

South African APRM Popular Sensitisation (SAPS) Project

Civil Society Training Workshop Via Zoom,

22 September 2020, 10h00-12h30

Report by Nhlakanipho Macmillan Zikalala

Welcome

The meeting was opened by Steven Gruzd, Head of SAIIA's African Governance and Diplomacy Programme, who reiterated that the project aims to produce a youth focused civil society submission for the second review of South Africa through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process. He urged all participants to avail themselves to join a working group that will be responsible for identifying important issues that affect the youth and drafting a civil society submission.

Presentations

Steven Gruzd: Head of African Governance and Diplomacy Program at SAIIA

The APRM is a tool for sharing experiences, reinforcing best practices, identifying deficiencies, and assessing capacity-building needs to foster policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration. Member countries within the APRM undertake self-monitoring in all aspects of their governance and socio-economic development. The APRM is regarded as being an open and participatory tool for enhancing good governance in member countries. It achieves this by encouraging public dialogue and setting new norms which promote good governance. South Africa was first reviewed in 2007 and has since published three implementation reports. Its second review is due in 2021. Due to a wide array of issues that affect the youth in South Africa, a youth focused civil society submission is of paramount importance. Civil society organisations (CSOs) can use this opportunity to push for an inclusive and a consultative process. SAIIA would provide support, training, and experience for CSOs in developing their written submission. Mr Gruzd proceeded to discuss various APRM structures - see appendix A below.

Mr. Thulani Tshefuta: APRM National Governing Council in South Africa

Mr Tshefuta began by extending a vote of thanks to SAIIA for the opportunity to participate in the webinar and acknowledged SAIIA for its work on the APRM in South Africa. He mentioned that the APRM is a self-owned African process, which allows African countries to share their

lessons. National ownership of the APRM is also important, and this cannot be achieved unless all sectors of the South African society are included.

Mr Tshefuta said that the NGC has developed a scientific rigor of participation by working close with various national structures, which include among others, the Focal Point (Senzo Mchunu, Minister of Public Service and Administration). Furthermore, the NGC works very closely with the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation in developing a roadmap to enhance the review process. Drawing on previous experiences, the NGC also wants to focus on communications to ensure that there is national coverage of the process. Mr Tshefuta added: "We will have thematic round tables and go to the ground focusing on community engagements. It is important to say that people should not be afraid to engage the NGC so that the work done is consolidated. We want all views to find expression".

Dr Patrick Sokhela, Representative of the APRM Focal Point, Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)

Dr Sokhela stressed the inextricably linked relationship between the rule of law and good governance. In doing so, he defined the rule of law as a cornerstone for developing a well-functioning state and society. Through legal frameworks, the rule of law ensures accountability. However, once those in power deviate from the rule of law, society starts witnessing corruption and governance failures.

Graham Hopwood, Director of the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), Namibia

Mr Hopwood shared his experiences of the Namibian APRM process. He mentioned that the Namibian government was hostile at first due to a lack of trust, but ended up working with civil society when it became clear that the group working on a submission had good intentions. The NGC was set up in late 2019 and initially was overwhelmingly represented by people aligned with the ruling party. This was challenged by CSOs and more people were added to the NGC to ensure that all stakeholders were included. He cautioned that the same may happen in South Africa and at some point, CSOs may have to stand up against inadequacies and this can only happen if they are well informed about the rules. He also added that: "When one makes a comparison between South Africa and Namibia, it can be noted that civil society in Namibia is not as organised. Furthermore, with Namibia being classified as a middle-income country, many CSOs witnessed cuts to civil society donor funding and this has created financial constraints for many organisations." This created additional challenges for CSOs interested in participating in the APRM.

Maipelo Phale: Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations

Ms Phale noted that the APRM process in Botswana, particularly with regard to drafting a civil society submission, was consultative and inclusive. The Botswana Council of Non-Government Organisations (BOCONGO), as the convenor of the project, was instrumental in bringing CSOs outside the capital in an attempt to ensure national coverage. Although the lockdown due to COVID-19 created constraints, meetings were conducted online. SAIIA was helpful in providing cellular data bundles for those who could not afford them so that no one is left out. She further mentioned that government response has been positive. To ensure this would also be the case in South Africa, CSOs should not seek to indict the government but to build a strong relationship with government officials and let them know of progress to motivate them in moving forward. Furthermore, CSOs in Botswana have shown excitement and commitment in the APRM, which is an important factor to keep the momentum going.

Susan Mwape, Director of Common Cause, Zambia

Ms Mwape mentioned that the Zambian process was one of the longest in the APRM's history. Zambia acceded in 2006 but only completed the review in 2014. In terms of recommendations for the South African process, Ms Mwape stated that prior to the appointment of NGC members, CSOs sent a list of recommended organisations because they had an agreement with the government that it should be composed of representatives from the government, private sector and CSOs. To familiarise themselves with the rules, Zambian CSOs used a guide provided by SAIIA. Mwape stressed that the APRM process is rigorous and can get tough. What is important is that participants should not lose momentum. This was one of the issues which caused the Zambian process to be so lengthy. To keep the momentum going, CSOs should communicate with various media outlets and broadcast all initiatives so that the government is pressured to do its part. She noted that the biggest challenge thus far has been monitoring the national plan of action (NPOA). At times, there can be also be a conflict between the NPOA and the country's National Development Plan.

Lennon Monyae: Youth Focal Point at the APRM Secretariat

Mr Monyae spoke of how the Youth Agenda in the APRM Secretariat commenced in 2017, when the Secretariat started working with SAIIA's Youth Programme, Youth@SAIIA. The APRM subsequently held its first International Youth Symposium on 1-2 July 2019, in N'djamena, Chad, under the theme "The Youth as APRM driving force for good governance in Africa". Declaration and outcome documents called for mainstreaming of youth into all APRM processes. Since then there have been significant achievements, including the establishment of the APRM Youth Network, which aims to link up with other AU programmes and include young people in APRM reviews. The Network will cultivate stakeholder groups at country level to improve collaboration

between governments and the youth. It is mandated to monitor and evaluate progress of existing AU initiatives on youth development. another notable achievement was the Targeted Review on Youth Unemployment in the Republic of Namibia which was focused on articulating important factors that contribute to youth unemployment. In closing, Mr Monyae recommended that the South African youth could contribute effectively in the APRM process by encouraging the Focal Point (Department of Public Service and Administration) and the newly elected APRM NGC to start active youth programmes in country. Furthermore, the youth should fully participate in the second Generation APRM Country Review Process, through advocacy and mobilisation and by taking advantage of the APRM Secretariat based in Midrand, Johannesburg.

Ms. Tessa Doms, Jasoro Consulting

Ms Doms stated that this is the first time SAIIA held this process virtually in South Africa and the Institute would like to be hands on with organisations that are involved. Ms Doms encouraged those who are interested in developing a written submission to engage with SAIIA. The submission will ultimately provide the government with inputs on what the youth think are the main issues in the country.

A Q&A followed the presentations:

What does good governance mean in corrupt South Africa?

Mr Tshefuta responded to this question by saying that the NGC operates on the premise that South Africa has the best legislative framework for the promotion of good governance practices. People should not put all power to the government. He specifically stated: "We cannot wait for the government to account. It is us who must demand accountability. It is us who must make sure that those in power are held to account".

What are the most notable lessons and successes of the NGC from the previous APRM review?

On this question, Mr Tshefuta stated that in the previous APRM review, there were instances where progress achieved due to the APRM was not communicated. The NGC's plan is to integrate previous experiences while drawing on lessons from other countries. Furthermore, to promote national engagement, he said that a webpage will be set up for all national APRM structures, which is currently under construction.

Is the APRM going to ensure implementation?

Dr Sokhela answered the question by saying "if we agree that there are good policies, the question is how can they be implemented?" The representation of Ministers in the NGC is

meant to ensure that there is progress in policy implementation. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that projects and programmes should not be implemented and lead by the government alone. Our solutions should not be to say we want the government to implement this and that. Instead we, as civil society should display our capacity to be able to implement.

Can young people contribute effectively given their lack of experience?

Mr Tshefuta responded by saying that young people can make a contribution and therefore experience should be juxtaposed with potential.

Closing

Steven Gruzd closed the meeting by encouraging all participants to keep the momentum going and to not get discouraged and bored because it is going to be a lengthy process. Ms Luanda Mpungose, Programme Officer in the African Governance and Diplomacy Programme at SAIIA read the statistics in relation to those who showed interests in forming a working group. An overwhelming majority (over 70%) showed interest and availed themselves, while others said they were not sure because they are not yet familiar with the APRM process. It was concluded that a WhatsApp group will be formed so that everyone has a platform to ask questions and get more clarity in terms of how to move the process forward. The next meeting will be on the 8 October 20202 and it would focus on identifying the issues that will form part of a civil society written submission.

Appendix A

The APRM is composed of various governing bodies which can be classified as follows:

Continental Governing Bodies

African Peer Review (APR) Forum

This is a committee made up of all participating Member States' Heads of State and Government. The Forum is the APRM's highest decision-making authority.

APRM Panel

This body is composed of eminent persons from all five of Africa's regions and appointed by the Forum. It is responsible for ensuring the APRM's independence, professionalism and credibility. Panel members are selected and appointed by the Forum for a term of up to four years, with the exception of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson who are appointed for one-year, non-renewable terms.

APRM Focal Point Committee

This committee is made up of the personal representatives of the Heads of State of the participating countries. It is a ministerial body acting as an intermediary between the APR Forum and the APRM Secretariat. It is responsible for administrative and budgetary matters, and reports to the APRM Forum.

APRM Secretariat

The Secretariat provides technical, coordinating, and administrative support services.

National Level Governing Bodies

National Governing Council (NGC)

This is a body that oversees implementation of the APRM process at the national level. In addition to providing guidance in terms of policy direction, the NGC ensures professionalism, credibility, and independence of the national APRM self-assessment and review processes. The NGC is composed of key stakeholder groups from government, civil society, and the private sector, in line with the APRM principle of broad-based participation.

National Focal Point

The APRM Guidelines stipulate that each participating country must have an APR Focal Point in government, to act as a liaison between the continental secretariat and the national APRM structures. This focal point is usually a minister, diplomat, or senior civil servant. In South Africa, Senzo Mchunu has been appointed as a focal point.

National Secretariat

Some countries have a national secretariat who provides assistance with administrative and logistical tasks.