

**South African APRM Popular Sensitisation (SAPS) Project**  
**Civil Society Training Workshop**  
**Via Zoom, 31 August 2020, 10h00-12h30**

Report by Nhlakanipho Macmillan Zikalala

**Welcome**

The meeting was opened by Steve Gruzd who welcomed all participants and briefly described the format of the meeting. He stated that the meeting would begin with an opening statement from Neuma Grobbelaar, followed by his brief explanation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and a presentation from Luanda Mpungose on the significance of youth participation in the process. Thereafter there would be a question and answer session.

**Opening Statement**

**Neuma Grobbelaar, Director of Research South African Institute of International Affairs**

Ms Grobbelaar began by thanking everyone for being part of the conversation and acknowledged the participation of the Child Commissioner of the Western Cape (Christina Naidoo). She went on to mention that there was a broad spectrum of youth organisations, youth advocates, and organisations focusing on the rights of the child and the challenges of our youth represented.

Grobbelaar also stressed that both globally and domestically we find ourselves in a uniquely challenging and difficult time. Human beings are not only living in the COVID-19 age, in that they are also living in a time of extreme polarisation in societies and between countries. The planet has never been as vulnerable as it is now. The global economy is faltering, but importantly, COVID-19 has served to expose deep fissures, inequalities and challenges in our societies. South Africa is no exception. Even before COVID-19 struck our shores, we registered the highest unemployment rate in South Africa in 20 years at 30.1%. The South African youth is particularly affected, representing in 2018, 54% of those unemployed. Notwithstanding that Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution (Bill of Rights) underscored the inalienable rights of our children as provided for by section 28, it is self-evident that we all have fallen short in meeting their expectations, hopes and dreams. This is why this APRM review process is so important. It provides an opportunity for all of us to honestly reflect and debate as a society how to address these challenges.

In closing, Grobbelaar wished all participants the very best in their deliberations. She went on to say that "I also want to encourage you to think about actionable, implementable proposals, and more importantly, about the need to think carefully about accountability mechanisms in your discussions. How do we ensure that all our leaders meet our high expectations and what

can we do to build a fairer, more just, prosperous and caring society not only for our youth, but for all of us?" Finally, she extended a vote of thanks to SIDA, the funder of SAIIA's APRM CSO Project and stated that she is looking forward to the outcomes of this meeting and the final submission.

### **What is the APRM**

#### **Steven Gruzd: Head of the African Governance and Diplomacy Programme at SAIIA**

Before, defining the APRM, Mr Gruzd explained SAIIA's role in the process. He stated that SAIIA has been in existence since 1934 as an independent, non-governmental think tank on international affairs. It has three major programmes, which include those on governance, economic diplomacy, resource governance and a robust youth programme. The institute has worked on APRM since 2002. It has provided research, analysis, training, and consultation to the APRM Secretariat. Furthermore, the institute has sensitised Civil Society Organisations in different countries, worked on questionnaire revision and papers on bottlenecks to development and the APRM's expanded mandate. SAIIA offered guidance in the development of CSO written submissions, drawing on experiences in 2018 in [Namibia](#), and 2020 in [Botswana](#).

In defining the APRM, Gruzd said the APRM was established in 2003, as Africa's premier governance self-assessment and promotion tool. APRM reviews focus on four broad thematic areas: Democracy and Political Governance, Economic Governance and Management, Corporate Governance and Socio-Economic Development. African countries accede voluntarily and after the review, the country starts to address identified governance challenges, through implementing its National Programme of Action (NPoA). The APRM is an example of a Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (MSI), in that it is not merely a government review, but a country review, which brings together different stakeholders, including government, civil society and the private sector to identify key governance concerns. The APRM currently has 40 member states, with 22 having been through the full review process. See <http://aprm-au.org/>

South Africa first acceded in 2003, which means the second review was much delayed. The country can be said to be ostensibly well governed, but there are key challenges, which include poverty, inequality, unemployment, environment, corruption, state capture, and management of State-Owned Enterprises. The aim of the SAPS project is to build on SAIIA's experience training and empowering civil society and parliamentarians – applying the same model used in Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Tanzania, Lesotho, Uganda and Botswana. The main task at hand is to offer guidance in developing a written submission by an APRM CSO Working Group. He further explained that SAIIA targeted people working in youth organisations to help them co-create a written submission. On this note, participants were encouraged to start thinking about some of the most pressing issues confronting the youth in South Africa. It is these issues that will be included in the written submission and they need not be more than twelve. He went on to say that SAIIA will be available to compensate all those who will be involved in the

writing process. Furthermore, SAIIA will provide a dissemination strategy so that the written submission has a broader reach.

## **Youth Participation**

### **Luanda Mpungose: Researcher in the African Governance and Diplomacy Programme at SAIIA**

Ms Mpungose began her presentation by stressing that young people should participate in governance issues. She mentioned that since her involvement on governance issues from 2016, youth participation has been minimal. Therefore, the APRM as a premier project for enhancing good governance in Africa needs to work with the youth. For this to happen, the youth itself must advocate for inclusion on APRM related projects which must be aligned with some of the existing projects within the African Union. The written submission should treat youth as a cross cutting issue because all governance issues have an impact on the youth. Youth has a growing centre at the continental level and their issues must be addressed in a meaningful manner.

Reflecting on her occasional paper titled [\*Africa's Diverging Approaches to Youth Inclusion and Participation\*](#) published by SAIIA in 2020, Ms Mpungose reiterated that to adequately harness youth inclusion and participation, all African countries need to empower their youth and create an enabling environment for young people to be an integral part of development. African countries need to go beyond the narrow definition of participation and inclusion – characterised by the delivery of basic services by the state to young people – to rather empower and elevate youth to decision-making. Notwithstanding this, it is important to state that SAIIA's role in the process is to offer guidance instead of imposing which issues should be selected as being of paramount of importance in drafting the written submission.

## **Discussion & Closing**

It was realised that having a timeline for the purposes of drafting a written submission is very important. On this note, it was agreed that there will be a training seminar on 22 September 2020 where a step-by-step process will be discussed in terms of what needs to be done. Furthermore, it was reasoned that buy-in from other countries is very important in order to strengthen the process. Furthermore, all participants acknowledged that knowing the kinds of people that will be involved in the country review mission is very important. Participants were given assurance that they will be notified accordingly of the date for the training seminar and data bundles will be provided to those who cannot afford to by them.