



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

National APRM Workshop on
Harmonizing the Mauritius National Plan of Action (NPoA)
with the existing Development Strategies and Medium Term
Expenditure Framework (MTEF)

23 – 24 April 2012, La Canelle Rouge

Domaine Les Pailles, Mauritius

His Excellency Minister of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Hon. A. Boolell

Mr. Radhakrisna SADIEN, Chair of the Mauritius National Economic and Social Council

Ambassador Curé, Special Representative of the Prime Minister for APRM and Secretary of the High Level Coordinating and Drafting Committee for APRM

Dr. M. Mekideche, Lead APRM Panel Member for Mauritius

Ms. Tegmo REDDY, UNDP Resident Coordinator, Mauritius

Honorable Ministers, Permanent Secretaries and senior Public Servants

Distinguished Members and Representative of Mauritian Private Sector and Civil Society

Distinguished APRM experts, participants and colleagues,

On behalf of the Executive Secretary of the ECA, **Mr. Abdoulie Janneh**, I would like to welcome you all to this National APRM Workshop on “Harmonizing the Mauritius National Plan of Action with the existing Development Strategies and Medium Term Expenditure Framework” holding on this beautiful Island of Mauritius in the course of the next two days.

The UNECA, the UNDP and the APRM Continental Secretariat are indeed proud to jointly organize this timely and important workshop with the government and stakeholders of the APRM Mauritius. You would recall that the two UN sister-organizations and the African Development Bank (ADB) 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 process of the APRM.

It is in this context that the strategic partners have over the past few years, collaborated with African governments, civil society organizations, Pan-African institutions, and individual African experts to provide highly interactive workshops and training sessions for discussions and exchange of best practices and lessons learned on the technical, organizational, methodological, research, planning, monitoring and evaluation challenges, as well as best practices, associated with the implementation of the APRM.

Honorable Minister, Distinguished Panel member, experts and participants,

There is no gain in saying that the African Peer Review Mechanism is one of the most significant initiatives in Africa over the last decade. Launched under the auspices of the New Partnership for Economic Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) has grown from five pioneer members (including Mauritius) to now 30 acceded countries. So far, fifteen (16) APRM participating countries out of the thirty (30) have conducted successful governance self assessments and external peer reviews. These countries are at different stages of implementing their National Programme of Action (NPoA), with Kenya being the first country to undergo a second round review.

Although the APRM has registered some remarkable successes, there is no doubt that the NPoA poses formidable challenges to the national planning systems of APRM participating countries. The value addition of the NPoA 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.

Lessons emerging from the APRM pioneer countries suggest that the NPoA is the weakest link in the APRM process. In fact, 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;
- Difficulties in identifying the NPoA programmes and projects in the national budgets and, thus, its impact on the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF); and
- Lack of institutionalization of the APRM-NPoA at the country level as an integral component of the National Planning System.

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 harness the potential of the APRM to national development.

Honorable Minister, distinguished participants,

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 good governance and socio-economic development.

This workshop presents a unique opportunity to Mauritian stakeholders with information and best practices that could form the core process for harmonizing the APRM -NPoAs with pre-existing national plans within the context of a common medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF).

It will provide a real opportunity for national APRM stakeholders to learn first-hand experiences from peer countries and experts about how to address similar challenges and suggest concrete tools and processes that could make the Mauritius NPoA a credible and operational planning document for socioeconomic transformation and development.

Specifically, this workshop seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Gaining/enhancing familiarity with and understanding of the major concepts, issues and skills that are required in the design and implementation of the APRM-NPoAs;
2. Identifying the competencies for successful harmonization of NPoAs with existing development strategies and the proposed National Strategic Transformation Plan;
3. Acquiring strategies for the systematic collection of data, information and coordination of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in monitoring and evaluation of the APRM-NPoA;
4. Exploring opportunities for engaging special interest groups and stakeholders in the formulation of national development plans and strategies.

Distinguished delegates and participants,

The main intention of the APRM as a governance framework is to foster the practice of participatory governance through a deliberative process of consultation, dialogue and accountability. This mechanism, if properly implemented, can foster a concrete transformation in the relationship between the state and society in Africa. This transformation is intended to create the social compact that is needed to strengthen

domestic accountability in order to ensure better development outcomes for all citizens. The lessons emerging from the global economic crisis, the Arab Spring and emerging consensus on post-2015 MDGs point to the need for a governance systems that would foster a new “social compact” between state and society.

Indeed, the World Bank, the OECD and other international development organizations are all calling for “social inclusiveness” and “social cohesion” as the new paradigm for international development. The APRM is the surest approach for African to achieve these objectives.

Honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates,

In conclusion, let me just say that this National Workshop comes at a critical time for Mauritius as you prepare to launch a Commission for National Strategic Transformation Plan.

The APRM has created a heightened awareness of governance and development challenges among citizens and 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,

Mauritius can tackle and address the most critical challenges could foster a socio-economic transformation and sustain its democratic credentials for which she is well recognized.

It is our hope that the outcomes of this workshop will be implemented and help institutionalize APRM within the mainstream of the national strategic transformation Plan.

I thank you for your kind attention.