

**Statement by African civil society on the postponement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Extraordinary Summit of the African Peer Review Mechanism Heads of State and Government Forum, Nairobi, September 2015**

We, the undersigned representatives of African civil society, are extremely disappointed at the sudden, unexpected and unexplained cancellation of the APRM Summit, scheduled to take place on 11 September 2015 in Nairobi Kenya. The Summit, initiated by H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya as the new chairman of the APRM Forum, was meant “to steer the Mechanism, mobilise resources for effective APRM delivery and raise its profile as the authoritative governance index for Africa”. Africa had high hopes and expectations that this Summit would have reinvigorated the APRM’s purpose, institutions and processes, and addressed the critical challenges facing APRM.

We further recall the decisions of the APRM Forum in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in June 2014, to inject fresh impetus into the continent’s efforts to commit to accountable and participatory governance assessments. The Nairobi Summit would have built on this momentum, but its cancellation jeopardises this progress.

Civil society recognises the continued relevance of the APRM principles as espoused in the NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance of 2002, which gave birth to the APRM. We appreciate the deliberate and sustained efforts of the APRM institutions to engage a diverse and broad range of non-state actors in the production of the Country Review Reports, and recognises the commitment to participatory engagement this practice represents. The APRM has demonstrated its usefulness in deepening democracy, promoting good governance and enhancing popular participation.

The APRM currently faces grave challenges and civil society has noted with concern how these difficulties have impacted on both the function and the outputs of the APRM at continental, regional and national levels. The most recent APRM Country Review Reports were produced in 2013. Only 17 of the 35 voluntary member states have produced their respective Country Review Reports and no country has yet successfully concluded a second review.

Civil society questions the commitment to the APRM of those member states that are currently several years in arrears on their annual membership contributions. This has negatively impacted the financial viability of the APRM and its ability to fulfil its mandate, which has diluted the African ownership of the mechanism.

For a mechanism dedicated to promoting good governance in Africa, the APRM’s internal governance processes have, at times, failed to live up to their own principles. Civil society is also concerned that the APRM Secretariat has been without a permanent Chief Executive Officer since 2008, which continues to undermine the ability of the Secretariat to implement reforms.

The cancellation of the Summit deprives all stakeholders of the opportunity to address critical issues currently undermining the spirit and function of the APRM.

We therefore call upon the Chairperson of the APRM Forum to urgently convene the 2<sup>nd</sup> Extraordinary Summit at the earliest opportunity, which must:

1. Urgently fill the vacant leadership positions within the APRM structures, in particular the Chief Executive Officer of the APRM Secretariat and other senior staff;
2. Review the current funding mechanism to support a financially healthy, reliable and sustainable APRM, and urge all members to pay their annual contributions and all arrears owing;
3. Develop an induction programme for new Heads of State and Government to ensure that they are fully familiar with the APRM, its operations and objectives;
4. Review the status of member states that have acceded to the APRM but have made little progress towards their self-assessment or Country Review Reports and determine the conditions under which membership can be temporarily suspended until such time as a member state is ready to fulfil its voluntary obligations;
5. Make public all APRM National Programme of Action Implementation Reports, and encourage more visible implementation of the National Programme of Action recommendations;
6. Create space for civil society to engage the APRM at all levels to enhance the work of the mechanism, including participation in all APRM meetings;
7. Demonstrate the value of the APRM Reports by encouraging debate at the highest levels of government, both continentally and nationally, regarding the findings and lessons learned from the APRM reports;

Signed on this the 9th day of September 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya