



BOTSWANA APRM POPULAR SENSITISATION (BAPS) PROJECT

Report of the Civil Society APRM Submission Launch

Tuesday 20 April 2021 at 10:00, via Zoom

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The [Botswana APRM Popular Sensitisation \(BAPS\) Project](#) reached its final stage on Tuesday, 20 April 2021. The [Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations](#) (BOCONGO) in collaboration with the [South African Institute of International Affairs](#) (SAIIA) hosted the Civil Society APRM Submission Launch with up to 75 online attendees. This included representatives from the APRM Secretariat, Botswana's Government, BOCONGO member organisations and SAIIA.

How the process unfolded

The journey to the launch began with a Pre-Planning Meeting in March 2020 to explain the aims of the BAPS project how civil society could be involved. This meeting developed a roadmap for CSO participation in Botswana's APRM process and planned future activities. A CSO Working Group was then formed to identify and write about the key governance issues in Botswana for the submission. These were the 12 key governance issues identified by the CSOs: (1) Human Rights (2) Separation of Powers (3) Public Service and Decentralisation (4) Citizen Participation and Economic Inclusion (5) Transparency and Accountability (6) Vulnerable Groups (7) Education (8) Sustainable Development and Natural Resource Management, Access to Land and Infrastructure (9) Food Security (10) Crime and Security (11) Research and Development (12) Foreign Policy.

This was followed by a Sensitisation Workshop in with other countries that have gone through similar APRM processes. Resource persons from the APRM Secretariat as well as other Southern African countries being Zambia and Namibia, that had completed APRM processes and reviews, were invited. This was mainly to share their experiences and expertise at the workshop as well as promote peer learning. The submission was completed in April 2021.

The official Launch

The keynote speaker was Dr. Kaelo Molefhe, Advisor to His Excellency the President of Botswana department of Governance. Dr. Molefhe expressed the importance of civil society involvement in the

APRM process and in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the country. He further assured that many of the recommendations documented in the BAPS submission will form part of the country's constitutional review process. Dr. Rachel Mukamunana, the Country Coordinator for Botswana in the APRM Secretariat, spoke on behalf of the APRM Secretariat. Dr. Mukamunana commended the resilience of BOCONGO and SAIIA in completing the BAPS Project despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted the value of the BAPS submission to the country's APRM review process which must reflect input from all layers of society.

There were interventions made by two representatives who took part in the writing of the BAPS submission. Ms Alice Mogwe, Executive Director of the Botswana Centre for Human Rights, recommended that government develop a comprehensive national action plan which applies to both government and the public sector. She reiterated that the recommendations made in the BAPS submission were not necessarily of the CSOs but were issues of the people of Botswana and hence should be implemented by the government.

Dumiso Gatsha, Executive Director of Success Capital Organisation, spoke on the 'Vulnerable Groups' section. This included women, children and youth, indigenous communities, the LGBTQI+ community, disabled individuals, the elderly, and those living with HIV in Botswana. The approach was to voice out the issues of those who are marginalised by relying on literature and securing various perspectives from vulnerable groups. This would contribute towards eliminating vulnerabilities and making the country more inclusive.

Concluding remarks

The Executive Director of BOCONGO, Mr. Monametsi Sokwe, concluded by reiterating the historic nature of the BAPS submission. He expressed that the submission is a tangible contribution and depiction of the important work of CSOs in Botswana. It allows for the country to introspect and objectively reengage on the kind of future that is needed for the country. Mr. Sokwe further asserted that the submission must be the basis of every NGO's and CSO's advocacy plan as it details key issues that civil society need the government to address. The presence of a government representative in the meeting provided a unique opportunity for civil society and the government to begin engaging on collective mechanisms to improve governance in the country.

Having launched the BAPS submission, the next step is for BOCONGO to disseminate it to various stakeholders in the country. This is going to be crucial in raising awareness and providing understanding to the public so that further engagement on the report can continue.

The link to the recording of the event can be found [here](#), and the final BAPS submission [here](#).