

**LAUNCH OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN APRM MONITORING PROJECT (AMP) REPORT: PROGRESS IN
IMPLEMENTING THE APRM- VIEWS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY**

**RESPONDENT COMMENTS BY
ZANELE TWALA
COUNTRY DIRECTOR: ACTIONAID INTERNATIONAL SOUTH AFRICA**

Good Afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is indeed a great honour to be invited to this important launch of the South Africa APRM Monitoring Project Report. I was invited to be a respondent in this launch. I have spent some time asking myself what a respondent does. I even thought maybe I should have requested a brief from the organizers. After careful thought and consideration, I decided that I will give my own definition to the task of being a respondent and just get on with it. This is exactly what I intend to do.

I would like to begin by commending the South African Institute for International Affairs (SAIIA); the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) and the Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AFRIMAP) for embarking on this project and producing such an excellent report, whose objective is to empower civil society in Southern Africa and the APRM states to track the implementation of the APRM in their countries. I have noted that the aim of the report is to complement South Africa's first and Second implementation reports by providing direct feedback, through the voices of civil society organisations on how issues mentioned in the Country Review Report have been addressed since 2007.

In addition I would like to acknowledge the presence of the Public Protector Advocate Thuli Madonsela in our midst, thanks for honouring the invite. It really means a lot for us Civil society organisations. By way of briefly responding to the report I would like to make the following comments:

The launch of the APRM Monitoring Project Report, comes at a very critical time in our country when there are a number of threats to our democracy in the form of the intended promulgation of the Protection of information Bill ; Detoriating relations between the media and government, threats to democratic institutions like the office of the Public Protector; human rights commission; the independence of the Judiciary and the dominance of sections of the ruling party in public policy dialogues. This context requires that Civil society must speak out and reclaim the public policy dialogue space.

General Comments:

- The APRM is not just a technical process of compliance, but rather a process that should be embedded in our continual analysis and measurement of the performance and progress of our country in advancing democracy and good governance.
- The relevance of the APRM in dealing with topical issues enhances the involvement of civil society in these assessments and debates.
- It is important for me to mention the concern of how the participation of civil society in the APRM has been polarised, between elitist think tanks; research organisations and grassroots mass based civil society organisations. This polarisation is something that was evident in the beginning when we drafted our Country Review Report, to a large extent it still continues we as civil society must **detest, reject** and deal with it. We must use the opportunity of launching this report, to get all of civil society together to talk about these issues as a collective.

THE REPORT

General

- Congratulations to the team, it is an excellent report indeed.
- I agree and concur with the analysis and welcome most of the findings of the report.
- Noted the reflection in the report that the momentum of the APRM Process has been somewhat lost.
- In my view the APRM process must withstand the notion that it happens in a country or is linked or dependent on the enthusiasm of particular person. I note with sadness that with the departure of President Thabo Mbeki and the coming in of President Zuma the APRM process has somewhat not enjoyed the same prominence.

Service Delivery:

My feeling is that the Report has been kind. I honestly appreciate the issue of it being complementary however, i do feel that on Basic Education the rating should have been **red**. We really have a crisis in this country on education. As a country we will need to apply our minds critically in responding to this crisis. This is one area where I feel we have not done well at all.

Access to Information & Protection of the media

I agree with what has been said by Raymond Louw from SANEF, it is a missed opportunity that the report has not rated this section, as it is a topical issue in the country at the moment and would have been an opportunity to spark civil society /public debate on this. This is a major threat to our democracy. As already mentioned by other speakers we have to find a way of reporting on the issues that were part of the NPoA even though there were no commitments made.

Representation

On the issue of public participation, it is indeed important that we see the launch of a report like this one as an opportunity to involve the whole of civil society in public policy debate,, not just the elite of civil society but also the mass based civil society organisations on the ground. I know that the report has given it a Yellow. I do agree that progress has been made in this regard.

Corruption

I was glad to see corruption receiving a Red. I would like to support the findings of the report on the issue of not dealing vigorously with corruption and the fact that the lack of poor legislation in protecting whistleblowers further exacerbates the problem.

These are my brief response comments .