

**Remarks from the APRM Secretariat on behalf of
Country coordination Unit for Zimbabwe at the
APRM Continental Secretariat**

Zimbabwe APRM Popular Sensitisation (ZAPS)

**CIVIL SOCIETY APRM SUBMISSION
VALIDATION WORKSHOP
VIA ZOOM**

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Distinguished Delegates,

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. A very good morning to all present here. It is an honour and privilege for me to present these remarks at the Zimbabwe APRM Popular Sensitization Project (ZAPS) Civil Society Validation Workshop, which aims to discuss and finalize the draft submission on the 10 major governance issues identified and solicit wider civil society endorsement.
2. The APRM process can catalyse and bolster reform efforts, and open civic space for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and citizens through the dialogue it promotes. This is a great opportunity for Zimbabwe to explain and showcase its best practices to its peers and build capacity in Zimbabwe's CSOs to provide governance bodies in all four APRM thematic areas including the private sector with an independent technical assessment of challenges and good practices.
3. CSOs are integral parts of the APRM process both at the national and continental levels. This is due to the importance of CSOs in enhancing accountability, transparency, and good governance. The fact that the CSOs exist outside the state and have the potential to positively influence governance outcomes is critical for improvements. Even more important is the ability for CSOs to pro-actively monitor the implementation of agreed upon recommendations once the reviews are completed, to ensure governance bodies do not lose sight of the goals.
4. For APRM, CSOs represent important, independent sources of information, recommendations, and follow-up, while they can also provide an independent assessment of sensitive and politically challenging areas. Furthermore, national APRM processes represent a formidable platform for advancing concerns of civil society organisations in their areas of competence, whether in gender equality for example, or local development initiatives.
5. In consequence, CSOs should seize the opportunity to influence the national APRM processes in a consensual and collaborative approach with the national APRM statutory bodies. This will also help foster a national debate on governance, without political contestation, where CSOs can draw attention to important areas requiring improvement as well as the success stories and the obstacles they face generally. These successes and failures are important elements that can contribute positively to the development and production of the Country Review Reports. 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 poor governance, and to propose solutions and participate in their implementation.

6. It is a requirement that civil society be involved in a country's APRM process. But the extent of their involvement depends on how informed, interested, and mobilised they are. It is of paramount importance that participating civil society representatives understand the APRM, its goals and processes, and the opportunities that are available to use the Mechanism to highlight governance issues in public fora to ultimately influence governance policies.
7. ZAPS aim of enhancing the participation of civil society in the Zimbabwean APRM process, through capacity-building, fostering better knowledge of the APRM and its rules and opportunities, and developing an evidence-based written submission on the key governance issues in Zimbabwe is laudable. It is what the founders of the APRM hoped for from CSOs and is necessary for the goal of undertaking a successful, inclusive, and meaningful APRM review process.
8. It is to be noted that CSO existence within the Mechanism has not yet been fully utilised. This is the opportunity for Zimbabwe's CSOs to lead the way in demonstrating how a consensual and goal driven approach with all governance bodies in the nation, whether traditional, local, or central government, the private sector, or sectoral regulators, to lead to the successful implementation of the development agenda.
9. We encourage Zimbabwean CSOs to continue participating in APRM processes through providing submissions, reports and research on governance challenges and proposed reforms, and to establish clear mechanisms for ensuring greater and broader-based civil society participation in the country self-assessment process.
10. In conclusion, dear participants, please be assured that the APRM Continental Secretariat will continue to work with you and the national APRM structures to help strengthen civil society participation in the APRM process. This is indeed vital for the success of the APRM and the promotion of good governance in Africa.

I thank you.