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**APRM and the Quest for a Developmental State: the Role of CSOs in
Implementing the National Programme of Action**

List of Acronyms

APRM	Africa Peer Review Mechanism
CBO	Community-based organization
CRM	Country Review Mission
CSAR	Country Self-Assessment Report
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECOSOCC	Economic, Social and Cultural Council/South Africa
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NDP	National Development Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's development
NGC	National Governing Council
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPOA	National Programme of Action
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs
UGMP	Uganda Governance Monitoring Platform
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. The purpose of this parliamentary document is to review the state of implementation of the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), in particular, the National Programme of Action (NPOA), and the role that civil society can play in ensuring that the NPOA is comprehensively implemented. The document assesses these important concepts and processes in the context of the Developmental State, illustrating the potential of APRM to foster and propel States towards achieving this status through building and gainfully utilizing important partnerships with civil society. The paper examines the World Bank and IMF-sponsored Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) as a comparable approach to governance mechanisms, from which lessons can be drawn. It also underscores the unique architecture, concepts and principles in the APRM process that avoid some of the potential pitfalls that beset PRSP and other existing governance mechanisms in Africa.

2. The paper further looks at some of the strategies that civil society has employed in various APRM country processes and which strategies have worked well and can be improved. It then addresses challenges that civil society organizations (CSOs) have faced in the pursuit of good governance through the APRM process. The prospects for future CSO participation and use of the NPOA as a tool for constructing a Developmental State are also propounded in the paper, with a view to informing policymakers on areas that may need strengthening and re-orientation.

A. GOVERNANCE AND THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

3. APRM background documents recognize the role of good governance in 'creating well-functioning and accountable institutions - political, judicial and administrative - which citizens regard as legitimate, in which they participate in decisions that affect their daily lives and by which they are empowered' (Kofi A. Annan, *Partnerships for a Global Community* (1998))¹.

4. This is an express recognition of the concept that, democracy and good political governance is fundamental to realization of citizen rights individually and corporately and that Governments must be accountable to the citizenry. Good governance has been put forward as the basis and a prerequisite for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

5. Democratic governance as a concept and practice is paramount to achievement of the Developmental State. It focuses on the nature of leadership and citizen interactions and dynamics; the functionality of political, social and economic institutions in place and the appropriateness of policies and legal frameworks to foster development, particularly social and economic development outcomes².

6. The Developmental State has been defined as a State that is 'capable of deploying its authority, credibility and legitimacy, and able, in a binding manner, to design and implement development policies and programmes for promoting transformation and growth, as well as human capabilities³. It has been characterized as having at least four features; development-oriented political leadership, autonomous and effective leadership; production-oriented private sector and performance-oriented governance.⁴ This parliamentary paper argues that these concepts and principles are clearly reflected in the instruments and orientation of the APRM process and subsequent NPOA implementation.

¹ APRM. Self-Assessment Questionnaire, Section 1-Democracy and Political Governance.

² P. Meyns and Charity Musamba (eds.), 2010. *The Developmental State in Africa: Problems and Prospects*. INEF Report 101/2010.

³ UNECA, 2011. *Economic Report on Africa 2011: Governing development in Africa - the role of the State in economic transformation*.

⁴ P. Meyns and Charity Musamba (eds.), op.cit.

7. The notion of the Developmental State as defined above supports the APRM emphasis on fostering democratic frameworks at country levels to ensure social and political inclusiveness. This requires the mobilization of stakeholders around a nationally owned development framework, including its vision and targets. The processes around NPoA as designed by APRM are illustrative of traction towards the manifestation of the Developmental State. In comparison with the PRSP approach, the theory of the Developmental State places the citizen at the heart of public policy in order to provide a sense of ownership of the national developmental agenda and not merely to formalize their participation in the development process.

8. Furthermore, APRM has been hailed for having a wholesome approach to development issues, in that it presents governance as a multifaceted concept, captured under four thematic pillars: Democracy and political governance; Socio-economic development; Economic governance and management; and Corporate governance. The NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance makes an indivisible link between governance and development, noting that Africa faces grave challenges including the eradication of poverty. The Declaration underscores the need to foster the socio-economic development of the continent through good governance approaches.⁵

i. Comparative assessment of the poverty reduction strategy and the NPoA in the context of civil society engagement in policy

9. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) initiative, which was established and supported by the World Bank and the IMF for highly indebted poor countries seeking to qualify for debt relief, is significant in contextualizing the actors, content and processes that are fundamental to the successful implementation of such strategies.⁶ Although questions persist as to the effectiveness of PRSP in achieving development, it laid the basis for certain rules of engagement, such as the imperative for inclusive, broad-based policymaking structures and policies, with civil society as a key stakeholder.

10. CSOs are an essential component in the development process and the quality and character of their involvement must match up to this role. The place and space of civil society in development has not always been well defined in practice, creating a push and pull dynamic that in many instances does not bode well for participatory governance. In most African countries, populations lack access to information regarding key public processes, institutions and decision-making, which hampers their ability to interact with or act on strategic development initiatives. Civil society as an intermediary comes in to occupy the space between the Citizen and the State, providing much needed agency, and promoting social accountability.

11. The importance of social accountability mechanisms in promoting citizen voice and spaces cannot be overemphasized, particularly those that 'seek to directly involve ordinary citizens in processes of allocating, disbursing, monitoring and evaluating the use of public resources'.⁷

12. The theory behind PRSP has been the substantive and meaningful participation of the population through civil society representatives, who would play a critical role in mobilizing

⁵ AHG/235 (XXXVIII) Annex I Paragraph 5.

⁶ Said Adejumobi, 2006. Governance and Poverty Reduction in Africa: A Critique of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

⁷ <http://web.worldbank.org>.

consensus towards sustainable outcomes regarding development initiatives, policies and resources and priority setting.⁸ Under PRSP, the process through which poverty eradication strategies are identified and prioritized is just as important as the outcome. In that sense, it was deemed that the more qualitative and wider the public participation, the greater the likelihood of success of the strategies employed, and outcomes. However, experience from implementation of PRSPs demonstrates that this objective has not been fully achieved so far.

13. A recurrent theme around the reviews of PRSP, however, has been its constraints when it comes to deepening the quality of civil society engagement and participation.⁹ In many African States, participation at the local levels in governance issues is generally limited despite the existence of frameworks to promote public participation, and ownership of local plans and programmes is usually weak. The PRSP in several African countries failed to provide a comprehensive and structural framework for public participation, resulting in bureaucratic government-led processes and instruments that reflected low consensus or ownership by the populations. This has had the result of marginalizing the role of civil society in influencing the domestic development agenda. The lack of a clear definition of what civil society participation means has led to limited participation by civil society and narrow consultative processes.¹⁰

14. Another drawback of the PRSP was the lack of direct CSO involvement in monitoring the PRSP. CSOs in general did not participate in processes such as data collection or policy analysis of the review findings, despite the proven capacities of CSOs to monitor 'input, output, outcome, and impact'.¹¹ The significant and substantive involvement of civil society in the appraisal and analysis that governance review processes afford would have helped to promote transparency and accountability.

15. The APRM in comparison has highlighted the role and form of participation of CSOs both in the core documents and through empirical evidence in APRM member States (see section iii for empirical evidence). The core documents establish institutional arrangements that take civil society, the private sector and government into account as the main actors. Through the NPoA, all these players are involved in development planning and policy initiatives that the APRM platform provides.

16. APRM framework documents address the issue of social accountability by institutionalizing civil society in its processes and structures as a legitimate, inalienable and vital partner. To avoid rendering the NPoA a purely technocratic process reflecting the biases of bureaucratic elites, CSO participation has been cemented as one of its fundamental tenets. This is an unprecedented role in the annals of development planning in Africa.

⁸ Lazarus, Joel (2008). 'Participation in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: reviewing the past, assessing the present and predicting the future'. *Third World Quarterly* 29 (6): 1205–1221.

⁹ See Innocent Fred Ejolu, 'The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP): A Critical Analysis of the Fundamental Limitations and A Conceptual Framework for Reform'. Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, Maastricht University, 2008; Said Adejumobi, 'Governance and Poverty Reduction in Africa: A Critique of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)', 2006; AFRODAD, 'Civil society participation in the PRS process: A case from Uganda, 2002; Moses Isooba, 'Civil society participation in Uganda's PRS process: opportunities and dilemmas', CDRN, 2005; IDASA, 'Civil Society Budget Groups and their Participation in the PRSP Process'. Draft Synthesis Report, 2002; R. Rowden and J. O. Irama, 2004, 'Rethinking Participation: Questions for Civil Society about the Limits of Participation in PRSPs', ActionAid International.

¹⁰ Kamruzzaman Palash, 2009. 'Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and the rhetoric of participation'. *Development Practice* 19, Volume 1, February.

¹¹ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2006. 'Involving Civil Society in PRS Monitoring: An Analysis of Critical Gaps in Ghana'.

17. Article 22 of the *APRM Memorandum of Understanding* obligates undertaking member States to ensure the participation of all stakeholders in development of the NPoA, including trade unions, women, youth, private sector, civil society, rural communities and professional associations. The *APRM Guidelines for Countries to Prepare for and to Participate in APRM*¹² and the *Base Document* refer to CSOs as including the media, academia, trade unions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), rural communities and representatives of international organizations, but this is not to be regarded as an exhaustive list, as APRM review processes have illustrated.

18. *The APRM Guidelines* seek to avoid the ambiguities of the PRSP process regarding participation in the national planning processes, and make participation an overarching theme and validation of the APRM. The *Guidelines* require that the NPoA should elaborate the feedback mechanism established to keep local stakeholders involved, including efforts to disseminate information in an easily accessible and understandable manner.

19. Participatory and transparent mechanisms for all stakeholders are emphasized in the *Guidelines* at all stages, including in the periods of the country self-assessment report (CSAR), during a country review mission (CRM), and finally, during implementation of the NPoA.¹³ These are explicitly recognized as being fundamental to the building of trust and to establish and clarify mechanisms for on-going engagement and empowerment of stakeholders.¹⁴

ii. The National Programme of Action (NPoA) under APRM

20. The NPoA is a major deliverable and can be the country's input into the APRM process. It aids the national planning process by identifying the governance gaps and priorities.¹⁵ Paragraph 32 of the *APRM Guidelines* explains the purpose of the NPoA as follows; 'The primary purpose of the National Programme of Action is to guide and mobilize the country's efforts in implementing the necessary changes to improve its state of governance and socio-economic development'.

21. In addition, the NPoA serves to present and clarify the country's priorities; the activities undertaken to prepare and participate in APRM; the nature of the national consultations; as well as to explicitly explain the responsibilities of various stakeholders in government, civil society and the private sector in implementing the programme. By this definition, the participation of non-state stakeholders in implementing the programme is clearly pronounced. To date, 16 African countries have been reviewed under APRM, and the first countries to be reviewed early have submitted more than one cycle of progress reports on NPoA implementation.

22. The fulfilment of the *raison d'être* of APRM is integrally tied to its ability to implement the NPoA, which is expected to integrate and harmonize with other national planning processes. The NPoA is meant to build on, incorporate and synergize with the relevant elements of various existing programmes, policies and strategies that address the key APRM objectives, e.g. PRSPs, good governance programmes, human rights action plans, gender equity strategies, national development plans, etc. These are areas that civil society traditionally and thematically engage in as part of their mandates.

¹² NEPAD/APRM/Panel2/country /10-2003.

¹³ Paragraph 35 (c).

¹⁴ Paragraph 36.

¹⁵ Open Society Foundation, 2010. 'The African Peer Review Mechanism: A Compilation of Studies of the Process in Nine African Countries'.

23. Further, under *APRM Guidelines*, the APRM process is designed to engage stakeholders, in order to facilitate exchange of information and national dialogue on good governance and socio-economic development programmes, thereby increasing the transparency of the decision-making processes, and build trust in the pursuit of national development goals.¹⁶ Having been involved in PRSP country processes, CSOs have the institutional memory and experience to contribute qualitatively to the NPoA. In recognition of this added value, for example, in South Africa, civil society and the private sector have been urged to integrate NPoA performance targets in their operational plans and to monitor them.¹⁷

24. Increasingly, the NPoA is being viewed as a fundamental part of long-term development planning, though not without challenges. Experts observe the constraints with costing NPoA effectively, the lack of monitoring and evaluation frameworks, the need to integrate it within the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), and the need to involve non-state actors in its implementation.¹⁸

25. To address this constraint, the APRM continental Secretariat, UNECA and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have embarked on strategies and programmes to enhance the capacities of Governments and CSOs to harmonize NPoA with existing development plans. Lessons accruing from this technical support show that APRM member States are indeed constrained by financial and human capacities in seeking to harmonize the NPoA with the MTEF and existing national plans, and that a multisectoral approach to implementation, including CSO involvement, is necessary.¹⁹

iii. Empirical evidence of the strategic role of CSOs in the NPoA process

26. The clear identification of national development objectives, goals and targets must be captured in NPoAs through inclusive approaches, which is the entry point for CSOs. They play an important role in providing evidence-based advocacy, data and monitoring, and in turn derive value in contributing to fostering an overall enabling environment in which they can attain important national objectives. In Uganda, the need to monitor the APRM process in the broader context of civil society's mandates was clearly identified from the outset by CSOs.²⁰

27. CSOs are a vital force, articulating the interests of the larger population. In Uganda, the CSOs were quick to identify the necessity of their presence in ensuring credible processes.²¹ In South Africa, they identified a set of principles to guide their involvement in the APRM process, laying emphasis on the direction, strategies and content of the peer review process and the NPoA.²²

¹⁶ Paragraph 18 (v).

¹⁷ South African Institute of International Affairs, 2010. 'Scoping Workshop: Development of Capacity in Civil Society to Track Implementation on the National APRM Programme'. 12 October.

¹⁸ UNECA, 2010. 'Expert Group Meeting on, "Harmonizing APRM-NPoAs and other National Development Plans into a Common Medium-Term Expenditure Framework"' (ECA/GPAD/APRM/TP/11/2).

¹⁹ Adotey Bing-Pappoe, 2010. 'APRM-NPoAs and other National Plans into a Common Medium Term Expenditure Framework: Experiences from Ghana, Rwanda, Uganda and Benin'. UNECA, Addis Ababa.

²⁰ Lillian Muyomba, 2010. 'Building A Network to Monitor APRM. Lessons from the Uganda presentation at a scoping workshop on, 'Developing civil society's capacity to monitor the APRM', Johannesburg, 12-13 October. Research Fellow, Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE).

²¹ Conference on "The APRM: Taking Peer Learning to the Next Level", Kampala, Uganda, 20-21 July 2010. A Communiqué.

²² N. Hutchings, M. Dimba and A. Tilley, 2008. SAIIA Occasional Paper Number 3, 'Assessing South Africa's APRM: An NGO Perspective'.

28. The Kenya Progress Report on the Implementation of APRM National Programme of Action 2006-2007 candidly admitted that its implementation required collaborative efforts across movement ministries and agencies, the private sector and civil society. Despite this, in Kenya, no notable movement or galvanized action was reported among CSOs in the APRM process in terms of integrating or harmonizing APRM in the civil society agenda to achieve sustainable results.

29. Insights from CSO experiences with the NPOA suggest that CSOs have added an important dimension in raising the visibility of pertinent issues of the collective population and its constituent parts. Whatever the arguments and theories about the legitimacy and representativeness of CSOs to act on behalf of the people, civil society does articulate the needs and aspirations of the ordinary population. In terms of agenda and standard setting, monitoring and advocacy, civil society adds value to the NPoA process.

iv. Civil society, National Governing Councils and NPoA formulation

30. CSOs create or seize and occupy important spaces through which they can exercise citizenship on behalf of wider groups and populations. The presence of civil society on NGCs is an important component of the APRM structural framework at the national level. This gives the NGC the requisite mandate to oversee implementation of the NPoA. Since CSO participation at this level constitutes the upstream stages of APRM, it kick-starts the crucial formal inclusion of CSOs in the process. In several countries where APRM structures such as an NGC were maintained, they have played an important role in monitoring NPoA implementation. In Kenya, the late and low involvement of CSOs in NGCs resulted in lost opportunities for participation in the APRM process, including the NPoA. Not all NGCs or their equivalents have been maintained after the Country Review Report and NPoA were completed.

31. The quality of CSO representation and the breadth of diversity vary from one country to another. Commendable efforts were made in some countries to marshal a wide array of CSOs to the APRM process. In Benin, the Independent National Commission for the Implementation of APRM (*Commission Nationale Indépendante de Mise en oeuvre du MAEP*) had a significant CSO membership, and CSO representation and participation at the national and local levels was considered quite substantial.

32. In Burkina Faso, while there was a significant CSO presence in the NGC, there were perceptions that the CSOs appointed to the APRM structures lacked representativeness, since they had been designated by the public authorities rather than by civil society.

33. In Ghana, NGC oversees the harmonization of all governance programmes, including the NPoA. The Government sought to ensure complete confidence in the APRM process, and constituted an NGC that was comprised entirely of CSOs, and it is notable that Ghana conducted one of the highly lauded APRM reviews, with a high degree of public participation. As will be illustrated, implementation of the Ghana NPoA has also witnessed unique and far-reaching innovations, no doubt in part to the focus of NGC on creating as much citizen participation as possible.

34. Failure to have diverse representation of civil society can result in uneven handling of sectors and public-interest issues. In Benin, CSOs working on gender issues were underrepresented, and this low participation was attributed to underemphasizing gender issues.²³ The original decision by the Government of South Africa to appoint CSO members of the NGC out of the national

²³ The African Peer Review Mechanism: A Compilation of Studies of the Process in Nine African Countries.

chapter of Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) was not well received. ECOSOCC has a very narrow prescription for national CSO membership; the Statute establishing ECOSOCC allows only for organizations and two CSOs per African Union (AU) member State. Subsequently, the Government increased the representation of civil society on the NGC to cover wider social interest groups.

B. LESSONS LEARNT: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

35. Analyses of the NPoA process in many countries reveal unevenness in the participation of CSOs in NPoA formulation and implementation. The *APRM Guidelines* and the *Base Document* have not provided sufficient clarity regarding at which stage CSOs commence their participation in the NPoA process. Most countries complete their NPoAs towards the end of the APRM national process, usually after receiving feedback from the continental APRMs.

36. This means that the exercise is usually conducted in crunch time, which does not lend itself to meaningful participation and inputs by CSOs. In many countries, the work on the NPoA is summarily performed in order to meet timelines, with little time left for stakeholder participation. This can result in heavily technocratic documents rather than instruments that reflect popular consensus and review. If the experiences from PRSPs are to go by, these perfunctory forms of participation are ineffective.

37. At the formulation stage, it is common for Governments to outsource the services to technocrats, experts and specialists – usually to technical review institutes - to lead the process, with civil society being consulted once drafts have been developed. While a situation in which all CSOs embark on the drafting of NPoA evokes scenarios of inertia and impasses, methodologies and strategies could be devised to involve and consult CSOs from the outset of the NPoA design process. CSOs should be brought on board from the earliest opportunity in formulating the NPoA. CSOs in Uganda, for example, sought to have a say in the selection of the technical research institutes that formulate the NPoA.²⁴

38. Under *APRM Guidelines*, the country support missions are meant to facilitate the common understanding of APRM processes, documents and instruments, including the Draft Programme of Action by all stakeholders. A contextual translation of this provision would infer that stakeholders should be able to understand from the outset the parameters and technicalities of the NPoA. Thereafter, civil society is obligated to see to it that NPoA commitments are faithfully implemented.

39. Under the *APRM Memorandum of Understanding*, the recommendations contained in the country review report are to be integrated in the NPoA. It is up to civil society to exercise vigilance and ensure that the recommendations do not fall through the cracks and that they are reflected in the NPoA.

40. In South Africa, vigilant CSOs felt that important information via oral and written submissions to the Country Review Team was missing in the NPoA, and undertook lobbying activities to ensure inclusion of this information. This approach was unique in itself, as it showed the degree of influence CSOs can wield in the APRM process if well organized and persistent with their demands.

²⁴ S. Tindifa and B. M. Luutu, 2011. 'The Implementation of APRM in Uganda - A Critical Evaluation, Open Society Publications.

i. Challenges faced by CSOs in participating in the NPoA

41. **Technicalities of participation:** the presence of CSOs on the NGCs is important, as they contribute to identifying the technical review institutes responsible for shaping the NPoA and they oversee its formulation, and implementation. However, where CSOs do not have an independent hand in nominating representatives to APRM structures, organizations deemed politically sensitive may not be adequately represented, as happened in some countries like Rwanda.²⁵

42. In several African countries, the law regulates the character of civil society, often imposing conditions for recognition, registration and operation. This can act as a caveat to association and participation, hampering important social movements that promote citizen action. In countries such as Ethiopia and Algeria, debates rage about the politicization of CSO registration, which can act as a filter to isolate certain CSOs engaging in political activism. CSOs involved in socio-economic and service-delivery activities tend to fare slightly better.

43. In Algeria, only legally registered associations were involved as representatives of civil society. In Rwanda, the dominance of Government officials in the Technical Review Institute and the APRM Commission, coupled with low participation by CSOs, raised concerns about the quality of inclusiveness and participation of the population in shaping the CSAR..

44. Selective CSO participation raises the risk of omitting NPoA issues that might have been identified by including a wider range of CSO actors, despite politics. For example, the contentious removal of Presidential term limits from the Constitution in Uganda was raised in the Country Review Report by CSOs. Despite political sensitivities around this, the restoration of term limits was addressed in the NPoA and implementation of this indicator is being monitored by civil society. This illustrates the power of CSOs in shaping the final country review report and the NPoA.

45. **Capacity constraints:** The NPoA processes, even with significant government resources-can be demanding, requiring technical, financial and human resources that stretch capacities. For example, in Kenya, the National Steering Committee for NEPAD appointed in 2006 was charged with monitoring the NPoA, PRSP and the MDGs. Practically, this means that CSOs have to monitor all these documents, thereby stretching their capabilities.

46. **Consensus building:** National development plans and the PRSP have in common the fact that policy trade-offs and negotiations have to be made in order to arrive at the priority areas. Challenges abound when the priorities and expectations of government and civil society, (or even intra-civil society) are sometimes diametrically opposed on 'hot button' issues. Participation ultimately must be distilled in one prioritized and costed plan, and in practical terms, this is not always possible.

47. Regardless of the challenges, there is growing evidence of quick governance gains in countries where civil society participated meaningfully in APRM/NPoA, as will be addressed in the following section.

ii. Successful strategies utilized by civil society engagement in NPOA

48. **Strategic engagement by CSOs:** CSOs in some instances have been quick to take advantage of the space provided for them in the APRM structures such as the NGC and the NPoA.

²⁵ SAIIA, 'The APRM: A Compilation of Studies of the Process in Nine African Countries'.

When Governments have been slow to accord them due status, CSOs have agitated for inclusion by right, as was the case in South Africa. In Kenya, the Government's decision to co-opt the CSOs to participate in the APRM Task Force led to shaky CSO-Government relations from the outset, but after vigorous CSO lobbying, the situation improved with the appointment of 16 CSOs to the NGC.

49. An important innovation of the CSOs in Kenya was the decision to assign civil society conveners for the four thematic groups. In this way, civil society and the community were mobilized to participate in the APRM process. Such an arrangement offers an opportunity for division of labour which can help to cope with the huge APRM/NPoA demands.

50. In Ghana, CSOs were strategically assigned to each APRM pillar to undertake situational analyses that would feed into the work of the CRM. Burkina Faso had a strong representation of CSOs in its NGC and they participated in generating data to input into the APRM process.

51. **Institutional arrangements:** Country experiences reveal that where CSOs have a clear vision and unified approach towards structured engagement, they garner better consensus on how to engage the APRM/NPoA process, and tangible results are registered. Notable among these was the case of Uganda, where umbrella NGOs, the National NGO Forum, and the Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA) provided much needed leadership, guiding mobilization and coordination of CSOs towards collective input at national and subnational levels. This strategy mitigated duplication of activities and marginalization of less capacitated CSOs.²⁶

52. The best results in NPoA monitoring come from having significant inputs from CSOs at both national and community levels. There is also a synergetic division of labour between think tanks/advocacy CSOs who do most of the research and policy analysis and the CBOs/service CSOs who are effective in advocacy and validation of the CSAR as well as in monitoring NPoA implementation.

53. **CSO monitoring frameworks for the NPoA:** Involvement of civil society in APRM monitoring mechanisms can also raise the bar for transparency and accountability. Studies conducted indicate that a high number of the recommendations made in the Country Review Report tend to go unheeded or are not reflected in many country NPoAs.²⁷ A strong oversight initiative from CSOs, in a timely manner during the country review process, can ensure that countries respond and adopt comprehensive NPoAs.

54. In South Africa, CSOs worked independently and jointly to monitor the NPoA process, to ensure conformity between the recommendations of the CSAR, the Country Review Report and the NPoA. One CSO resorted to obtaining legal advice, to determine the legality of the actions of Government when they revised the NPoA and failed to share this with the public, including the NGC and civil society. It is believed that this action may have contributed to the turnaround by the Government which subsequently shared the document and revised it to include some of the missing CSO concerns.²⁸

55. In Ghana, the NGC appointed four CSOs to monitor the activities of the civil society sector within their designated mandates and areas of operation and to coordinate their monitoring of the

²⁶ Available from www.ngoforum.or.ug

²⁷ R. Herbert and Steven Gruzd, 2008. 'The African Peer Review Mechanism: Lessons from the Pioneers'. South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA).

²⁸ N. Hutchings, M. Dimba and A. Tilley, 2008. 'Assessing South Africa's APRM: An NGO Perspective'. SAIIA Occasional Paper Number 3.

implementation of the NPoA. Further, the Ghana NGC has complementary structures in all Districts, which serve as district-level APRM Oversight Committees.

56. The Committees comprise voluntary associations of civil society and public sector actors, committed to undertake education and sensitization on APRM, and to monitor implementation of the Programme of Action at the local level.²⁹ This model has been adopted in Benin. Ghana has also undertaken novel NPoA strategies since its review by embarking on an APRM-related household survey in 2006.

57. Uganda's civil society experiences offer useful insights into effective tracking methodologies. The Uganda Governance Monitoring Platform (UGMP) undertook to monitor 32 indicators of the NPoA and produced a monitoring report entitled, 'Is Uganda on Track with Commitments in the APRM Process: UGMP Annual Governance Status Report for 2009'.³⁰

58. UGMP was already established by the time of APRM, functioning as a civil society platform of 16 CSOs involved in monitoring good governance and producing annual governance trends research reports, using them to lobby policymakers on governance reforms in the country. UGMP offered much needed leadership around the NPoA monitoring exercise, enabling CSOs to strengthen their data collection and research skills for joint monitoring.

59. **Technical assistance to the NPoA:** Civil Society entities with specialized competencies can offer technical expertise in the preparation of an NPoA. Research institutes, academia and NGOs can play a significant role in this area. In Ghana, three out of the four technical research institutes were civil society research organizations. In Burkina Faso, one CSO (*Centre pour la gouvernance démocratique*) served as a technical research institute.

60. **Partnering:** In South Africa, the Parliament uniquely undertook a complementary APRM assessment process and held public hearings to receive submissions and information. CSOs made contributions regarding the NPoA and enriched the dialogue and data-collection process in this way. In some countries such as Benin, the NGCs were able to link up with their counterparts in Ghana on experience sharing missions that enabled them to boost their capacity to engage in APRM and NPoA.

61. Partnership approaches with CSOs can substantially help to forward NPoA implementation. In Kenya, the initial National Steering Committee for NEPAD appointed in 2006 lacked an inclusive membership, in contrast to the subsequent NGC, which had a significant NGO presence and which supervised formulation of one of the highly developed APRM methodologies, namely, the household surveys, resulting in an enriched qualitative and quantitative CSAR.

C. GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE TO SUPPORT THE MONITORING ROLE OF CSOs: EMERGING BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

62. The APRM process stratifies NPoA monitoring mechanisms at local, national and regional levels. The *APRM Guidelines* require a country under review to outline the implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for NPoA and to outline the feedback mechanism established to keep local stakeholders involved in the process, including efforts to disseminate information in an easily accessible and understandable manner.

²⁹ Ghana APRM Third Annual Progress Report: January - December 2008.

³⁰ Available from www.ngoforum.org

63. At the country level, NGCs and Government have been free to establish or identify existing structures to implement and monitor the NPoA. Civil society has been factored in to some extent in these structures. However, not all countries retained the NGC structure. Nonetheless, APRM processes have been designed in such a way that CSOs can participate in NPoA monitoring at the following levels:

i. National level

64. National periodic progress reports are required after the completion of the review process and are useful in helping the APRM stakeholders to assess progress with NPoA implementation. Annual progress reports on NPoA implementation help the Panel, Forum and national stakeholders to track progress on national commitments.

65. Efforts have been made at the national level to convene stakeholders to validation workshops and to disseminate progress reports, although most reports evidence a limited outreach. In South Africa, efforts were made to hold dissemination workshops at province level, but this effort did not target a critical mass of society.

66. After reports are presented to the Peer Review Forum, there are no indications of effective downstream mechanisms for feedback to the national level stakeholders, civil society or government on resultant deliberations and conclusions.

ii. Subnational level

67. In countries where decentralized governance or federalism is practised, it is important for monitoring and evaluative frameworks to be set up at the local or regional level in order to allow for local participation by citizens, and to harmonize local development initiatives with the NPoA agenda and targets.

68. In Nigeria, a joint monitoring and evaluation entity, the APRM-National Working Group was constituted to oversee NPoA implementation. CSOs as well as government officials are represented on this body. The implementation of the Nigerian NPoA in a federal context poses a challenge as noted in its NPoA, given the imperative to integrate the positions of civil society and private sector within the federal, state and local government levels, particularly given the highly devolved system of governance. However, there have been calls to have the states involved in monitoring NPoA implementation.

69. In Algeria, the APRM process provided forums for dialogue between civil society and government, held at national and subnational levels. In South Africa, consultations for the annual progress reports to facilitate monitoring and participatory governance have been held in all provinces with some stakeholders from the private sector, civil society and vulnerable groups.

70. Kenya has in the past, through the NEPAD Secretariat sought to involve civil society at the central and subnational levels in NPoA monitoring, through information sharing and awareness raising on the contents of the report.

71. Given the demands of monitoring, and the existence of multiple planning and development documents, the best-case scenario to foster comprehensive approaches to monitoring will occur when NPoAs are fully integrated into national planning processes. In Uganda, it has been integrated

into the National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP has adopted a layered approach towards tracking NPoA implementation.

72. The monitoring strategy outlined in the NDP has designated community-level monitoring to NGOs, noting that they have a role in providing information on: (a) delivery of various services; (b) transparency and accountability for resources allocated; (c) challenges and gaps experienced in delivery of various services and (d) validating the outcomes of NDP implementation in their respective areas.³¹ In the same vein, at the local/household level, citizens have a monitoring role on the delivery of target outputs and validation of the results thereof.

73. Nonetheless, NDP has not escaped the structural problems that were evident in the PRSP process. While the NDP empowers Ugandan citizens to use the monitoring and evaluation results to push the demand for better service delivery and accountability, it does not outline the participation modalities for citizens, raising the risk of state-centric approaches to the monitoring.

74. In Rwanda, the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy Sector Working Groups were set up, constituting government officials, development partners, civil society and the private sector. These working groups seek to align and integrate the NPoA with the various sector programmes.

iii. Continental level

75. *APRM Guidelines* require that in the fifth and final phase, six months after the Country Review Report has been considered by the Heads of State and Government of the participating member States, it should be formally and publicly tabled in key regional and subregional structures such as the Pan-African Parliament, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the envisaged Peace and Security Council and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union.

76. The importance of these structures arises from the fact that over the years, CSOs have built important partnerships with them. These continental entities are composed of civil society actors, citizens and stakeholders who embrace rights-based approaches and espouse social accountability in their various mandates. This can provide another layer of NPoA monitoring to ensure positive APRM results for African citizens. However, this framework has not yet been actively engaged by APRM.

D. NPoA PROSPECTS FOR FOSTERING THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

77. The NPoA constitutes the critical link between the State and Society, enabling communities to construct shared visions, goals and objectives. It also provides the opportunity for APRM member States to return to the era of participatory development planning, after a protracted period of structural adjustment conditionalities that not only diminished the capacity of the State to lead the development efforts, but also alienated civil society in terms of participation.³²

³¹ Uganda National Development Plan (2010/11-2014/15).

UNECA, 2010. 'Expert Group Meeting on "Harmonizing APRM-NPoAs and other National Development Plans into a Common Medium-Term Expenditure Framework"' (ECA/GPAD/APRM/TP/11/2).

78. Further, APRM opens up refreshing possibilities for more coordinated and harmonized national development strategies to ensure compliance within regional blocs in Africa and promote joint capacity development through a system of peer review and learning. Best practices on the Developmental State model can be shared among countries and mutual capacity-building agreements could be fostered within regional blocs.

79. However, there is need to clarify the participation modalities for civil society in monitoring and evaluating the NPoA. A framework detailing these modalities should be developed at national and continental levels to provide a uniform approach to monitoring.

80. The capacitating of civil society to accomplish their goals is important in ensuring their participation. To the greatest extent possible, Governments should actively provide CSOs with financial assistance where possible, without compromising the integrity of the CSOs in pursuing their mandates.

CONCLUSION

81. The APRM framework, principles, processes, and substantive content, provide a deliberative approach that can enhance state-society linkages for constructing such a Developmental State. The APRM pillars, principles and approaches provide a framework beyond formal interpretations of citizenship, to ensure equal access to the State, and enhanced participation in governance, by individuals and collectives. This will enable citizens and communities to construct shared coherent goals, whose concrete implementation can then be co-owned by the State and agencies to effect implementation.

82. At the operational level, the NPoA also provides a key link between the APRM, PRSP and other development plans. The involvement of CSOs in these processes serves to fast track and facilitate establishment of the Developmental State. CSO participation is necessary for effective good governance as demonstrated by the APRM experience in many African countries. Successes have been registered in countries where CSOs have used the NPoA and APRM processes, platforms and spaces to dialogue, share experiences and coordinate responses and activities.

83. It has become clear that for some APRM countries, the challenge is in implementing the NPoAs, while at the same time harmonizing them with the PRSP and other development plans. The preconditions for this include ascertaining by how much the NPoAs have added to the nation's development funding needs, determining how the funds to cover the additional costs will be raised and from where, integrating NPoA into the national budget, and ensuring that it is actually implemented, monitored and evaluated. In short, it is important to establish that APRM/NPoAs, PRSPs and other development plans are systematically linked and harmonized.

84. The APRM/NPOA approach seeks to redefine African politics in terms of partnership or social contract between critical stakeholders on the basis of their collective or intersecting social responsibility to protect and advance the public interest. If these principles are faithfully adhered to, they stand to facilitate the transformative governance along participatory democratic lines to redefine governance in Africa.

REFERENCES