



UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Opening Statement by Mr. Abdoulie Janneh,  
Executive Secretary and UN Under-Secretary General of the  
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

at the

Expert Group Meeting on “Harmonizing the APRM-National  
Programme of Action (NPoAs) and other national plans into a  
Common Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)”, to  
be delivered by Mr. Pedro Antonio, Director, Sub-Regional  
Office for Eastern Africa (SRO/EA)

29 – 30 September 2010, Imperial Hotel,

Kampala, Uganda

**His Excellency Minister of State for Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Planning) and Chairperson, National Planning Authority, Hon. Ephraim Kamuntu,**

**Mr Theophane Nikeyema, UNDP Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator for Uganda**

**Madame Maitre Domitilla Mukanataganzwa, Deputy Chairperson of the APR Panel**

**Bishop Zac Niringiye, Chair, Uganda APRM National Governing Council**

**Honorable Ministers, Ambassadors and APRM Focal Points from APRM participating countries,**

**The Chairpersons and members of APRM National Governing Councils from Uganda and other APRM participating countries,**

**Distinguished delegates, experts, participants and colleagues,**

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to this Expert Group Meeting on “Harmonizing the APRM-National Programme of Action (NPOAs) and other National Development Plans into a common Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)” holding here in this beautiful city of Kampala over the next couple of days.

Permit me, from the very outset, to stress how grateful UNECA and UNDP are to the Government of the Republic of Uganda and the National Planning Authority (NPA), as the Focal Point of NEPAD and APRM in Uganda, for readily agreeing to host this very important meeting.

UNECA is very proud and indeed privileged to jointly organize this important meeting with the UNDP in close collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB). You would recall that these three institutions were designated as Strategic Partners by the APR Forum of Heads of State and Governments in Kigali, Rwanda, in February 2004, to support the implementation of the APRM.

This meeting, therefore, is in the spirit of collective efforts in advancing Africa's democratic renewal and developmental goals within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

It is in this context that the strategic partners have over the past few years, collaborated with civil society organizations, African governments, Pan-African institutions, United Nations agencies and other partners to provide a highly interactive fora for discussion and exchange of lessons learned and best practices on the technical, organizational, methodological, research, communication, planning and

monitoring challenges, as well as best practices associated with the implementation of the APRM.

**Honorable Ministers, Distinguished delegates and participants,**

It is by no means an accident that the organizers chose Kampala as the venue for this meeting although it is always pleasant to attend meetings in the “pearl of Africa.” Indeed, our primary reason for choosing Uganda to host this important event is simply due to the fact that you have demonstrated outstanding leadership in the implementation of the APRM process, especially in this area of harmonization of the APRM-NPoA with your current National Development Plan – no wonder that Uganda’s new Five-Year National Development Plan is now being touted as a model for the whole continent.

**Distinguished delegates and participants,**

There is no gain in saying that the African Peer Review Mechanism is one of the most significant initiatives of Africa. Under the auspices of the New Partnership for Economic Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was launched in March 2003 as a self-monitoring instrument voluntarily acceded to by member States of the African Union.

So far, fourteen (14) APRM participating countries of the thirty (30) acceded countries have conducted successful governance self assessments. Among those who have undertaken the rigorous self-assessment and validated their Country Review Report, thirteen (13) are at different stages of implementing their National Programme of Action (NPoA).

The mechanism has registered remarkable successes in that so many countries have now embraced it and the reviews conducted thus far have earned the reputation for professionalism, integrity and forthrightness and are being taken seriously by the participating countries.

Despite these considerable achievements, there is no doubt that the NPoA poses formidable challenges to the national planning systems of APRM participating countries. Its value addition to national socio-economic development would highly depend on the extent to which it is integrated into the mainstream of the national policy and planning systems of the country.

### **Distinguished delegates and participants,**

Experiences from the pioneer countries suggest that the NPoA is the weakest link in the APRM process and that there are real challenges to its effective implementation. In fact, preliminary studies initiated by the APRM Strategic Partners -- UNECA, UNDP and the AfDB – have shown the following key challenges to the NPoA implementation:

- Discrepancies between the costs of the NPoAs and the information held by the relevant sector ministries and agencies;
- Lack of clear links with the funding mechanisms such as the national budget and the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF);
- Weak coordination between agencies responsible for costing the NPoAs and those responsible for financing the programmes; and
- Difficulties in identifying the NPoA programmes and projects in the national budgets and, thus, its impact on the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).

It is against this background that the APRM strategic partners felt that there was an urgent need to explore synergies between the NPoA and other national development plans in order to avoid duplication and overstressing of scarce financial and human resource in the APRM participating countries.

One of the fundamental principles of the APRM process is to foster "peer learning" of best practices among African countries and to build a sense of community among them in regards to the implementation of the APRM. You would therefore agree with me that the value-addition of

the APRM and its comparative advantage and superiority over other development planning and processes including, the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), is the bringing together of African states as equals and to share experiences and best practices in governance and development. This workshop is organized to give life to the principle of “peer learning” which is embedded in the APRM.

**Honorable Ministers, distinguished delegates and participants,**

According to the APRM Country Guidelines, the primary purpose of the NPoA is to identify governance areas that need to be improved and to mobilize the country's efforts in implementing the necessary reforms to enhance its state of governance and socio-economic development. The guidelines stipulate unequivocally that resulting National Program of Action (NPoA) should be integrated into the national development plans or strategies.

This workshop presents a unique opportunity for experts from APRM participating countries to exchange views on the key challenges affecting the process and suggest concrete tools and ways to make the APRM-NPoA a credible and an operational document for the national socio-economic development of our countries.

It further provides an opportunity to seriously reflect on the challenges encountered in the designing, costing, and harmonizing the NPoAs with

other development programmes including its funding and monitoring. Specifically, this workshop seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) Analyzing the costing process and challenges;
- (ii) Evaluating the links between the NPoAs, the MTEF and existing national development strategies and plans;
- (iii) Investigating the financing instruments, particularly the budget and Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF);
- (iv) Examining the Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks for APRM-NPoA's implementation; and, finally
- (v) Establishing a standardized framework for integrating the APRM-NPoAs into the National Development Plans.

The outcome of this workshop would be to come up with strategic recommendations and guidelines that would ensure that the APRM-NPoA is linked systematically to the national development plans (PRSPs,) in terms of funding and costing in the context of national budget (MTEF).

### **Distinguished delegates and participants,**

The critical strategic and sustainability question for the APRM is how to ensure that the NPoA becomes an integral part of national planning and development processes and its effective implementation.

Indeed, the overarching strategic question for APRM participating countries is to ask whether the existing PRSPs should be integrated into the APRM, rather than the other way round. This workshop should seek to clarify this issue among others.

Given its emphasis on participation, consultation, dialogue and accountability, the APRM has a better chance of succeeding than any other previously experimented national development process.

There is no better way to give real life and meaning to the “Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness” than countries faithfully and diligently integrating the APRM-NPoA. African leadership and ownership of the APRM is what sets it apart from other donor driven priorities in development policies and planning.

**Honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates,**

In conclusion, let me just say that this “Expert Group Meeting” comes at a critical time for the APRM process. The realization of a national vision requires the wholehearted support and ownership by all stakeholders.

The APRM has created a heightened awareness of governance and development challenges among citizens given them hope that their voices would be listened to and desires implemented.

The NPoA is the link between citizen aspirations and the realization of these hopes. By harmonizing the NPoA with other development plans, Africa can tackle and track its development challenges and progress towards meeting the MDGs.

It is my hope that the outcomes of this expert group meeting will consolidate the gains of the APRM and help institutionalize it within the mainstream of African development planning and practice.

**I thank you for your kind attention.**