

Closing Remarks for Training Workshop on “Enhancing the Role and Effective Participation of Parliamentarians in the APRM Process”

Delivered by

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Honorable Bernard Membe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the National Focal Points of the APRM

**The Honorable Minister Fred Jachan Omach,
State Minister of Finance, Republic of Uganda,**

Chairperson of the APRM National Governing Council, Prof. Hassa Mlawa

Honorable Members of the Pan-African Parliament

Honorable Members of Parliament of the Tanzanian National Parliament

The UNDP Country Director

Fellow UNECA Colleagues

Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

There is no doubt that the last three-days have provided a unique opportunity for a highly interactive forum for discussion and exchange of lessons learned and best practices, as well as suggestions for new approaches to the role, functions, modalities and strategic partnerships that can enhance the participation of African Parliamentarians both at the national and continental levels. In many ways, therefore, the main objectives of this workshop -- to enhance the information, conceptual, analytical, knowledge and skills base of national and continental parliamentarians -- have been achieved with remarkable success.

This workshop has also demonstrated that the APRM is a collective African responsibility, even as countries must explore individual approaches to its implementation at the national level. The very notion of “peer Learning” built into the APRM process allows stakeholders to learn from each other, avoid costly mistakes and reap the benefits of the process and its outcomes.

Among the strategic issues that have been widely discussed and agreed upon is the centrality of the role that Parliaments must play in championing the cause of the APRM. Parliament is not only a subject of the APRM, but it is also an agent of mobilization for support for the success of the APRM.

There is also a consensus that the best way to effectively participate in the APRM process is for parliament to empower itself through awareness campaigns and strategic interactions with other key stakeholders, especially from Civil society organizations, think-tanks, private sector and other actors in the national governance system. It is clear that without striking such strategic alliances and partnership with other stakeholders, Parliament's role will be marginalized and neglected. More importantly, effective participation in the APRM requires an information feedback-loop between Parliamentarians and their constituencies: it is imperative that MPs communicate as much as possible about the APRM and what it means for their constituencies. Also, the perennial problem of the imbalance of power between the branches of government in African needs to be addressed, if the APRM is to succeed in our countries.

APRM is a review of the entire governance system, therefore, the presumption that the executive should be in the driver seat should cease and allow all branches of government, particularly that which represents the “people’s voice” to play a leading role. In this regard, the APRM Secretariat in each country should be engaged to constantly report to Parliament the progress of the APRM process both nationally and continentally. The issue is independence of the APRM Secretariat rather to be seen as another bureaucratic outfit of the government.

Honorable Ministers,

Distinguished participants,

The participants at this workshop unanimously agreed that role of Parliament should not end with the completion of the CSAR. In fact, the role of Parliament takes on an even higher significance with the implementation of the National Program of Action (NPoA). The workshop agreed that Parliament should have a permanent Committee to which the APRM NGC must report periodically on implementation progress. It was also agreed that there should be a permanent body –

perhaps a partnership between Parliament and CSO and media – to regularly monitor the progress of APRM programs both in the form of budgetary allocations and concrete programs and its outcome.

Honorable Ministers, distinguished participants, this workshop has been most productive both in terms of its breadth and scope of discussions and resolutions. The next step is to put into concrete action what has been agreed upon which can be aptly called “Bagamoyo Plan of Action”. The onus is on you, honorable Parliamentarians, to both take up this Action Plan, brief your National Parliaments and the top-leadership of the PAP so that this will become a reality. The UNECA and other strategic partners – the UNDP and the ADB- will stand with you, side by side, step by step, to ensure that the rich discussions and consensus reached in Bagamoyo will not be discarded to the dustbin of history.

On behalf of the Executive Secretary of the UNECA, I would first like to thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Focal Point of the APRM for gracing this workshop with his presence, and closing it for us. I wish also to thank all the Parliamentarians both from the PAP and National Parliaments who, in

spite of their busy schedules, have agreed to be imprisoned in this small but beautiful town of Bagamoyo for three good days. It is a testimony to your unyielding commitment to the APRM and, indeed, to the progress of this continent.

I sincerely thank Prof. Mlawa, the Chairperson of the Tanzania NGC, for his wonderful hospitality and devotion to the APRM process in Tanzania and indeed, the continent.

Let me also thank sincerely, the National APRM Secretariat, its Executive Secretary, Prof. Mukagara and his wonderful staff who have painstakingly served as rapporteurs for this meeting. You would agree with me that they have done a wonderful job.

Now, I wish also to thank my colleagues from UNDP and UNECA, who have worked tirelessly over the last few months to make this workshop a reality and a resounding success.

And, finally, let me thank the staff and management of this wonderful Hotel, who deserves our appreciation for looking after us so well during these three-days without any incidence.

I wish you all a safe journey to your final destinations.

Asante Saana.