Economic Commission for Africa

**Handbook for African
Civil Society
June 2008**

**African Peer
Review Mechanism
(APRM)**

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Acronyms

NGC	National Governance Commission or Council
FORUM	Forum of Heads of State and Government
TRI	Technical Research Institutes
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
CRM	Country Review Mission
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
CSO	Civil Society Organization
PANEL	Panel of Eminent Persons
NPA	National Programme of Action
CRR	Country Review Report
AU	African Union

Acknowledgements

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Guidelines state that *"The organization of public participation in the APRM process is in itself a central aspect of enhancing the state of governance and socio-economic development in the participating country. Such interactions can build trust, establish and clarify mechanisms for ongoing engagement and empowerment of stakeholders."*

Based on these principles, civil society organizations, particularly those from French-speaking countries, during the African Civil Society Forum held in Addis Ababa on 22-24 March 2007, strongly urged the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) to play a bigger role in building the capacities of civil society organizations so that they could participate actively in the APRM process.

Following the Forum, and as if to translate their words into action, civil society organizations in Central and West Africa called on ECA to support their capacity-building efforts by designing a training manual on the APRM for civil society in French-speaking countries.

The contents of the manual are based on the experiences of the drafters and the lessons learned in countries that have already been reviewed. The eight modules in this manual are the result of a broad consultation with all stakeholders and will provide a framework to guide civil society organizations in their efforts to participate in the APRM implementation process.

Objectives of the manual

This manual contains advice to civil society organizations (CSOs) and their development partners on the priority areas and principal anchors within government and State institutions for the implementation of the APRM process. This is a tool to help CSOs participate more in the APRM process.

Each module of the manual is devoted to these challenges and recognizes the vital importance of strengthening CSOs and giving them some ownership of the development policies of a nation.

The courses are designed to help participants learn how to work positively with the wide range of actors that make up civil society, governments and the private sector, from the beginning of the APRM process to its full implementation, follow-up and assessment. The manual is based on the experience of the consultant and the staff of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), principally of Governance and Public Administration Division (GPAD), who have worked for several years to promote CSOs and the APRM process.

Each module presents an overview of approaches, activities and stages of the APRM process with the effective contribution of civil society. Key definitions are provided at the beginning and reference documents are mentioned at the end of the manual. The annexes (such as the principles of the APRM, the resolutions that led to the creation of the APRM, and the other documents of NEPAD) are appended to the manual. The table of contents will help readers to easily find the paragraphs and sections that are of most interest to them.

1.   Organization of the manual

This manual is organized so as to present a practical view of the commitments that civil society must make vis-à-vis the State and other stakeholders for its effective participation in the APRM implementation process. It recognizes that the level of engagement of civil society could affect its contribution in the different stages of the APRM.

Giving civil society the opportunity to participate in the full process could add an important dimension to the project that has often been missing in previous programmes. Civil society is unique in that it belongs neither to the State nor to the private sector. Consequently, the implementation process would be more effective if it involved all development actors, including civil society, the private sector and the State. However, the courses recognize that there are many problems in trying to reflect the interests of all stakeholders in the APRM process, and that these problems should be resolved for all stakeholders to be able to participate effectively in and take ownership of the process.

2.   Groups targeted by the manual

Participants in the various courses or modules of the manual will have to represent all stakeholders involved in the APRM process, including:

- Governmental institutions (ministries responsible for governance and NEPAD, national governance commissions, parliamentarians and other relevant ministries);
- The private sector, including professional associations;
- Civil society organizations, including religious and public opinion organizations;
- Other development actors and international, bilateral and multilateral partners.

To address all these segments equally and to ensure that they all have the same understanding, the language and level of instruction of the manual have been made accessible to non-specialists.

As they are designed for collective use, the courses offer a standardized framework that can be used as a self-learning tool or for formal training.

The time allocated to cover the full contents of the courses in this manual depends largely on the level of the trainers and their teaching ability, as well as the different course participants. The workshops should be organized with small groups of 30-35 people, to allow for interaction and to make the activity productive and manageable. To generate more interest from participants, it is advisable to include working group sessions, which would allow for greater coverage in the exchange of ideas and the discussions. If possible, participants should be invited from countries that have already undergone the complete APRM review to share their experiences on the subject.

3.   Structure of the courses

The manual is divided into five modules demonstrating how civil society could participate continuously in the different stages of the APRM implementation process. It also includes a preface, an introduction and a conclusion to explain a few key concepts and how civil society could participate effectively in the different parts of the process. These subjects are outlined at the beginning of the manual in order to establish a framework for understanding the engagement of civil society.

Module I
The first module presents the five stages of the APRM:

a)   Preparation and national self-assessment
b)   Country review mission
c)   Drafting of mission report
d)   Submission of country review report and peer review
e)   Presentation and official publication of the report.

Module II
The second module explains the different structures of the APRM at the continental level and at the Country level.

Module III

This module answers the many questions that CSOs have concerning their effective involvement in the APRM process. The manual presents a few recurring points that explain why civil society is misinformed or ignorant about the APRM process.

Module IV

The module presents the areas that have been identified by the APRM for review, including:

- Democracy and political governance
- Economic governance
- Corporate governance
- Socio-economic development.

Module V

This module shows how civil society can participate effectively in the APRM. In this regard, it advises civil society not to wait for the Government's invitation to start considering or planning its role in the APRM process.

Module VI

This module shows the difficulties that civil society faces in its efforts to get involved in the APRM process.

Module VII

This module examines the levels of power that CSOs would have to influence in order to play their role in the APRM process.

Module VIII

This module describes a few experiences of CSOs in the early APRM countries, such as South Africa, Algeria, Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda.

Adopted in March 2003 in Abuja, Nigeria during the 6th Summit of Heads of State and Government on the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is the major and innovative element arising from the ambitious NEPAD programme. While 28 member countries of the African Union have so far acceded to the APRM, only seven of them have completed the process[1], meaning that a series of other countries are in line for reviews.

The APRM is making a unique contribution in promoting good governance and establishing a culture of political dialogue in Africa. As a participatory, consultative and open process, it is built on two pillars that give it credibility: technical competence, which limits attempts at political manipulation of the process, and the principle of inclusion, which makes it an obligation to allow all national actors to participate in the reviews. In addition, the major added value of the APRM relative to other past or present initiatives is the adoption of a national programme action to provide concrete solutions to the problems identified.

The first mechanism of its kind in Africa, the APRM has real potential to promote participatory democracy that can mobilize the political and economic forces of the continent. It serves as a dual contract between African governments and their citizens on the one hand, and between Africa and its development partners, on the other. But above all, the APRM provides a forum for an African voice to talk to Africans and allow them to take ownership of issues related to development in general and governance in particular.

The APRM could be termed a new social contract, because its aim is to make a qualitative change to the nature of the relationship between African governments and their citizens. The launching of NEPAD in 2001 already affirmed the desire of political leadership in African States to forge a new partnership with other major actors such as the private sector and civil society. Recognizing that the private sector and civil society are central actors in governance and development, the African Union decided to emphasize the strengthening of partnerships among the State, the private sector and civil society, in order to promote the effective participation of citizens in the crucial areas of governance and development.

An anlysis of the experiences of the early APRM countries shows clearly that the success of the mechanism depends largely on the involvement of civil society at the national, regional and continental levels. This is why it is important to strengthen this dynamic and to encourage civil society to participate more actively in future reviews.

Even though it constitutes a major challenge for all actors – the State, the private sector

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1   Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, Algeria, South Africa, Benin and Burkina Faso have already completed their assessments. Nigeria and Uganda are waiting to go before their peers.

and civil society – the APRM still represents a formidable platform for advancing the traditional concerns of civil society. CSOs should sieze this opportunity to influence the process at the Country level, the content of the country review reports, and the national programme of action. In so doing, they would be able to foster a national debate on governance, where they could draw attention to their agenda, the victories they have achieved in their many battles, and the obstacles they face generally. Their successes and failures are all important elements that can allow them to contribute positively to the development of the necessary daignoses for the production of the country review reports of member countries. CSOs can also use this mechanism to maintain their influence by making their voice heard and contributing concretely to the identification and analysis of the causes of bad governance, and to propose solutions and participate in their implementation.

As an open and participatory process, the APRM calls on stakeholders to build a platform for national dialogue on governance and on all socio-economic development programmes. In so doing, it reinforces the transparency of public decision-making processes and builds the necessary trust for the pursuit of common goals of national development. Accordingly, the success of the APRM depends primarily on the will to promote the participation of all important actors not only in the reviews, but also in the implementation of national programmes of action. It can provide a great platform for African governments, the private sector, civil society and its external partners to discuss and create a consensus on the state of governance at the Country level.

With regard to the peer review itself, the APRM is a framework for the systematic review of the level of performance of a country by its African peers in an effort to help the peer-reviewed country adopt best practices that should include overall improvements in all aspects and levels of governance. In addition, it can lead to the establishment of meaningful parameters for comparison between participating African States on the subject of governance.

> Good governance means the creation of serious and well-functioning legal and political institutions which citizens consider as being legitimate, which give them power, and in which they participate in making decisions that affect their lives.
>
> (**Kofi A. ANNAN, 1998**).

It is indispensable for participants and instructors to agree on the principal terms and concepts used in this manual. In the following section, we will explain what civil society is, why this sector is unique, how to work concretely with actors in this sector, and how the other stakeholders such as governments and the private sector can collaborate with civil society to deliver good governance and self-maintained development. We will also explain the concept of governance and the benefits it can generate for a given country.

What is civil society?

Civil society or the voluntary sector is often considered one of the three sectors of a modern nation, along with the public sector (government) and the private sector (businesses and the market). Each sector has specific roles and functions to perform in a country's development and each sector is different from the other, even though they are also all interrelated (see figure 1).

The proper functioning of civil society and its different segments at the national and local levels depends largely on the social, economic and political characteristics of countries. Even though civil society does not include government agencies and other entities as wel as businesses, its actors can have many roles to perform in the two other sectors. For example, a businessman working in the private sector may be an active member of the chamber of commerce and local industry or a member of a government commission on trade. While trade associations are considered part of civil society, the businessman's company and the Government entity are not.

Civic engagement and collective actions of civil society

The civil society sector is unique because it offers citizens a forum to meet voluntarily around common values, ideals and interests.[2] The space so created allows State institutions and members of civil society to consult with one another, and to exchange views and information on the problems of the nation. This interaction can be achieved through official or officious channels such as organizations and institutions, and also through collective or individual actions of citizens.

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2   For more information, see research findings in "Global Perspective", Alan Fowler.

Civic engagement is the result of the people's involvement in the economic, social and political spheres of society that affect their lives. This is why a peaceful climate that encourages civic engagement and that is strengthened and governed by legislative and political measures can allow citizens to act collectively in a formally or informal setting.

It should be noted that when collective action originates from civil society and is then taken up by the Government, it can create a powerful mechanism for strengthening the impact of Government policies. This means that a collective action can put the Government under pressure, pushing it to become more accountable to the citizens and to improve the delivery of public services.

Features of civil society organizations

Civil society organizations represent channels through which collective actions can be undertaken. Apart from their role as advocates for common interests, civil society organizations can serve as conduits for resolving problems facing the citizens of a nation, in relation to the delivery of basic services, the Government's socio-economic development policies, etc.

The range of responsibilities reflects the different organizations and institutions that can be classified as civil society organizations. For example, professional associations and trade unions are classified as civil society organizations on the same footing as cultural and religious organizations, independent media, search and rescue organizations, academic and research institutions.

Civil society organizations are thematically diverse, but also have certain structural traits in common. Hence, a civil society organization is:

- An organization with daily and regular operations;
- Owned, managed and operated by private individuals who are not considered officially as being part of the State;
- Not for profit, does not distribute dividends to shareholders or a board of directors, and is not involved in commercial activities;
- Self-managed, which means that it controls its own affairs;
- Voluntary: membership is free and members are not legally bound to participate. In certain cases, membership may be mandatory to allow members to formally practise their profession (trade unions) or their religion (churches, mosques, temples).

In an effort to establish a standard definition that will satisfy all countries, Lester Salomon, Helmut Anheier et al, have developed an International Classification of Non-profit Organizations (ICNPO) that divides organizations into groups and sub-groups based on their thematic area (see Annex 1).

The APRM is carried out in five (5) different stages that are clearly outlined in the base documents, as follows:

Preparation and self-assessment

This is when the country to be reviewed has initial negotiations with the Continental Secretariat, and later hosts a country support mission and signs a memorandum of understanding setting out the objective parameters of the review. Once the country is informed about the applicable guidelines, it appoints a national APRM Focal Point and a National Governance Commission (council) to drive the process, and develops its research and consultation programme. The national focal point is appointed once the country joins the process, before it signs the memorandum.

Thereafter, the country being reviewed starts its self-assessment on the four areas identified, based on updated documents prepared by the APRM Secretariat and other documents provided by national, subregional, regional and international organizations (such as ECA).

This stage ends with the production of a country self-assessment report (CSAR) and a national programme of action (NPA).

Country review mission (CRM)

This stage is conducted by a group of independent African experts under the supervision of the Panel and the Secretariat. The group of experts assesses the integrity of the country process and holds in-depth consultations on the major governance issues with the Government, senior officials, political parties, parliamentarians, representatives of civil society organizations (including the media, intellectuals, trade unions, professional associations), and the private sector. If there are underlying concerns about the credibility of the process or if weaknesses are observed, the group of experts can decide to conduct further research and to hold additional consultations.

Drafting of mission report

Based on all the information collected during the preliminary research, the review mission, the CSAR and the NPA, the Continental Secretariat of the APRM and the Panel draw up the country review report. This report is sent back to the country in question for information and comments if necessary. Whatever the reactions of the country, the content of the report remains unchanged and its comments are only appended to the report. This procedure prevents political manipulation of the contents of the reports by countries.

Submission of CRR and peer review

The Continental Secretariat submits the CRR to the Forum of Heads of State and Government of the APRM member States. It is at this stage that the real peer review begins. This peer review is based essentially on a constructive dialogue that does not prescribe concrete coercive measures in case of failure by a member State. The APRM peer review promotes learning, discussion and mutual enrichment through best practices.

Presentation and official publication of the report

No later than six months after the report has been considered by the Forum, it is formally and publicly presented to key regional and subregional structures such as the Pan- African Parliament, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the envisaged Peace and Security Council, and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union. The report is then made public.

MODULE II
What are the
different structures
of the APRM?

The APRM has institutions at both the continental level and the country level.

Continental institutions

1 Forum of Heads of State and Government or Forum

This is the highest decision-making body of the APRM. It is composed of the presidents or prime ministers of all the countries that have acceded to the APRM. It is this group that conducts the peer review. It meets two times a year, often on the margins of African Union (AU) summits.

2 Panel of Eminent Persons or Panel

Composition of the Panel (2007-2008)

Professor Adebayo Adedeji of Nigeria (Chairman)
Professor Dorothy Njeuma of Cameroon (Member)
Ms. Marie-Angélique Savané of Senegal (Member)
Professor Mohammed Seghir Babés of Algeria (Member)
Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat of Kenya (Member)
Dr. Graça Machel of Mozambique (Member)
Dr. Chris Stals of South Africa (Member)

This Panel oversees the review process and ensures its integrity. The members of the Panel are persons of high moral stature who have demonstrated commitment to the ideals of pan-Africanism.

The missions and duties of the Panel are outlined in a charter, which also spells out reporting arrangements to the Heads of State and Government of participating States. This charter secures the independence, objectivity and integrity of the Panel.

During the Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Accra, Ghana, African leaders designated Professor Adedeji as the new Chairman of the Panel for 2007-2008.

The APRM Continental Secretariat

The Continental Secretariat is based in Midrand, South Africa and maintains a database on the political and economic developments in all participating countries, prepares background documents for the peer review teams; proposes performance indicators, and tracks the performance of individual countries.

It supports the Forum by providing the technical capacity to undertake the analytical work that underpins the peer review process.

Group of independent experts

This group is made up of 15 to 20 African experts selected based on their inherent competence. Headed by a member of the Forum and coordinated by the Continental Secretariat, the group conducts country reviews and is free of political influence.

Partner institutions

The APRM has three technical partners that provide support services, advice and technical assistance. They are the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Experts from these institutions participate in country support and country review missions.

National institutions

The APRM focal point

The APRM Guidelines stipulate that each participating country must have an APRM focal point in government to act as liaison between the country and the Continental Secretariat. In general, the focal point is in a ministry.

The National Governance Commission (or Council) (NGC)

The National Governance Commission or Council is responsible for managing the process at the Country level. It must be made up of representatives of the State, the private sector and civil society. The NGC guarantees the integrity of the process at the Country level. Its composition must be representative of the different constituencies and institutions of the country. Given the experiences of the early APRM countries, there is an emerging jurisprudence that this entity should be chaired by an independent person, preferably a member of civil society. At the

end of the initiation process, the NGC conducts self-assessments and produces the country self-assessment report (CSAR) and the national programme of action (NPA).

✌3 National APRM Secretariat

Certain countries have decided to create a national APRM Secretariat, which provides the NGC with the necessary administrative and technical support to perform its work.

✋4 Technical research institutions (TRI)

According to the APRM Guidelines, any review under the APRM must be technically competent and credible. In this regard, the APRM uses researchers and research institutes or any other organ with the requisite expertise to conduct the research needed for the production of the CSAR and the NPA.

Structures of the APRM

Continental level	National level
Forum → Panel → APRM Secretariat → PARTNER INSTITUTIONS	FOCAL point --- National commission → TRI, APRM Secretariat
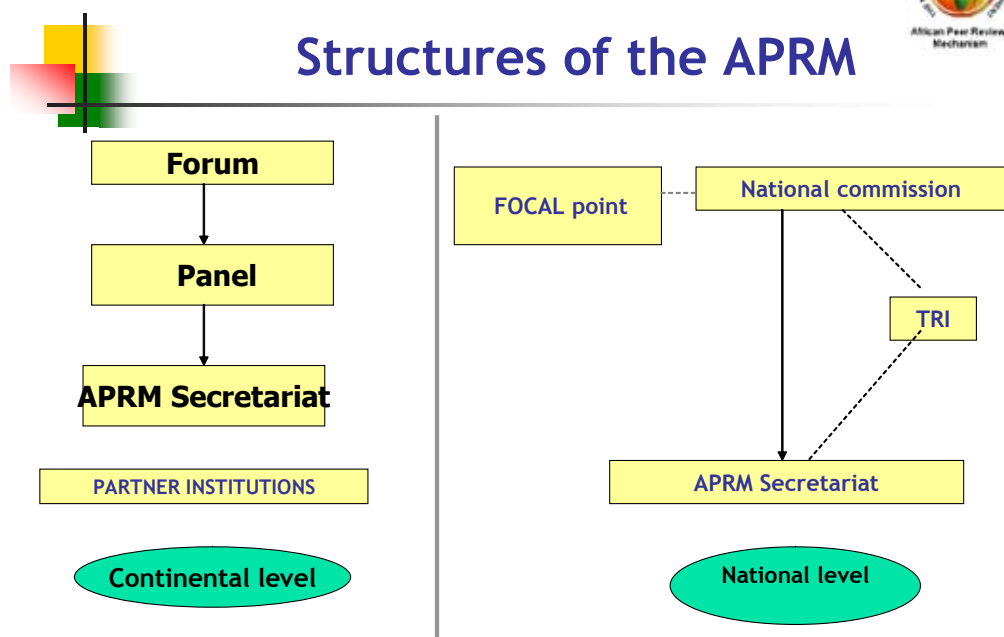
Source: Continental APRM Secretariat

Let us first try to understand the mechanism!

What is the APRM?

1 What the APRM is not

It is important to first discuss some recurrent issues that account for the poor or total lack of knowledge about the APRM.

2 The APRM is not a programme to audit the current government

The APRM is not the place for denouncing sitting politicans or existing political institutions. It is a mechanism designed to create objective conditions for a consensual national debate on governance. In this light, the APRM should be seen as a lever with which to conduct analyses aimed at identifying the structural causes of bad governance and socio-economic problems.

3 The APRM is not a club where Heads of State and Government assess one another

The coinage African Peer Review Mechanism often leads to major confusion, in that the APRM is seen as a programme of Heads of State and Government who agree to submit themselves collectively to a review by their peers. Obviously, the APRM is an initiative of African political leaders who agree to submit their country to a critical review by their peers. However, this dimension of the process is not exclusive. The APRM is, above all, a national exercise through which all national actors enter into a frank and open partnership to promote good governance and improve their socio-economic development. Consequently, it is the national part of the process that is of particular interest to civil society actors who want to make a national contribution to the APRM. This is where CSOs have to focus their attention and work.

The APRM is not just one more programme

One of the difficulties in getting civil society actors to be involved in the APRM is that this mechanism is perceived as just one more programme. The failure of many previous initiatives seems to have made several CSO actors weary. In addition, the plethora of initiatives by partners for Africa's development and the multiple efforts that they require limit the time and resources available. As a result, one of the major arguments to make in order to generate or strengthen civil society involvement in this mechanism is the requirement of results fixed in national programmes of action, whereby tangible results can be measured. Furthermore, the inclusive and participatory nature of the APRM should not be taken as mere rhetoric, but rather as a real opportunity for CSOs to play a central and decisive role in promoting good governance and improving the level of socio-economic development.

Is it a programme to please funders?

Certain critics of the APRM maintain that it is a mechanism concocted by African Heads of State and Government who, upon launching NEPAD, were simply trying to convince development partners and private investors to drain the continent's capital. In other words, these skeptics see the APRM as an outward-looking initiative, and not a lever that could bring the changes expected within African societies.

We find such an analysis to be an exaggeration. A review of the base documents that spell out the objectives, principles and standards of the APRM as well as the concrete experiences of the first countries to take part in the process shows that the APRM seeks to tackle the ills of political governance and democracy, economic governance, corporate governance and socio-economic development. The implementation of NPAs in countries that have completed their reviews will be a major argument to illustrate the positive results of the intra-African mechanism. In addition, the slow rate at which certain signatory countries are initiating the process implies that there are attempts to bypass the national debates and reviews imposed by the APRM.

The APRM is a tool for dialogue

The APRM "is an instrument voluntarily acceded to by member States of the African Union[3]. It is a self-monitoring mechanism designed to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated subregional and continental economic integration through sharing of experiences and reinforcement of successful and best practices, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity-building."[4]

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3   As at 30 June 2008, the following countries had acceded to the APRM: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zambia.

4   APRM base document, available at www.nepad.org.

The goal of the APRM is therefore to provide African countries with an innovative tool that could foster the emergence of democratic spaces for the purpose of building more open societies. Indeed, "one of the objectives of the APRM that is not much talked about is that the Mechanism should enable member States to learn to dialogue (…). We insist that there should be this dialogue and that there should be a framework for concerted action among the three stakeholders. This is why the APRM fosters dialogue for the actors to discuss, negotiate and agree on minimum platforms."[5] By combining the efforts of the State, the private sector and civil society, the APRM helps identify and then solve problems in the areas of political governance and democracy, economic governance, corporate governance and socio-economic development.

In addition to the potentiel to create a culture of political dialogue, which remains necessary for the construction of a peaceful environment and the creation of solid foundations for Africa's development, the APRM has other benefits, including:

- Finding solutions to problems that might be neglected or marginalized;
- Deepening democracy and strengthening national institutions;
- Building national consensus and political trust needed to find new solutions;
- Boosting the image of the nation and continent with investors and development partners.[6]

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[5] Extract of a conversation with Marie Angélique Savané, member of the Panel of Eminent Persons, February 2005.

[6] Ross Herbert and Steven Gruzd, Planning an Effective Peer Review: A Guidebook for National Focal Points, p.2, February 2007, South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA).

MODULE IV
What are the areas
identitied by the
APRM?
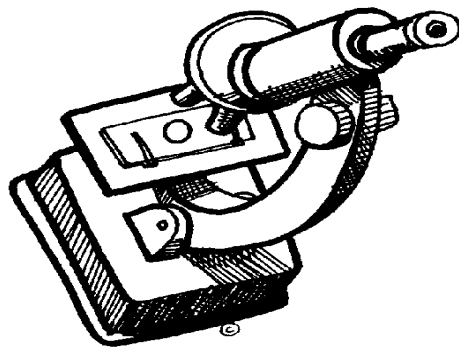
The APRM has identified for thematic areas: democracy and political governance; economic governance; corporate governance; and socio-economic development.

1 Democracy and political governance

This part deals with the principal objective of the APRM, which is to promote democracy and good governance as the basis for poverty reduction and sustainable development. In this regard, questions have been developed to measure popular participation and political equality – fundamental principles of a democratic society. These questions are divided into three major categories:

- A defined framework where citizens enjoy the same rights and there is consensus on the constitutionnal instrument for souverainty;
- A representative and accountable government;
- A strong private sector and capable to play an important role in a self-sustained development;
- A strengthened civil society.

2 Economic governance

Good economic governance, including transparency in financial management, is an essential element for promoting economic growth and reducing poverty. Promoting market efficiency, controlling waste in public spending, using natural resources efficiently, consolidating democracy and encouraging the flow of capital to the private sector are some of the crucial aspects of the efforts to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development on the continent.

Economic governance focuses on the following objectives:

- Promote macroeconomic policies that support sustainable development;
- Implement transparent, predictable and credible government economic policies;
- Promote sound public finance management;
- Fight corruption, drugs and narcotics, and money laundering;
- Accelerate regional integration by participating in the harmonization of monetary, trade and investment policies amongst the participating states.

3 Corporate governance

Corporate governance is a system whereby companies are managed, controlled and accountable. It affects all types of companies in the public and private sectors.

Good corporate governance is characterized by certain distinct features: discipline, transparency, independence, accountability, fairness and social responsibility. Five general objectives serve as a guide for reforming corporate governance in Africa. They are:

- Provide an enabling environment and effective regulatory framework for economic activities.
- Ensure that corporations act as good corporate citizens with regard to human rights, social responsibility and environmental sustainability.
- Promote the adoption of codes of good business ethics in achieving the objectives of the company.
- Ensure that corporations treat all their stakeholders (shareholders, employees, communities, suppliers and customers) in a fair and just manner.
- Provide for accountability of corporations, directors and executives.

4 Socio-economic development

Socio-economic development in the specific case of NEPAD involves the continuous improvement of the welfare and living conditions of the people.

The socio-economic development module is intended to recognize efforts made and progress accomplished in the design of appropriate policies and service delivery mechanisms in the key areas of social development.

Questions have been asked about the efforts made by all stakeholders in the country to achieve the following socio-economic ojectives:

- Promote self-reliance and build capacity for sustainable development.
- Accelerate socio-economic objectives to achieve sustainable development and poverty reduction.
- Strengthen policies, delivery mechanisms and outputs in key social development areas (including education for all, combating of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases).
- Ensure affordable access to water, energy, finance (including micro-finance), markets and ICTs to all citizens, especially the poor.
- Progress towards gender equality, particularly equal access to education for girls at all levels.
- Encourage broad-based participation in development by all stakeholders at all levels.

To achieve all these objectives, the broad-based participation of all stakeholders at all levels is necessary.

Advocating for civil society to become involved in the APRM is not an encroachment or even an attempt at usurpation. Rather, it is to recognize its vital role in the elaboration and implementation of development programmes. This is why the APRM Guidelines state clearly that: "The APRM process is designed to be open and participatory. Through a participatory process, the APRM will engage key stakeholders to facilitate exchange of information and national dialogue on good governance and socio-economic development programmes, thereby increase the transparency of the decision-making processes, and build trust in the pursuit of national development goals."[7]

However, there are three prerequisites for civil society to participate fully in: preparing upstream; involving a broad spectrum of civil society; and participating in all stages of the process.

1 Preparing upstream: leadership, not waiting for the Government

One of the biggest lessons that civil society can learn from the early country experiences is the need to play a leadership role in the APRM process upstream from the official launching of national reviews. Civil society should not wait for an invitation from the Government to start thinking about or planning its role in the APRM. Otherwise, the balance of power will obviously be against the CSOs, given that time limits the possibilities of good planning and that public actors in charge of the national process will have defined the rules of the game beforehand. Consequently, CSOs in countries that have acceded to the APRM must start organizing themselves to take up the challenge of participating in the long and difficult process of the APRM.

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7   APRM Guidelines.

In this regard, it is important to point out that in French-speaking countries such as Senegal, Mali, Benin and Republic of Congo, CSOs had already organized information and training activities to create favourable conditions for their participation in national reviews. Overall, these activities were organized in order to:

- Learn about the APRM by obtaining information and training civil society actors in those countries;
- Learn from the experience of CSOs in early APRM countries;
- Create frameworks for concerted action among CSOs interested in the APRM;
- Ensure that civil society had a broad and qualitative involvement in the APRM process.

These experiences confirm that preparation by CSOs for the APRM allows them to create and/or strengthen their frameworks for concerted action. This preparatory work allows civil society to clear up its internal divisions in order to develop a common position before embarking fully on the process.

Convincing a broad spectrum of national CSOs

The APRM is a long, complex, technical and costly process. Only a strategic division of labour can allow CSOs to do their work properly, by casting the relevant actors to play specific roles based on their capacities. Clearly, all segments of civil society do not have the same intellectual and physical resources. With dialogue upstream, they could be able to identify:

- those that can be members or leaders of NGCs;
- those that can work on raising awareness about the APRM and explaining the process to a wide audience. At this level, the CSO leaders involved may, for example, identify translators and interpreters in national languages, and target (and train if necessary) actors who can defend the APRM in a simple language accessible to all.

Participating in all stages of the process

This preparation upstream must translate into complete engagement of civil society throughout the process. After this preparatory stage, civil society must demand a central place in the **constitution of the NGC**. This demand is the most eloquent guarantee of the recognition of civil society as a crucial actor in the APRM and fully guarantees the credibility of the process. In this regard, the Ghanaian experience is the most relevant illustration of the need to integrate civil society into the highest levels of the process.

Participating in the follow-up to the programme of action

The APRM does not end with the publication of the CRR. Civil society must develop a strategic plan to follow up on its recommendations. It must continue to put pressure on the Government to ensure that the solutions are applied. To this end, it must maintain the framework for concerted action on the APRM in order to:

- Create effective checks and balances to compel the stakeholders to fulfill their commitments made in the NPA, by mobilizing the media and organizing activities on a regular basis;
- Monitor the NPA and report. This is important not only for the CSOs, but also for the population;
- Mobilize the resources of civil society in order to execute the NPA. This is an opportunity to position the CSOs as forces of political and social change;
- Encourage the private sector to play a leading role in the implementation of the NPA;
- Institutionalize good practices that have proven their worth during national reviews;
- Evaluate the impact of the NPAs;
- Have the contribution of society in the entire process assessed.

Relative levels of engagement of stakeholders in the process

STAGES / ACTORS	Sensitiza-tion	Consulta-tion	Assess-ment	NPA	Imple-menta-tion	Follow-up to NPA	Assess-ment of NPA
Government	++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	++
Partner institutions: Country level	+	++	+++	+++	++	++	+
CSO	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++
Private sector	+	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	++
Media	+++	+++	++	++	+	+++	+++
Parliament	++	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++

Source: Presentation by Kojo Busia (ECA) updated by the author.
Note: + = limited engement required; ++ = active engagement required; +++ = central actor in this process.

Please note that, in fact, the level of engagement of the different national actors may vary from one country to another, depending on particular circumstances. More than a representation of absolute levels of engagement, this diagram only gives an indication of the relative levels of engagement required for each stakeholder in relation to the other actors.

1 Fear of governments

Governments that have acceded to the APRM have real fears when they launch the implementation stage of the process at the country level. They fear that the opposition parties and civil society will use the mechanism for political ends to question the credibility of actions taken by the current government. Also, governments that have a high level of bad governance fear that the reviews will introduce or strengthen the aid conditionalities established by the international community and by donors. These fears therefore lead to politicization of the process, such that several States perceive the mechanism as a public relations plan that should only allow them to win the trust of investors, development partners and their African peers. Given such fears, a responsible, constructive and non-partisan approach by CSOs can cause political leaders to create favourable conditions for national dialogue in favour of good governance and socio-economic development.

2 Disorganization/dispersion of civil society

While it is true that CSOs have often demonstrated their ability to organize and to mobilize national interests, it must be admitted that, on certain occasions, their disorganization and dispersion have been major roadblocks impeding progress on some important causes. This is due to the large number of civil society components, the wide variety of areas of action, their philosophical or ideological differences, and often their geographic dispersion[8]. In addition, there is a lack of frameworks for concerted action and dialogue between CSOs at the country level to harmonize positions and try to develop common opinions on major issues. Yet the paradox is striking given the large number of national structures responsible for coordinating members' actions. The reality is that these structures are often empty aggregates. Beyond their legal and administrative existence, they have difficulty becoming operational and bringing their members together around one table. In cases where these structures are functional, they could serve as a powerful lever to push CSOs to become more involved in the APRM. In cases where the CSOs are not functional, they urgently need to be made operational to give them vitality, coherence and political capacity so that the voices of citizens could be heard in the process.

3 Turf wars

The absence of frameworks for concerted action and work among CSOs as they grapple with the major challenge of the dispersal of its various components makes it difficult for them to influence initiatives as decisive as the APRM. When this is

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8   It should be noted that in almost all African countries, CSO are concentrated in urban areas and more specifically in national capitals.

combined with attempts at manipulation by the authorities, who promote and foster these antagonisms among CSOs, it weakens the position of civil society vis-à-vis the major issues that have to be discussed and resolved. In addition, other factors such as the remuneration of civil society leaders can increase these turf wars. For example, in the case of Kenya, remuneration paid to members of the National Governance Commission was the source of major tensions that gave rise to suspicions, insults and public denunciations that certain actors were enriching themselves in the name of civil society.

Clearly, it is illusory and even utopian to think that these turf wars can be resolved permanently. However, several national experiences have shown that the strengthening of frameworks for concerted action and work based on clear and transparent rules and procedures may limit the effects considerably. The collective sharing of information and a clear definition of roles and expectations would lay the groundwork for respect and trust among actors, all elements that are indispensable for creating the necessary synergies for the APRM process.

4 The credibility of people and organizations acting on behalf of civil society

The, the APRM is a transparent, inclusive and participatory process. However, it is also a demanding, complex, technical and exhausting process (saps energies and resources). Consequently, people and organizations leading it must have the appropriate intellectual and material resources, as clearly illustrated by the Ghana example. Civil society was able to participate and indeed drive the process through the NGC undoubtedly because of the expertise, competence and intellectual and moral integrity of its representatives.

This is a vitally important point. Indeed, quantitative representation of civil society in national review structures can be assured in regulations and in fact. However, if CSO leaders do not have the required stature and capacities, the intellectual balance of power will be in favour of the Government, which has significant resources and can take advantage of such a situation.

5 Lack of resources

The experiences of the early APRM countries and those that are in the preparatory stage have shown that the APRM is a long and costly process. It requires considerable intellectual and financial resources. The meagre resources of CSOs would all be used up in facilitating frameworks for concerted action and work, organizing information sessions, participating in self-assessment exercises and training workshops, and performing all sorts of secretarial work. This is why CSOs that want to participate in the APRM must be aware of this upstream and adopt a clear fundraising policy to ensure that their full participation in the reviews is not compromised by the lack or insufficiency of resources.

6 The cumbersome nature of networks for concerted action

A review of the CSO networks in several countries that have acceded to the APRM has shown that very few of them are indeed functional, in part because of the cumbersome nature of their structures, which require a large number of staff, considerable financial resources and good management and coordination among members.

7 Obstacles related to the complexity and technical nature of the process

As experts and actors in peer-reviewed countries have noted, the APRM is a complex and highly technical process. The structuring of the stages, the levels of competence, the large number of national and continental actors involved, and the cumbersome nature of the questionnaire are some of the factors that make the APRM difficult to understand and limit the chances of qualitative participation in country reviews.

This is why the CSOs involved in the APRM must take into account the complexity and technical nature of the process and thus try to simplify it for their members and for the population as a whole. The key is to promote democratic participation in the APRM process lest it should remain only in the hands of experts and politicians. In this regard, the media must be an active determinant in simplifying the techniques, information and education of citizens on the different technical aspects of the mechanism.

1 Government

The Government plays a central role in the mechanism as outlined in the APRM base documents, giving it a strategic advantage. It should be noted that well before the process is officially launched at the Country level, the Panel and the Continental Secretariat contact the Government of the country to be peer-reviewed to ask it to put in place the relevant structures and provisions. At that stage, if civil society is not informed and hence does not have in advance a strategic plan that clearly defines its role in the process, it would be futile to think that civil society could influence the process.

This is why upstream planning is more than necessary. Once the country accedes to the mechanism, the relevant government authorities should be contacted to clearly define the roles of the different actors. CSOs should not wait for the official launching to be invited to take part. They should also demonstrate their will to participate in the process at all levels. But this is a very delicate approach. It requires well-developed political capacity. Civil society must demonstrate sharp negotiation skills right from this stage and throughout the process. It has to negotiate, reassure and convince the politicians. In short, it has to enter into a partnership based on complementarity of experiences, competence and legitimacy. The partnership should also be based on mutual recognition, respect and trust. The suspicion that generally characterizes relations between the State and civil society is an obstacle to cooperation. Indeed, "any cooperation and alliance cannot be built solely on a reading of the issues and the actors. Building a partnership means, first and foremost, meeting and sharing, showing your respective strengths and weaknesses, interests and goals, revealing your reciprocal perceptions, and expressing your representations on a context, an issue, an alliance and other actors."[9]

2 The Panel

In few countries, the reaction of the Panel of the first APRM country self-assessment was that the process is heavily dominated by government actors, leaving very little room for civil society. It should be noted that the Panel has, through this episode, shown all its neutrality and its credibility. It is therefore up to civil society to call on the Panel when all the avenues for negotiating with the State have been exhausted. It can do so during the expert review mission. To do this, civil society must be informed of the visits of the eminent persons responsible for supervising the mechanism at the Country level, to be able to present its positions.

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9   Carlos Cubillos and Frédéric Apollin, "Renforcement de la société civile et politiques d'alliances et partenariat ", Traverses no.14, Les éditions du groupe Initiatives, VSF&Cicda, June 2004, p.10.

✌3 The Continental APRM Secretariat

To prevent the processus from being manipulated by State actors, CSOs in countries participating in the APRM may, if they have the necessary resources, legitimacy and expertise, draw up a list of national experts and national technical institutions to be submitted to the Secretariat well before the effective launching of the process in the country. The CSOs may also submit a document outlining their expectations.

🖐4 African independent experts

The credibility of the APRM rests primarily with these actors. They are responsible for collecting the necessary data for the drafting of the review reports. Given the decisive role of these experts, civil society must inform them about its positions, preferably in writing. To this end, it must prepare upstream to rigorously document its arguments on issues related to the four areas identified by the APRM. In fact, this could be a difficult exercise, as the experts visit the peer-reviewed country for a limited time and they must travel to all regions of the country. Moreover, their agenda is often quite full before they arrive in the country. Consequently, it is important for civil society to anticipate by making every effort to know the scheduled dates for the experts' visit and to make appointments in advance.

🖐5 National Governance Commissions

It is clearly at this level that the entire credibility of the APRM comes into play. For this reason, civil society must rigorously ensure that it is represented in the process both quantitatively and qualitatively. It should be noted, however, that only planning upstream can allow civil society to meet this challenge. In the absence of work upstream by national CSOs, the composition of the NGC could be established by government actors, who may tend to include only CSOs whose views are similar if not identical to theirs. But if the APRM turns out this way, it will be impossible to make any progress on governance and development.

6 Civil society, convincing a broad spectrum of CSOs at the Country level

For the APRM to promote broad and democratic participation, it is indispensable for it to be known and disseminated by several CSOs. It is therefore up to the leaders to involve all segments of civil society, which can then give the APRM broad appeal. When many CSOs are informed about the issues and implications of the APRM, this can help put pressure on the State for it to meet the requirements of transparency and credibility.

However, civil society must be mobilized based on a rational division of labour. CSOs involved in the APRM should do so on the basis of their capacities, with a clear awareness of their strengths and their objective limits. Hence, frameworks for concerted action and work among national CSOs are the ideal forum for discussing

strategic issues regarding the involvement of all. Instead of discussing certain insurmountable positions among CSOs, these frameworks should clearly divide their tasks, taking into account their respective resources and expertise.

7 The media

For the APRM exercise to succeed, it is important for the media to be more deeply involved in the reviews. The media is an essential lever that can help disseminate information to explain the APRM and ensure the full involvement of the population. Its ability to process information in African languages allows it to reach a wide audience. In this endeavour, civil society must involve both the official and the popular media, particularly community radio stations that broadcast in national languages.

It should also be acknowledged that in the absence of a clear and coherent communication policy from the APRM Secretariat, the media is so far one of the rare sources of information that allows different actors and the general public to keep track of practical developments in reviews in participating countries.

One advantage in getting the media involved in the APRM is that it could provide effective checks and balances against any attempts by the Government to manipulate the process. Indeed, the African media is helping more and more to shape public opinion in order to limit government excesses.

Likewise, it can help educate the public about the positive impacts of the APRM on democracy and on the country's development. In a communiqué released in July 2005, the Executive Director of the APRM Secretariat, Bernard Kouassi, said that the Secretariat feels that the media plays a crucial role in supporitng the APRM process and in providing the public with accurate information. The media could and should inform the population on the positive aspects of the process and underline the very good positive developments that are taking place in the African continent ... The Secretariat hopes that the media will support the APRM by trying at least to showcase best practices and complementing its efforts to improve governance in Africa.[10]

In Mali, once the review was launched, the NGC organized an information and training session to explain the ins and outs of the APRM to the national media. This experience can be identified as a best practice because it can make the process easier to understand. Once again, the APRM must be seen as an exercise aimed at identifying systems of good and bad governance. Without this approach, the media may compromise the chances of seeing existing governments encourage transparent and credible reviews.

Still in the case of Mail, during their national awareness campaigns, CSOs involved in the APRM published pamphlets in national languages (Bamana and Fula) that were distributed to the local population. This work stemmed from the strong demand expressed by women's associations of Koulikoro for the discussions of the APRM to be held in national languages. This made several local associations from the regions of Koulikoro, Ségou and Mopti interested in the process. Journalists from the regions, notably those of community organs, were able to join NGO facilitators from Bamako to get more people to participate in the awareness campaigns.

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10   NEPAD, "Communiqué of the APRM Secretariat", July 2005, available at www.nepad.org, consulted on 2 August 2005.

 Parliamentarians

For many initiatives, African parliamentarians are left out of the national decision-making and policy implementation processes. Very often, their opinions are only sought when the Government insists that they should be consulted for the adoption or amendment of laws. Yet, parliamentarians have political legitimacy and sit in one of the most important institutions in any country. Parliament is a place where several important decisions affecting the lives of citizens are taken. Therefore, such an institution cannot be left out when considering initiatives designed to institute good governance in the country.

It is based on this reality and the various contributions that parliaments can make to the objectives of NEPAD that various personalities decided to create the Forum of African Parliamentarians for NEPAD (FPA/NEPAD): to enhance democratic debate, good economic, political and social governance, by making the Forum of African Parliamentarians for NEPAD, a platform for discussions, concerted actions, debates, initiatives, proposals, engagement and support of ongoing efforts to achieve the goals established in the programme of the African Union. In this regard, the Forum recommends to all national and regional parliaments to establish NEPAD parliamentary groups responsible for monitoring the work of the Forum, according to their organizational specificities.[11]

Civil society must include parliaments from the outset of the APRM process, in an environment where there is an actual or potential risk of an omnipresent executive power. In this regard, it can:

- Sensitize elected officials to the relevance of the APRM;
- Educate/inform them on the content of the APRM and their role throughout the process;
- Argue for the inclusion of parliamentarians in National Governance Commissions;
- Convince parliamentarians to participate actively in the self-assessment by communicating their opinions in writing and organizing meetings with independent experts;
- Convince parliamentarians to get involved in the implementation, follow-up and assessment of NPAs.

 Powers often forgotten: senates (French system), economic and social councils, the judiciary, etc.

In its effort to positively influence the APRM process, civil society can and must identify all relevant national actors and institutions. Among the actors, it could try to mobilize retired civil servants or experts to get involved at different levels. Given their experience, they could serve as resource persons for civil society actors. As for institutions that are often overshadowed or maginalized by the omnipresence of the executive branch, namely senates, economic, social and cultural councils, and the judiciary, they could play a major role in country reviews. With this in mind, CSOs can find powerful allies in the struggle to promote good governance and socio-

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11   Forum of African Parliamentarians for NEPAD (FPA/NEPAD),   http://www.parlanepad.org/fr/ Actualites, consulted on 16 July 2005.

economic development. This approach could have the advantage of minimizing any shortcomings that could result from the scarcity of resources and capacities.

Development partners present on the national scene

In general, development partners tend to adopt a wait-and-see attitude. Some raise doubts about the contribution of the APRM to the promotion of good governance. Civil society may convince its partners to support the efforts of the APRM. These partners must be particularly involved in the implementation of national programmes of action, to make tangible contributions to the efforts undertaken by African countries to promote good governance and improved socio-economic development.

It should be noted, however, that according to many experts, the contribution should be limited solely to NPAs. Indeed, they fear that the inclusion of these actors throughout the process would lead to forms of conditionalities and also compromise the national dialogue dimension. The argument put forth is that the APRM is and must remain an African mechanism run, endured and accepted by Africans.

Finally, the contribution of development partners can help resolve the burning issue of duplication of effort in the field.

What can be learned from the experiences of the early APRM countries?

"Take the initiative and adopt a good plan that guarantees the credibility of the process and takes into account the interests of civil society"

Based on the experiences of the early APRM countries (Algeria, Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa), civil society must take the initiative in the APRM process in order to fulfill all its obligations. Given that the process is complex and technical, only true leadership would guarantee the credibility of the process and allow civil society to perform its advocacy role. Leadership by civil society is needed for two major reasons:

- To create frameworks for concerted action that would allow for discussions on the best planning possible for interested CSOs.
- To prevent the risk of manipulation of the process by government representatives.

This planning must:

- Lead CSO representatives to adopt a common position on the nature and types of commitment of civil society in the APRM.
- Determine the priorities for each area identified by the APRM.
- Submit to the NGC, the Panel, the team of experts and the TRIs a detailed analytical report showing the expectations and arguments of civil society in relation to the process.
- Consider the conditions for better representation of civil cosiety within the NGC.

- Adopt flexible and operational working frameworks for the CSOs themselves.
- Present a clear strategic plan to ensure the involvement of civil society in the entire process, from the official launching to the implementation of NPAs.

It is important to note that all the planning, particularly the definition of a strategic plan, must take into account the resources, strengths and weaknesses of CSOs. The political environment in the participating country should also be evaluated, notably the history of relations between the State and civil society and the willingness of the public authorities to work with civil society and the private sector on clear and objective bases.

Conclusion

The APRM is intrinsically a State-centred initiative promoted by African Heads of State and Government who undertake to mobilize their efforts and their resources for the development of Africa. Consequently, African political leaders are primarily responsible for its success. It is expected that the self-assessments and peer review will lead to the adoption of the principles of accountability and transparency, which constitute the foundation of good governance.

The starting point of APRM implementation is the designation of an APRM Focal Point by the Government. It is thereafter than the APRM can gradually establish a framework for participation and partnership involving the private sector, civil society and all development actors This is why civil society must fully assume its role by raising the awareness of citizens, by playing an active role in the consultations and reviews, and by participating in the development, execution and monitoring and assessment of the NPAs. However, civil society, like the private sector and the State, must make an effort to understand the APRM as an exercise that requires strategies, operating mechanisms and the sharing of responsibilities.

As a collective exercise in self-assessment, the APRM process should help eradicate the destructive *Us*-versus-*Them* political culture, which takes away any possibility of dialogue that could lead to the emergence of collective synergies. When participating in the APRM, civil society should adopt an approach of positive and constructive engagement and not be confined to the traditional position of condemnation and systematic radicalization, because the APRM offers a real chance of political change. Accordingly, civil society should be able to sieze all opportunities to collaborate and cooperate wherever possible, and to opt for confrontation where that remains necessary. These two attitudes do not have to be mutually exclusive, because ultimately, collaboration and/or confrontation are indispensable in the process of creating democratic societies.

To assume its expected role as an agent of political change, the APRM must ensure that all stakeholders participate in all stages of the process. The goal is to identify avenues to facilitate the institutionalization of participatory structures and processes which, beyond the immediate expectations of the APRM, could be turned into national governance systems.

Figure 1: A three view of the State and civile society: An ideal vision

Private Sector
(Government)

Business Sector
(Market)

Voluntary Sector
(Civil society)
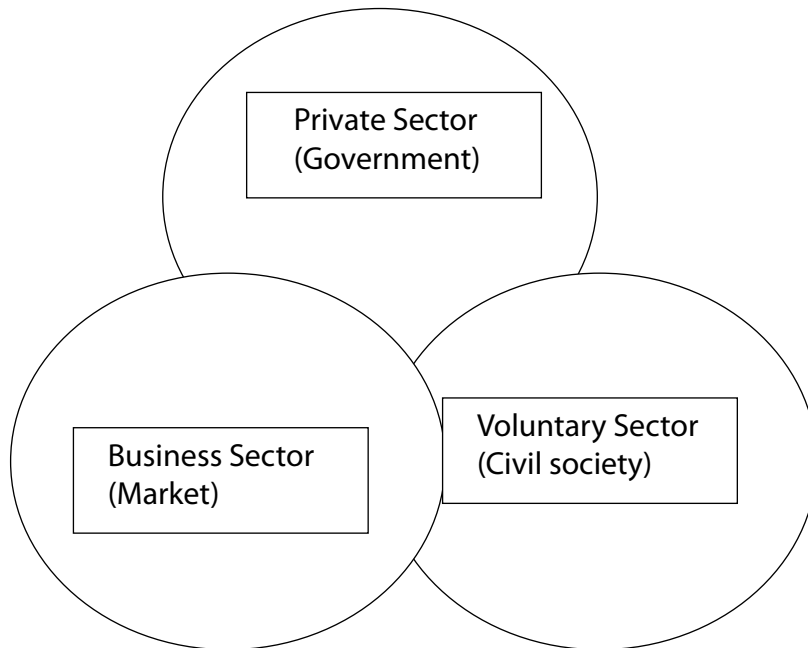
International Classification of Non-Profit Organizations (ICNPO): Main Groups and Sub-Groups

MAIN GROUPS	SUB-GROUPS
Group 1: Culture and recreation	1100 Culture and arts 1200 Sports 1300 Other social and recreation clubs
Group 2: Education and research	2100 Primary and secondary education 2200 Higher education 2300 Other education 2400 Research
Group 3: Health	3100 Hospitals and rehabilitation 3200 Nursing homes 3300 Mental health and crisis intervention 3400 Other health services
Group 4: Social services	4100 Social services 4200 Emergency and rescue 4300 Income support and maintenance
Group 5: Environment	5100 Environment 5200 Animal protection
Group 6: Development and housing	6100 Economic, social and community development 6200 Housing 6300 Employment and training
Group 7: Laws, advocacy and policy	7100 Covic and advocacy organizations 7200 Legal and judicial services 7300 Political organizations
Group 8: Promotion of volunteering and philanthropic intermediation	
Group 9: International	
Group 10: Religion	
Group 11: Business, professional and trade union associations	
Group 12: Not classified	

Source: Global Civil Society: An Overview by Lester M. Salomon, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Regina List, JHU Press, March 2003. http://www.jhu.educ

This declaration was drafted and adopted at the APRM seminar for Fench-speaking CSOs organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in collaboration with the Partnership Africa Canada in Douala from 25 to 27 June 2007.

DOUALA DECLARATION

We, the representatives of African civil society organizations from French-speaking African countries that have or about to accede to the APRM, meeting at the training workshop for civil society organizations on the APRM organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), in collaboration with Partnership Africa Canada (PAC), held in Douala, Cameroon from 25 to 27 June 2007 on the theme "the involvement of civil society organizations in the intra-African review mechanism –APRM",

- Having examined the challenges of the APRM and its potential to stengthen good governance pactices;
- Having followed the country experiences with the APRM reviews and the important role played by civil society organizations in these reviews, in particular those of Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda and Benin;
- Recognizing that the APRM is able to make a relevant contribution to the promotion of good governance and the establishment of a culture of political dialogue in Africa;
- Reaffirming that the success of the APRM depends on the broad and qualitative involvement of African civil society in the entire review process and in the implementation of national plans;
- Considering that the APRM is the most important pillar of NEPAD, and an indispensable lever for the promotion and consolidation of good governance in Africa;

Having agreed to strengthen the CSO network on the APRM constituted in Addis Ababa in January 2006 and having requested ECA and PAC to facilitate the coordination of this network;

Recommend:

To African governments

1. To accede to the APRM and to accelerate the process of effective implementation in their respective countries;

2. To encourage the population to take ownership of the APRM and to allocate the appropriate financial resources to the mechanism so that it remains an African instrument to serve African interests;

3. To involve all State institutions, in particular the parliament and the social and economic council, in all stages of the review process;

4. To establish independent national governance commissions;

5. To fully involve civil society and the private sector in national governance commissions responsible for managing the APRM process and the implementation of programmes of action;

6. To develop through the APRM Secretariat a real communication policy to facilitate understanding of the process by all social and development actors by, among other actions, regularly updating the APRM website and any other media support needed to make the mechanism more widely known;

To the African private sector

7. To support the existing frameworks for dialogue and to become more involved in national APRM country reviews and in the implementation of programmes of action;

To African civil society

8. To create national frameworks for dialogue and concerted action to identify common goals and plan strategies designed to elicit better participation in the APRM process;

9. To strengthen cooperation with the Government, parliament, the economic and social council, the private sector, the media and development partners in the identification and analysis of issues of national, regional and pan-African significance;

10. To strengthen its technical and institutional capacities in the four thematic areas of the APRM, namely, political governance and democracy, economic governance, corporate governance and socio-economic development;

11. To develop working networks on NEPAD and the APRM among African civil societies;

12. To share and draw on past experience in advocacy and the independent monitoring of national development policies in order to support APRM reviews;

To the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

13. To continue accompanying States in the promotion of national dialogue in general and the APRM in particular;

14. To support the network of African civil society organizations and the APRM working networks by:

- allocating adequate resources for the activities of these networks
- organizing information and training workshops
- assisting in the formulation of their projects and in the search for adequate funding.

Done in Douala on 27 July 2007.

Useful sources

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa: www.uneca.org

Official site of NEPAD/APRM: www.nepad.org/aprm/

New site of the APRM: www.aprm-APRM.org/

United Nations Development Programme: www.undp.org

African Development Bank: www.afdb.org

Canada-Africa Partnership: www.pacweb.org

Africa Governance, Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AFRIMAP) www.afrimap.org

South African Institute of International Affairs: www.saiia.org.za