themselves caught in the grips of a crisis of governance and political legitimacy.

The need for a new governance regime in Africa to address these challenges led to initiatives in the areas of governance and democracy as reflected in the agenda of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad), which signified the advent of a new dawn in Africa's governance regime. To ensure that progress on democracy, human rights, good governance and sound development practices highlighted in the Nepad initiative become irreversible, the APRM has been adopted as an African self-monitoring mechanism. It is one of the most original concepts emerging from the Nepad

document, which has captured the attention of the Group of Eight (G8) and other aid donors at a time when the focus of the international community is shifting elsewhere, signifying the unique position of the APRM in African development discourse.

It is within this context that we highly commend Herbert and Gruzd's pivotal volume, which, among other things, analyses expectations, reality, challenges and experiences emerging out of the APRM process. This book's balanced representation of the critical issues of this extraordinary experiment, the scholarly assessment of the APRM institutions, national and continental, the focus on points of contention – which is of considerable interest to both veterans of the process and anyone new to the APRM – as well as the APRM comparative timeline make a significant contribution to the body of practical and theoretical knowledge that supports the APRM process.

Without any doubt, peer review is one of the boldest ideas that African leaders have come up with in the recent past. It is potentially the most important reform ever to emerge from the continent. Peer review may mark the start of a new kind of African diplomacy. Its success will determine whether Nepad remains a dream or becomes a reality. If African leaders fail to hold each other strictly accountable to the new principles they espouse, the renaissance of the continent will not take place.

The launch of the APRM and the completion of the first three country reports (on Ghana, Rwanda and Kenya) and their actual peer reviews, as critically assessed in this book, represent a transition to an important stage of Africa's commitment to the consolidation of political, economic and corporate governance as well as for the continent's socio-economic development. It is a landmark achievement for Africa.

The country case studies are particularly detailed and instructive. The study of Ghana, Africa's APRM trailblazer, is worth noting. For us, in Ghana, the APRM is seen as a major element in the country's quest for a democratic, accountable and transparent government, for fostering a more positive image of Ghanaian institutions and attracting much-needed private investment. We see the APRM process as having considerable potential for improving the quality of governance in all areas of activity, including better delivery to meet the valid and growing demand of Ghanaians for a share in accelerated and more effective development. It has provided investment opportunities as well as opportunities for increased aid flows, increased political and economic stability and increased job creation. Such stability would decrease the risk factor for investors, both local and international, implying that the country would become a more attractive destination for commercial and industrial investment.

Significantly, too, *The African Peer Review Mechanism: Lessons from the Pioneers* emphasises the crucial need for active participation of civil society organisations in the APRM process to make it viable and credible. It assesses

the extent to which the mechanism provides an opportunity for civil society and government to interact in order to achieve the desired objectives. For the first time, civil society is given a role in African governance systems. Similarly significant and instructive are the lessons learnt from experience about the dynamics of the APRM process thus far. These lessons help to improve the processes, procedures and rules that will enable government and civil society to make the most of the opportunity that the APRM provides.

The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) is so far the only institution in Africa to have conducted such a wide range of research, facilitation and training and actively to have participated in the series of workshops on the APRM process. The commendable pioneering efforts of SAIIA could go a long way to providing considerable assistance to both governments and civil society groups in meeting the challenges of the process.

While one may not necessarily accept every idea or rationale that the authors have proffered, we can all agree that Herbert and Gruzd have clearly and concisely articulated the main themes of the APRM process. Their approach will surely stimulate greater attention of scholars, researchers and policy makers, particularly the member states of the African Union, to further intellectual exploration of the prospects and the promise of the APRM process.

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This guide book is based on a five-year research and training programme by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). SAIIA has conducted African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) training in over a dozen countries and interviewed civil society, government, research institutes and APRM governing council members in Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Mauritius, and South Africa.

The book has a difficult three-fold mission: to provide a concise overview of the APRM process, to explain how it unfolded in each of the five pioneer countries and to extract the key lessons from these early experiences. It is challenging because there are no textbooks yet written on the APRM. Only a few conferences and conference reports have offered critiques of the process, and the official APRM country reports offer little detail on the procedures used. The vast majority of the information and conclusions presented here had to be drawn from personal interviews with participants in these early processes, who have generously offered their time and insights. This volume tries to synthesise these insights in a simple and straightforward manner.

There are too many participants to name here and many offered information on a confidential basis. The authors would like to offer our thanks to all of those who lent their time as well as the many other individuals and organisations whose energy and commitment have helped the APRM become a reality. They include researchers, governing council members, civil society, Focal Points and government officials.

The continent as a whole owes appreciation to the thousands of participants in the Ghanaian, Kenyan, Rwandan, Mauritian, Algerian and South African peer reviews, as well as those in Nigeria, Mozambique, Uganda and many other places where the process is still unfolding. Their optimism that participation and dedication to peer review can make a difference has been inspiring to witness.

We would also like to express special appreciation to the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons and the continental APRM Secretariat, who deserve the continent's gratitude for keeping this important process credible and on

track, even when their hard work largely falls outside the public spotlight. The African Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) also deserve credit as strategic partners to the APRM process, who have assisted greatly with country reviews, advice on the process and many other forms of support.

This book was a team effort. Its production pushed other responsibilities onto the rest of the SAIIA governance research team. And it required a great deal of fact checking, proofreading and editorial advice. We would like to thank in particular Terence Corrigan, who provided a wide range of editorial assistance. He also conducted in-depth analysis of the APRM Questionnaire and comparisons of the Programmes of Action, which informs the discussion of those subjects here. Corrigan played a key role in SAIIA's work on the South African APRM as did former project researcher Peroshni Govender. Faten Aggad played an important role in comparison of the Programmes of Action. Often under very tight deadlines, Corrigan, Aggad, Kwaku Asante-Darko and George Katito contributed to the analysis of various versions of the South African APRM report and Programme of Action and they allowed this book to go forward by continuing to provide training workshops to a variety of civil society organisations in many African countries.

The authors also thank the staff and management of SAIIA for their input and advice, and the Royal Netherlands Embassy in South Africa for their continued support of SAIIA's Governance and APRM Programme and for making this book possible.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACEG	African Centre of Economic Growth
ADB	African Development Bank
AGF	Africa Governance Forum
AGF-VI	Sixth Africa Governance Forum
AHSI	African Human Security Initiative
AICC	African Institute of Corporate Citizenship
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AIPA	Africa Institute for Policy Analysis and Economic Integration
APR	African Peer Review
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ASDR	African Security Dialogue and Research
AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BIS	Baseline Indicator Set
CACG	Commonwealth Association of Corporate Governance
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CCOAIB	Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base
CDD-Ghana	Centre for Democratic Development, Ghana
CDW	Community Development Worker
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEPA	Centre for Policy Analysis
CESTRAR	Centrale des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Rwanda
CLADHO	Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Defense des Droits de l'Homme au Rwanda
COPPER	Candid, Open, Participatory, Planned, Exemplary, Robust
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CRM	Country Review Mission
CRT	Country Review Team
CSAR	Country Self-Assessment Report
CSM	Country Support Mission
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOSOCC	Economic, Social and Cultural Council
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
EISA	Electoral Institute of Southern Africa
FATF	Financial Action Task Force

Femnet	African Women's Development and Communication Network
FODEP	Foundation for Democratic Process
GII	Global Integrity Index
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome
HSGIC	Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IASB	International Accounting Standards Board
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
Idasa	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IDEG	Institute for Democracy and Governance
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
IERI	Institute for Economic Research on Innovation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
ISSER	Institute for Statistical, Social and Economic Research
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KEPSA	Kenya Private Sector Alliance
KIPPRA	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Analysis
KIST	Kigali Institute of Science, Technology and Management
LDLG	Ligue des Droits de personne dans la région des Grand Lacs
LTA	Lead Technical Agency
MACOSS	Mauritius Council of Social Service
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NACTU	National Council of Trade Unions
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NC	National Commission
NCCE	National Council for Civic Education
NCS	National Co-ordinating Structure
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
Nepad	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NGC	National Governing Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNSC	National Nepad Steering Committee

OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCI	Objective, Standards, Criteria and Indicators
OSSREA	Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa
PEF	Private Enterprise Foundation
PGC	Provincial Governing Council
POA	Programme of Action
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
ROSC	Reports on Observance of Standards and Codes
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs
Salga	South African Local Government Association
SANCO	South African National Civics Organisation
Sangoco	South African Non-Governmental Organisation Coalition
SAQ	Self-Assessment Questionnaire
SAWID	South African Women in Development
Sonarwa	Societe nouvelle d'assuarance au Rwanda
TRI	Technical Research Institute
TRT	Technical Review Team
TSA	Technical Support Agency
T-SA	Transparency South Africa
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women's Development
WANEP	West African Network for Peacebuilding
WHO	World Health Organisation
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

INTRODUCTION

This book is divided into five sections. Part I gives a broad overview of this unique and difficult undertaking and includes a concise summary of the APRM rules, with chapters on the stages and institutions of peer review. Part II looks at the governance of the process at national level, and the various research, public consultation and validation options used in the pioneer countries. Part III presents an analysis of the politics of peer review, how civil society can become involved and influence the process, and suggestions for the way forward. Part IV has detailed case studies of the Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, Mauritius and South African processes. Part V consists of several useful appendices.

Throughout, we have sought to illustrate the human and political dynamics that animate the process. Understanding these dynamics is vital to any successful consensus-building exercise. Where possible, we have sought to make constructive recommendations for changes to the overall process and offer strategies that will enable future participants in peer review to get the most out of the opportunity it affords.

This book is part of a broader effort to improve understanding of the APRM to assist civil society and governments in helping the system live up to its promise. It is based on a five-year research project by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). The conclusions expressed here are based on a detailed analysis of the founding APRM documents, discussions with various members of the APRM Secretariat, the Panel of Eminent Persons, national Focal Points and in-depth interviews with many civil society and governing council participants in Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and Mauritius. Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda have completed their first review and are involved in implementing and monitoring their Programmes of Action. South Africa was reviewed by heads of state in July 2007 and Mauritius, which got an early start, then stalled midway through the process, is regaining momentum.

SAIIA was actively involved with civil society in all five countries. The institute facilitated a civil society conference for Rwanda, conducted training workshops in Ghana and Kenya, worked with the Mauritius Council of

Social Services (an umbrella body of civic groups) to prepare a civil society submission, and at the behest of the Malawi government, conducted an assessment of the country's governance based on the APRM Questionnaire. In the South African process, SAIIA made a substantial written submission in conjunction with other research institutions, worked with other civil society organisations to press for a more open and inclusive process and later served as one of four research institutes commissioned to assemble various public inputs into the draft Country Self-Assessment Report.

The APRM has important ramifications for African diplomacy, aid and investment levels, and the long-term evolution of political and economic thought on the continent. Much academic, diplomatic and journalistic analysis has focused on the limits of the APRM: Is it too broad to be effective? Will it remedy the situations of nations embroiled in full-blown crises? Will it be credible and transparent? Those are important questions, but none should detract from recognition of the important opportunity that the APRM offers. Nor should such questions distract civil society and governments from studying how best to use the APRM opportunity to catalyse positive political and economic reform. That perspective – of the APRM as opportunity – informs the central purpose of this book.