



## **SOUTH AFRICAN APRM POPULAR SENSITISATION (SAPS) PROJECT**

Report of the Civil Society APRM Youth Submission Validation Workshop

Wednesday 24 February 2021, via Zoom

By Nkanyiso Simelane

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### **Introduction**

On 24 February 2021, the [South African Institute of International Affairs](#), in collaboration with [Jasoro Consulting](#), hosted a [Civil Society APRM Youth Submission Validation Workshop](#) as part of the [South African APRM Popular Sensitisation \(SAPS\) Project](#). The aim of the meeting was to have the youth, who worked on the submission, present and participate in the validation of the youth-centred report on nine key governance issues in South Africa

### **Remarks from Government, the NGC and APRM Secretariat**

In attendance was Dr Patrick Sokhela from the Department of Public Service and Administration, the Focal Point Ministry in South Africa, representing the Government of South Africa. Commending the substance of the report, Dr Sokhela deemed it extremely helpful to the work of the Second-Generation Country Review process that South Africa (SA) is conducting. He also commended the timing of the report in the context of the recent Labour Force Survey, where the 2020 fourth-quarter results show unemployment to have increased to 32.5% (63.2% for young people). Dr Sokhela advised the APRM National Governing Council (NGC) to include the youth submission in its draft report compiled by the technical research institutions.

The Chairperson of the South African APRM NGC, Mr Thulani Tshefuta, was also full of praise and offered an opportunity for the youth to present the final report submission to the NGC. He highlighted the importance of youth involvement in the APRM and the country review processes as this impact on all the thematic areas of the APRM. Moreover, the youth is most

affected by current issues, such as unemployment and climate change, hence it is important to integrate the voices and interests of the youth on economic development and governance. Mr Lennon Monyae, Researcher and Civil Society Liaison at the APRM Secretariat, alluded to the priority of civil society participation in the APRM Strategic Plan for 2020-2024. He further explained that youth mainstreaming has become a huge focus area on the agenda and is the engine driving civil society participation. Therefore, the SA youth have shown leadership in galvanising themselves and contributing to the APRM process, which sets an excellent example for other African countries to follow.

### **Validation by Youth Working Groups**

The various youth working groups each presented on the content of their contribution to the respective sections of the APRM Youth Submission. Kenneth Dirole represented the **Institutional Planning** working group and highlighted the following key points. The purpose of this working group was to reflect on what plans had been developed and which ought to have been implemented by the SA government at an institutional level. Although the SA government has on the whole developed the necessary institutional plans, the key challenge is the implementation process. There needs to be more resolve in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation processes, and consequence management to ensure stricter compliance with the institutional plans made. Furthermore, a budget is needed to accompany the implementation of the APRM process. Secondly, this working group explored issues of institutional representation. Currently, political deployment dominates, which breeds shortcomings in the form of inadequate capacity, capability and leads to the promotion of a biased political mandate. Thirdly, the working group raised issues of oversight in the context of monitoring the emigration of talented and highly skilled young South Africans from the country. This leaves national institutions vulnerable, hence the government must draw attention to how this talent can be retained and how to access talent from the diaspora.<sup>1</sup>

The second presentation was by Andile Mthombeni, representing the **Political Participation** working group. Here, the political participation of the youth was evaluated against the backdrop of the SA definition of 'youth' – this being persons between the ages of 16 and 35 years. What was noted was that the youth accounted for 60% of the SA population and therefore, youth political participation is important. However, looking at the statistics from 1994 to the 2019 national elections, there is evidence of a lack of youth participation in political and electoral processes, as well as in government. The working group then explored the

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<sup>1</sup> Presentation by Kenneth Dirole, Institutional Planning Working Group, February 24, 2021.

various reasons why this could be the case. These included the issue of tokenism, and a parliament that devises 'pseudo solutions' that are well documented but are not practically implemented. There is also a lack of political participation within the different political parties, with the youth only accounting for 10%, which is minimal considering the youth's population in the country. It was recommended that a quota be created to ensure equal representation in terms of gender and youth in the political sphere.<sup>2</sup>

The **Health and Social Services** working group was represented by Surekha Bhugeloo who shared issues and recommendations on access to health and social services in the country. Two key issues were identified. The first being the failure of the post-Apartheid government to restore economic equality and dignity to the majority – the black populace of the country. Black citizens continue to be economically excluded and this negatively impacts accessing quality healthcare and other social services. A second key issue was the rise of digitalisation. There is an expected shift in the labour market, moving away from labour-intensive jobs towards those requiring technology and highly specialised skills. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on the economy will have adverse impacts on the disadvantaged. From a health and social services perspective, this will affect access to grant payments, relief programmes and social protection. It was recommended that a comprehensive solution to the abovementioned issues must achieve short-term economic relief such as increasing social grants. It must also provide long-term income flexibility that enables people to meet financial goals, pursue meaningful work and achieve economic mobility that will diminish poverty and inequality. This will in turn improve the mental health of workers, create generational wealth and provide more room for skilled individuals.<sup>3</sup>

Sibusiso Mazomba of the **Land and Housing** working group explored issues of access to land, housing, water and sanitation and infrastructure development. He highlighted that most of the current issues of land emanate from policies implemented before 1994 that were designed to stifle the black majority's capacity. This section of research was guided by principles of land redistribution, reform, justice, and restitution. It was important to acknowledge the unequal impacts of poor implementation of land reform policies on women and the call for more responsive policies to rectify this. There is also a need to increase the land reform budget for the National Development Plan (NDP) goals related to land to be

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<sup>2</sup> Presentation by Andile Mthombeni, Political Participation Working Group, February 24, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Presentation by Surekha Bhugeloo, Health and Social Services Working Group, February 24, 2021.

achieved. In terms of housing, water and sanitation, more emphasis is required on developing informal settlements and integrating them into the service grid of the country.<sup>4</sup>

The working group on **Economic Empowerment**, represented by Yolokazi Mfuto, depicted how the youth are viewed as passive consumers instead of agents and stakeholders contributing meaningfully to the SA economy. She problematised how young people are under-represented in the country's economy, business, and esteemed occupations in government. The existing employment initiatives currently operating, like the Youth Environmental Service project, have failed to bring significant, tangible change in the lives of young South Africans. These initiatives and other policies are not inclusive of young people and hence fall short of the threshold and targeted goals for economic empowerment. It was recommended that there be a change in the economic policies to ensure that young people are the main stakeholders in discussions on economic policy-making as they are most affected.<sup>5</sup>

Omhle Ntshingila, a member of the **Social Cohesion and Inclusion** working group, shed light on the problems and tensions evident in SA society where matters of cohesion and inclusion are concerned. Firstly, in terms of religion, there is a lack of regulation and religious accountability for unlawful religious behaviour which creates mistrust in the religious sector. The regulation of the religious sector must be intensified to protect citizens from fraud and extortion. With regards to nationality, there is a misapprehension about the politics of migration which has resulted in xenophobic attitudes and behaviours that are unaccounted for by the state. Race and ethnicity continue to divide the country socio-economically and LGBTQ+ members continue to find disparities between their Constitutional rights and lived experiences. It was recommended that all key actors of society and government must be held accountable for the promotion of divisions and the violation of human rights. All key actors in the country must collaborate to put equity at the forefront of the country's development Agenda for true social cohesion and inclusion to succeed.<sup>6</sup>

The working group on **Education**, represented by Dikeledi Moabelo, interrogated the issue of access to quality basic and higher education as stipulated in the fourth UN Sustainable Development Goals. The main issues presented were the systematic challenges, where no central agencies are coordinating educational programmes. Only 1% to 2% of the educational budget is allocated to early childhood education, which creates a defective foundation with

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<sup>4</sup> Presentation by Sibusiso Mazomba, Land and Housing Working Group, February 24, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Presentation by Yolokazi Mfuto, Economic Empowerment Working Group, February 24, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Presentation by Omhle Ntshingila, Social Cohesion and Inclusion Working Group, February 24, 2021.

greater negative impacts on rural education. Only 59% of schools in SA meet the minimum required infrastructural standards and 7,520 schools use boreholes to access water. Moreover, the country has witnessed the digital divide accelerated by the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic as only a certain class of students and educational institutes can benefit from online learning. Therefore, these issues need serious attention to enhance education.<sup>7</sup>

**Peace and Security** was another theme analysed by working group members, Kagiso Segage and Anita Dywaba. These members highlighted various issues relating to peace and security in the country, including: crime, gender-based violence (GBV), xenophobia, human trafficking, constitutionalism, human rights, and corruption. Recommendations included: improving socio-economic development as this contributes to violence and criminal activity. Increased investment in resources for adequate data collection and recording of crimes are a necessity for the combating of GBV. To deal with migration issues, it was argued that that the detention centres must be dismantled as they are ineffective and rather promote deportation of illegal migrants. With regards to constitutionalism, there is a lack of access to efficient and effective justice systems which hinders the realisation of human rights. Civic education to explain the implementation of human rights needs to be prioritised and accompanied by more awareness campaigns, educational programmes, and workshops in disadvantaged communities.<sup>8</sup>

The last working group on **Climate Change** was represented by Tyler Booth who emphasised that the “future we want as young people is going to be green, intersectional and just”. The four lenses through which the working group analysed climate change were: social justice, environmental education, biodiversity loss and the circular economy. It was highlighted that there is a need for climate change issues to be represented in the APRM as climate change can exacerbate all other issues such as land and housing, health and social services, and economic development. The recommendations were as follow. Social justice must be reflected in policy implementation, and public participation (consulting local communities and youth) must be accommodated. The private and public sectors must collaborate to confront climate change and these sectors, along with the government, must be held accountable. Lastly, there needs to be civic education and awareness by including climate change in the curriculum.<sup>9</sup>

The validated draft submission will now be edited into the final report to be launched. Once the final report is completed, it will be formally presented to the South African Focal Point,

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<sup>7</sup> Presentation by Dikeledi Moabelo, Education Working Group, February 24, 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Presentations by Kagiso Segage and Anita Dywaba, Peace and Security Working Group, February 24, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Presentation by Tyler Booth, Climate Change Working Group, February 24, 2021.

APRM NGC and the APRM Continental Secretariat for consideration ahead of the South Africa Second Generation Review Report. What is evident in this youth-centred submission is that the inputs of young people are of a well-articulated and highly intellectual standard. Therefore, all stakeholders need to engage with the youth and be inclusive of them in conversations that impact their present so that they can indeed be catalysts of change and take control of their future.

A recording of the full Zoom meeting is available on YouTube [here](#) and the draft submission can be accessed online [here](#) in a Google Document. For more on the SAPS Project, see [here](#).