



ZIMBABWE APRM POPULAR SENSITISATION (ZAPS) PROJECT

Report of the Civil Society APRM Sensitisation Workshop

Friday 26 February 2021, via Zoom

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Introduction

[The Zimbabwe APRM Popular Sensitisation \(ZAPS\) Project](#) entered its second phase on Friday 26 February 2021. The [SIVIO Institute](#) and the [South African Institute of International Affairs \(SAIIA\)](#) and hosted a Civil Society APRM Sensitisation Workshop with over 75 attendees. This included representatives from the APRM Secretariat, Zimbabwe's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, multiple Zimbabwean Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and CSOs from SADC countries that had gone through a similar APRM process. This was an opportunity to hear from the APRM Secretariat on the APRM's processes and structures, elaborate on the role of CSOs, and draw lessons from [Botswana](#), [Namibia](#), [South Africa](#), and Zambia experiences.

Official View from the Government of Zimbabwe

Ambassador Raphael Faranisi, Chief Director of Multilateral Affairs, was in attendance representing Zimbabwe's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. This is the ministry that houses Zimbabwe's APRM Focal Point. The presence of the Zimbabwean government was crucial as it indicated the government's commitment to the APRM process and its acknowledgment of the potential benefits of the ZAPS Project. Ambassador Faranisi emphasised President Emmerson Mnangagwa's commitment to transparency in governance issues as this will enhance Zimbabwe's democracy, create sustainable peace, stability, and economic development. He further reminded stakeholders that the APRM process should be engaged with an open and collaborative mindset rather than confrontation or finger-pointing. Although the

Zimbabwean government is yet to finalise processes of establishing national structures to implement the APRM, necessary consultations are underway to plan for this. Therefore, the meeting provided the ideal opportunity for the Zimbabwean government to receive advice and counsel from other SADC countries on what to expect.

The APRM and the Role of CSOs

Presentations on the APRM were made by Mr Steven Gruzd, head of SAIIA's African Governance and Diplomacy Programme, and Mr Dalmar Jama and Ms Ejigayhu Tefera, APRM Coordination Team for Zimbabwe, from the APRM Secretariat. They can be found online on the ZAPS Project page [here](#).

The APRM Strategic Plan 2020-2024 places great priority on Civil Society participation and engagement in the success of the APRM. One of the most important beliefs of the APRM is that "civil society involvement can catalyse reform",¹ hence the involvement of CSOs is vital in Zimbabwe's national APRM process. CSOs exist outside the state which allows for enhanced accountability, transparency, and good governance through lobbying, petitioning and advocacy conducted before, during, and after the reviews.² Moreover, CSOs can comprehensively contribute to their national APRM process by providing submissions, reports, and research on issues of governance – as will be the case with the ZAPS CSO submission towards the end of the Project. The significance of this submission will not only be the successful collaborative effort of Zimbabwean CSOs, but also the representation and voicing of the concerns of Zimbabwean civil society where governance is concerned.

Lessons from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Zambia

CSOs that had taken part in previous APRM Popular Sensitisation Projects shared their lessons, challenges, and triumphs. Presentations were made by Susan Mwape, Director of Common Cause Zambia, Dietrich Remmert from the Institute for Public

¹ Steven Gruzd, "APRM in a Nutshell: And an Introduction to the ZAPS Project", February 26, 2021, [PowerPoint Presentation \(saiia.org.za\)](#).

² Ejigayhu Tefera, "APRM in a Nutshell: SADC, CSOs and the APRM", February 26, 2021, [PowerPoint Presentation \(saiia.org.za\)](#).

Policy Research in Namibia, Maipelo Phale from the Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations, and Dimpho Lekgeu from YouthLab in South Africa.

One of the recurring points from the various contributions was the importance of not politicising the process.³ This is particularly prominent as every review must be “competent, credible and free of political manipulation” as mandated by the APRM.⁴ Secondly, the technical support provided by SAIIA allowed CSOs to benefit from the knowledge and information gained through SAIIA’s APRM experience with other countries,⁵ and the provision of financial assistance where needed.⁶ The third area of convergence evident was the importance of unified, collaborative participation between all CSOs involved in each country, and between the CSOs and their respective governments.⁷ This not only assists in terms of efficiency and forming a common voice, but also in rebuilding trust and communication between CSOs and the respective governments for future initiatives. The South African experience depicted the benefits of involving the youth in the APRM process as the submission was generated entirely by young South Africans. Hearing from the youth brought great insight about their perceptions on governance in their country as they shaped the scope of the research to identify key issues.⁸ This can be an approach Zimbabwe can also benefit from.

Moving forward, it was advised that a separate CSO working group be established to focus on the APRM process as it is a mammoth but important task.⁹ It was further advised that there should be equal representation of different stakeholders in the National Governing Council (NGC) to ensure even engagement of all institutions. Sustaining the momentum was also raised as a crucial point, for example using online platforms, as the APRM process can be timeous and slow.¹⁰ Moreover, it is of great

³ Maipelo Phale, Programs Coordinator, Botswana Council of NGOs (BOCONGO) and Susan Mwape, Director, Common Cause Zambia.

⁴ Steven Gruzd, “APRM in a Nutshell”.

⁵ Maipelo Phale (BOCONGO) and Susan Mwape (Common Cause Zambia).

⁶ Dietrich Rimmert, Research Associate, Institute for Public Policy Research, Namibia.

⁷ Dietrich Rimmert (IPPR, Namibia), Dimpho Lekgeu (Youthlab, South Africa), Maipelo Phale (BOCONGO) and Susan Mwape (Common Cause Zambia).

⁸ Dimpho Lekgeu, Youthlab, South Africa.

⁹ Susan Mwape (Common Cause Zambia) and Dietrich Rimmert (IPPR, Namibia).

¹⁰ Dietrich Rimmert (IPPR, Namibia), Dimpho Lekgeu (Youthlab, South Africa), Maipelo Phale (BOCONGO) and Susan Mwape (Common Cause Zambia).

importance to raise civic awareness and provide civic education by simplifying the APRM processes for ordinary citizens to comprehend its dynamics.¹¹

Although it is evident that the task at hand is great; the various insights provided an invaluable foundation for Zimbabwean CSOs to build on during their APRM journey. As monumental as the task may be, one thing is certain – the task will be made much easier if all relevant parties work collaboratively in unity for the benefit of the Zimbabwean nation.

A recording of the full Zoom meeting is available on YouTube [here](#) and all presentations made [here](#).

¹¹ Maipelo Phale (BOCONGO) and Susan Mwape (Common Cause Zambia).