

THE APRM PROCESS IN BURKINA FASO

Julien K. Natielsé

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Preface

In the footsteps of Ghana in 2005, Benin in 2007 and Nigeria in 2008, Burkina Faso joined the list of ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) countries to have completed the lengthy process of assessing the state of their governance through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in 2008. This report is part of a series of studies commissioned by AfriMAP (Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project) to assess the APRM process in adhering countries. Similar assessments of the APRM process have been conducted in Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria and Rwanda. Others are currently being finalised with a view to reviewing the processes in South Africa, Algeria, Mozambique and Uganda.

Created in 2004 by the network of African foundations of the Open Society Institute (which includes the Open Society Initiative for West Africa [OSIWA]), AfriMAP works with the foundations and their national civil society partners, chiefly on close monitoring of how African states have fulfilled their recent undertakings in the framework of the African Union (AU) to promote good governance. Indeed, the undertakings of the African states pursuant to the Constitutive Act of the AU include the promotion of human rights, democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance. More specific undertakings to promote good governance were made in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the APRM.

The APRM process began in Burkina Faso in 2005 and unfolded in a very unusual context. The country was in the midst of a prolonged electoral cycle, with presidential elections in 2005, municipal elections in 2006 and legislative elections in 2007. More fundamentally, even before adhering to the APRM, the government of Burkina Faso had designed a national good governance programme (*Politique nationale de*

bonne gouvernance, PNBG) that was executed simultaneously with the APRM process. How did the elections, which are a prime opportunity for national debate on governance issues, affect the APRM process? How did the APRM and the national programme on good governance contribute to each other? With what degree of scientific integrity was the APRM conducted? What margin of political independence did the bodies in charge of leading the APRM process have? What was the degree of participation of civil society in the process? This report will attempt to shed light on all of the foregoing questions.

The present report was written by Julien Natielsé, a jurist and political scientist at the University of Ouagadougou and a researcher at the university's Centre for Democratic Governance (*Centre pour la Gouvernance Démocratique*). It is based on a review of the process documents and on interviews that Mr Natielsé conducted with persons involved in the process as either participants or experts. Mr Natielsé complemented these sources with an attentive personal observation of the APRM process as it was conducted in Burkina Faso from the time of its launching in 2005 up to the presentation of the review report before the Forum of Heads of State and Government of the APRM member countries in October 2008.

Like similar reports prepared for other countries, the primary objective of this report is to examine whether and to what extent the self-assessment process in Burkina Faso complied with the effectiveness and credibility criteria defined by the APRM founding documents, and in particular to what extent it was open, participatory, transparent and independent. Julien Natielsé points out the difficulties facing the process, including the delay caused by its intersection with the electoral cycle between 2005 and 2007; issues regarding

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the degree of independence of the technical institutions in charge of data gathering; poor civil society representation in the APRM governing bodies and low popular involvement. He also stresses the strengths of the process, foremost amongst which was the opportunity that the APRM provided and continues to provide to assess the effectiveness of the national programme on good governance, which has been in effect in Burkina Faso since 2003.

As pointed out by the report, the haste with which the APRM was conducted sometimes gave the impression that the authorities of Burkina Faso conducted the process for the sake of having officially done so. Now that the Burkina Faso review report has been submitted to and approved by the APRM Forum, it is also important that the recommendations and roadmap contained in the national action plan provide an opportunity to continue the debate within Burkina Faso society on both their implementation and their contribution to improving governance in the country.

Pascal K. Kambale
Deputy Director, AfriMAP

Summary

Burkina Faso adhered to the APRM on 9 March 2003 and signed the Memorandum of Understanding on 20 March 2003, thereby officially marking the commitment of the political authorities of Burkina Faso, before their people and the international community, to comply with the principles of democracy, good political, economic and corporate governance, and socio-economic development, by submitting to regular reviews by their African peers. In 2006, the country set in place the instruments it needed to conduct a self-assessment using the APRM. After the creation of an APRM national governing council, a permanent secretariat for the APRM was officially set in place.

Professor Mohamed Seghir Babes, a member of the Panel of Eminent Persons of the African APRM, was in Burkina Faso from 19–22 June 2006, where he led a delegation of six persons on a mission to support the implementation of the review process. In October 2007, the self-assessment process began in earnest with the intervention of the technical research institutes (TRIs), which were mandated to gather data for the administration of the self-assessment questionnaire. In order to successfully execute the APRM process, a department was created to deal with communications issues through awareness and information activities aimed at citizens and public authorities alike. Before the data-gathering phase began, this department launched awareness activities to facilitate the administration of APRM questionnaires. Regular progress reports were issued at every step in the process, before and after its implementation. However, the effectiveness of APRM communications activities in Burkina Faso was seriously compromised by the low level of ownership of the process, affecting both the citizens and the public authorities.

Four TRIs were identified to support the APRM national governing council in conducting the self-assessment in Burkina Faso. These were the *Centre pour la gouvernance démocratique* (CGD, Centre for Democratic Governance), the *Centre d'analyse des politiques économiques et sociales* (CAPES, Centre for Economic and Social Policy Analysis), the *Institut national de la statistique et de la démographie* (INSD, the National Institute of Statistics and Demographics) and the *Institut supérieur des sciences de la population* (ISSP, the Higher Institute of Population Science). These institutes were mandated to gather data, respectively, in the areas of democratic and political governance, economic governance and financial management, corporate governance and socio-economic development. All four TRIs used largely the same methodology to administer the questionnaires, involving a documentary review and a survey-based data-gathering technique. On the whole, the data-gathering exercise revealed a certain number of insufficiencies and criticisms pointed out by the TRIs, which seemed to be obstacles to the administration of the questionnaires.

Following the data-gathering phase, the APRM Permanent Secretariat organised a joint, two-day validation workshop in order to pool and harmonise the different reports into a single document to ensure a certain consistency in light of the different analytical approaches of the TRIs. The validation workshop for the national self-assessment report also included awareness and information for those invited to attend the event, through the presentation of summary versions of all four reports. The fact that the participants did not have the necessary background information to be able to effectively comment on the contents of the reports and contribute to their qualitative improvement had a negative impact on the workshop objectives. Following this meeting, the APRM expert review mission was conducted to compare

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the data contained in the self-assessment report with the perceptions of society.

The Burkina Faso review mission was conducted from 18 February to 16 March 2008 under the leadership of the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons. Following the initial handshake, the mission held seminars with members of the government and conducted in-depth working sessions with organisations and bodies in charge of managing the national governance system. It also held working sessions with the country's technical and financial partners, ambassadors from G8 member countries and the African ambassadors accredited in Burkina Faso. After a far-reaching consultation of organisations and bodies at the central level, in Ouagadougou, the mission went into the field to talk to the grassroots population about the issues and challenges identified in the national self-assessment report. All 13 regions of Burkina Faso were visited and meetings were held with the participation of civil society organisations, customary and religious leaders, and the political and administrative authorities. Some 5 000 people took part in those meetings.

The submission of the review report by the APRM experts, including the country review and comments on the plan of action (PoA), took place in May 2008 and was followed by comments by the government. The Burkina Faso review report was scheduled to be presented at the APRM Forum meeting held in Egypt on 29 June 2008. However, this intention was thwarted by the busy schedule of the heads of state during the summit. The report was finally presented during an extraordinary meeting of the APRM Forum held in Cotonou in October 2008.

The APRM process in Burkina Faso raises several questions, notably regarding its contribution to governance discourse and practices in the country, as well as its integrity and inclusiveness. When the APRM began in Burkina Faso, the country had been implementing a national policy on good governance (*Politique Nationale de Bonne Gouvernance*, PNBG) since 2003, but no efforts seem to have been made to clarify the relationship between the two initiatives, and the authorities in charge of leading the APRM do not seem to have given enough thought to the contributions that the APRM and the PNBG could have made to each other.

Another important question raised by the APRM process in Burkina Faso is that of its integrity and independence. First of all, the way in which the process was conducted did not fully satisfy the scientific and technical soundness criteria recommended by the guidelines in the APRM founding documents. Three out of four of the technical research institutes in charge of ensuring the scientific and independent nature of the research were government organisations.

In addition, the TRIs did not have enough time to gather, process and validate the self-assessment report data; and even if they had been given more time, the means available to them were too limited to enable them to do scientifically sound research.

Finally, the way in which the APRM was conducted in Burkina Faso raised several questions regarding its inclusiveness and independence. On the one hand, the bodies in charge of leading the process were almost entirely dependent upon the executive, and particularly on the president of Burkina Faso, who appointed their top officials by decree. While this presented the advantage of ensuring personal involvement in the process on the part of the head of state and increasing its political prestige in the eyes of public institutions, the arrangement did not exactly fit the idea of an independent process contained in the guidelines for participating countries. On the other hand, APRM implementation requires participatory and inclusive involvement of all strata of society represented by civil society organisations (CSOs). In Burkina Faso, civil society involvement in the APRM process was mitigated. On the one hand, CSOs were not fully represented in the APRM steering bodies. A good part of civil society felt that the mandate of the persons sitting on those bodies on behalf of civil society was not representative because they were co-opted by the public authorities. On the other hand, however, the CSO representatives were able to make their opinions heard during the preparation of the self-assessment and review reports and several exchange and information sessions were held with a view to ensuring CSO involvement.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a strategic framework that proposes a 'vision for Africa's renewal'. NEPAD was launched by five heads of state (Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa) and its founding document was officially adopted by the 37th Summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), held in Lusaka, Zambia, in July 2001. NEPAD is now a programme of the African Union (AU), the body that succeeded the OAU; however it has its own secretariat, based in South Africa, which is in charge of programme coordination and implementation. Successive AU summits have proposed greater integration of the secretariat and NEPAD in general in AU processes and bodies.

The four primary objectives of NEPAD are poverty eradication, the promotion of sustainable growth and development, the integration of Africa into the global economy, and the speeding up of women's empowerment. NEPAD is founded on basic principles that include a commitment to good governance, democracy, human rights and conflict resolution, as well as the recognition that the maintenance of these standards is fundamental for the creation of an enabling environment for investment and long-term economic growth. NEPAD aims to attract more investments, capital flows and funding by setting up an African framework for development as a foundation for partnership at regional and international levels.

NEPAD is steered by a Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSIC), which finalised the political framework adopted in Lusaka in October 2001. The HSIC comprises three states per region of the African Union. The HSIC reports annually to the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the African Union. The steering committee, which comprises twenty AU member states, is in charge of monitoring the progress of all projects and programmes.

In July 2002, the AU Summit in Durban supplemented NEPAD with a Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. According to the terms of the declaration, the NEPAD member states parties 'believe in just, honest, transparent, accountable and participatory government and probity in public life'. They accordingly 'undertake to work with renewed determination to enforce', inter alia, the rule of law, the equality of all citizens before the law, individual and collective freedoms, the right to participate in free, credible and democratic political processes and the adherence to the separation of powers, including the protection of an independent justice system and effective parliaments.

In the declaration on democracy, political, economic and corporate governance, the participating states also undertook to establish an African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to promote adherence to and fulfilment of the commitments contained in the Declaration. The Durban Summit adopted a document stipulating the steps of the peer review and the operating principles of the APRM.

In March 2003, NEPAD's HSIC, meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, adopted a Memorandum of Understanding on the APRM. This Memorandum of Understanding effectively operates as a treaty. It entered into force immediately in Abuja, when six states agreed to be subject to its terms; by December 2008, 29 countries had acceded to the agreement. States that do not accede are not subject to review. The meeting of March 2003 also marked the adoption of APRM 'objectives, standards, criteria and indicators'. The meeting also led to the creation of an APRM Secretariat, also based in South Africa, and the nomination of a 'Panel of Eminent Persons' comprising seven members entrusted with supervising the implementation of the APRM process and ensuring its integrity.

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The APRM Secretariat, which began functioning in late 2003, developed a questionnaire based on a wide range of African and international treaties and standards on human rights, in order to guide the participating states' self-assessment of their compliance with the principles of NEPAD. The questions are grouped under four broad headings: democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance and socio-economic development. The questionnaire was formally adopted in February 2004 in Kigali, Rwanda, by the first meeting of the APRM Forum, comprising the representatives of the heads of state and government of all APRM participant states. At that stage, the official peer review process was ready to begin: the meeting identified the first four countries to undergo review as Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius and Rwanda. Since that time, eight countries have completed the review process. These are: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa.

Each country that is subject to a review is assigned to one of the seven eminent persons, who will review and study the reports and make recommendations to the APRM Forum. The panel members are: Marie-Angélique Savané (Senegal), chair; Adebayo Adedeji (Nigeria); Bethuel Kiplagat (Kenya); Graça Machel (Mozambique); Mohammed Babes (Algeria, replacing original Algerian panel member, Mourad Medelci); Dorothy Njeuma (Cameroon) and Chris Stals (South Africa). Certain of the panel members were scheduled to be replaced in 2009. At the national level, the participating countries each set up a national focal point and a national coordinating committee to lead the review process and liaise with the APRM Secretariat.

The APRM documents established the following five-step review process:

Step 1: Self-assessment

The APRM Secretariat mandates a country support mission led by the assigned eminent person to visit the participating country to ensure a common understanding of the rules, processes and principles of the APRM. The team liaises with the designated focal point in each country and organises working sessions and technical workshops with stakeholders; the eminent person signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the government on the terms and conditions of the country review mission. The country then begins its self-assessment report, based on the APRM questionnaire. The country is also expected to formulate a preliminary programme

of action (PoA) based on existing policies, programmes and projects. Normally, self-assessment should involve broad participation of all relevant stakeholders, including CSOs as well as government ministries and departments.

Step 2: Review mission

A country review team visits the country to carry out broad consultations, clarify all questions that may require discussion and contribute to the development of a national consensus on the road forward. The team is led by the eminent person assigned to the country and comprises representatives of the APRM Secretariat and APRM partner institutions, including the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank and other institutions.

Step 3: Country review report and amendment of the programme of action

The country review team drafts its own report on the country, based on the information gathered during its study mission and on independent papers prepared by the APRM Secretariat; the team then shares its findings with the government. Based on the self-assessment report and the country review team report, the country finalises its programme of action, outlining policies and practices with a view to implementation.

Step 4: Peer review

The country review team report and the programme of action are presented at the APRM Forum by the eminent person and the country's head of state or government for consideration by the other participating heads of state and government.

Step 5: Publication of the report and programme of action

Finally, after the report has been considered by the APRM Forum, it is tabled at the AU Summit before being made public.

Implementing the APRM in Burkina Faso: Major steps in the process

By voluntarily adhering to the APRM on 9 March 2003, Burkina Faso became one of the first countries on the continent to commit to taking all the necessary steps to facilitate the development and implementation of a national programme of action (PoA) aimed at improving its performances in the areas of democratic, economic and financial governance, socio-economic development and corporate governance. Consequently, measures were taken at the highest level of government to fulfil that commitment to promote sustainable human development in Burkina Faso.

Preparation at the government level

Burkina Faso signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 20 March 2003, thereby officially marking the commitment of the country's political authorities, in the eyes of the people and the international community, to adhere to the principles of democracy, good political, economic and corporate governance and socio-economic development, by submitting to regular reviews by their African peers. When Burkina Faso adhered to the APRM, it already had internal mechanisms for the promotion of good governance. The public authorities had adopted a national good governance plan (*Politique nationale de bonne gouvernance*, PNBG) in 1998, which was revised in 2003 to become a national good governance policy. The priority focuses of good governance were structured around four poles: political governance including public safety and the promotion of human rights, administrative governance, economic governance and local governance. The national policy on good governance was an instrument for the operationalisation of the Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction (SFPR), in that it provided more specifics on socio-economic development and elements for implementation.

After adhering to the APRM, Burkina Faso appointed the minister of foreign affairs and regional cooperation as APRM focal point. The government then set up a ministerial committee, comprising the ministers of finance and the budget, foreign affairs and regional cooperation, and the economy and development, with a mandate to determine APRM operating methods at the national level.¹ Upon the initiative of the ministerial committee, several sectorial meetings were held between 2003 and 2005 on NEPAD and the APRM. The fundamental objective of the meetings was to raise awareness amongst the people of Burkina Faso and obtain their adherence to the process. To this end, from 11–13 April 2005, Burkina Faso organised a national workshop on the APRM in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). In addition to participants from public institutions, the private sector and civil society organisations, the workshop was attended by representatives from Ghana and Rwanda, who shared their experience in APRM implementation with the stakeholders in Burkina Faso. The Ouagadougou workshop enabled various actors in development to familiarise themselves with the APRM process, to engage in debates on the major issues linked to good governance and, above all, to envisage the necessary bridges to ensure efficient implementation of the APRM in Burkina Faso.

In so doing, Burkina Faso completed a consultation process undertaken by the government with all social actors to enable the latter to achieve genuine ownership of the APRM as a new tool for the promotion of good governance and sustainable development on the African continent. Based on the consensual conclusions of the workshop, the

¹ Information gathered from the APRM permanent secretary during an interview on 2 May 2008. However, we were not informed of the precise date on which the ministerial committee was set up.

ministerial committee identified the fundamental features of the organisation that would be responsible for APRM management at the national level.

Setting up institutional management for the APRM

In order to ensure the leadership of APRM implementation in Burkina Faso, the government set up an institutional arrangement comprising two major bodies: an African Peer Review Mechanism National Governing Council (APRM NGC) and an African Peer Review Mechanism Permanent Secretariat (APRM PS). Each body has clearly defined powers, duties and functions.

The bodies were created by the government and directed by persons appointed by the executive, which implied that the authorities led by the President of Burkina Faso intended to exert tight control over the process. The governing council is the deliberating body of the APRM and adopts all major decisions regarding implementation. The APRM Permanent Secretariat is led by a permanent secretary appointed by decree of the President of Burkina Faso.²

The APRM National Governing Council

The council comprises 28 members³ including representatives of the executive and the legislature (opposition and majority), representatives of employers' organisations and labour organisations, as well as civil society representatives. The chairmanship of the APRM NGC was automatically filled by the director of the office of the president of the republic.⁴ He was assisted by a deputy chair elected from outside of the representatives of the executive.

The decree stipulated the composition of the NGC as follows:

- Representing the executive: the cabinet director of the president of Burkina Faso, a representative of the prime minister, a representative of the ministry of foreign affairs in charge of NEPAD, a representative of the ministry of finance and the budget, a representative of the ministry of the civil service and state reform, a representative of the ministry of justice, a representative of the ministry for the promotion of human rights, a representative of the minister of territorial administration and decentralisation,

and a representative of the ministry of labour, employment and youth, for a total of 10 members;

- Representing the legislature: four representatives, two from political parties supporting the president (Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès, which is the party in power, and a dozen political parties that support the programme of President Blaise Compaoré) and two from opposition political parties;
- Representing employers' and labour organisations: two representatives of employers' organisations and two representatives of labour organisations, for a total of four representatives;
- Representing CSOs: two representatives of women's organisations, two youth representatives, two media representatives, two representatives of the scientific community and two representatives of grassroots communities (a customary leader and a farmers' representative), for a total of 10 representatives.⁵

The different organisations were supposed to freely appoint their representatives on the APRM NGC.⁶ In every case, however, all of the members of the body were officially appointed by presidential decree.⁷ Upon analysis, it can be considered that the composition of the NGC is sufficiently representative of the various social strata of Burkina Faso thanks to the inclusion of representatives of a variety of governance stakeholders such as the state (the executive), CSOs and the private sector.

The NGC includes four working groups established by order of its chair, focusing on each of the four areas of governance to be self-assessed. Each working group is led by a component of the council: the private sector leads the working group on corporate governance; CSOs are in charge of the working group on economic and social development; economic governance and financial management are under the responsibility of the executive; and, finally, the legislature is responsible for the working group on political and democratic governance.

The APRM NGC holds ordinary meetings on a quarterly basis. Extraordinary meetings are convened by the chair or upon request by two-thirds of its members.⁸ At least twice a year, it submits reports to the president of Burkina Faso on the execution of its missions, decisions and recommendations.⁹

2 Article 7 of Decree No. 2007-337/PRES/PM/MAECR of 25 May 2007, on the composition, duties and powers and running of the APRM NGC.

3 Ibid., Article 2.

4 Ibid., Article 4.

5 Ibid., Article 3.

6 Interview with certain members of the APRM national governing council.

7 Article 5, of Decree No. 2007-337/PRES/PM/MAECR of 25 May 2007, on the composition, duties and powers and running of the APRM NGC.

8 Ibid., Article 9.

9 Ibid., Article 13.

The APRM Permanent Secretariat

The APRM has a Permanent Secretariat, also created by decree and is headed by a permanent secretary.¹⁰ The permanent secretary has the rank of a secretary general in a ministerial department. The Permanent Secretariat comprises: a private secretariat, a democratic and political governance department, an economic governance department, an administrative and financial department and a communications, public relations and computer department. The departments are led by department heads appointed by decree. Their rank is equivalent to that of ministerial department heads. The organisation and running of the departments and the private secretariat are governed by an order by the chair of the APRM NGC. In addition to providing technical support for the APRM NGC, the duties of the APRM PS include preparing the contribution of the president of Burkina Faso at the APRM Forum of Heads of State and Government, liaising with the APRM Secretariat, NEPAD and all other national, African or international organisations involved in APRM or NEPAD implementation, organising and monitoring the mission of the APRM secretariat support team, informing and raising the awareness of the national stakeholders involved in the various APRM processes and, finally, conducting advocacy to raise funds from partners.

Appointment of technical research institutes (TRIs)

In keeping with APRM principles, the APRM PS and the APRM NGC and its working groups have called upon organisations specialising in research, with strong knowledge of review methodology and governance issues, to help conduct the Burkina Faso self-assessment according to rigorous methodology and a scientific approach. To that purpose, four TRIs were identified¹¹ to support the APRM NGC in conducting the self-assessment of Burkina Faso. These were the *Centre pour la gouvernance démocratique* (CGD, Centre for Democratic Governance), *Centre d'analyse des politiques économiques et sociales* (CAPES, Centre for Economic and Social Policy Analysis), the *Institut national de la statistique et de la démographie* (INSD, the National Institute of Statistics and Demographics) and the *Institut supérieur des sciences de la population* (ISSP, the Higher Institute of Population Science). The institutes

10 Decree No. 2007-338/PRES/PM/MAECR of 25 May 2007, on the duties and powers, organisation and running of the APRM PS.

11 At least six months before the data were gathered, the TRIs were appointed through a call for offers, and the final selection was made by the APRM NGC as the deliberating body of the APRM process (interviews with Mr Luther Yaméogo, *Centre pour la Gouvernance Démocratique* [CGD], and members of the NGC).

were mandated to gather data, respectively, in the areas of democratic and political governance, economic governance and financial management, corporate governance and socio-economic development. Their aim was to clearly define the issues and challenges of all four areas of governance with a view to formulating the national self-assessment report. This report will be subject to a critical review by an international team of African experts responsible for the country review in the framework of the APRM.

The primary objective of the self-assessment team was to allow citizens' voices to be heard and to gather their perceptions and approaches in terms of how they felt they were governed. The views of the population were focused on the four thematic areas mentioned above. In order to achieve their objective, the partner research institutes were to:

- Conduct a broad and in-depth documentary review;
- Meet with the different stakeholders and other relevant actors in national governance;
- Produce a report and a preliminary programme of action on governance in Burkina Faso.

Evaluation of the capacity of the TRIs to carry out the project

Four TRIs were appointed to gather data for the self-assessment. They possessed the skills and capacities needed to conduct the research activities.

CAPES was created by Decree No. 2000/171/PRES of 16 May 2000 and has been operational since 2001. As a public institute, the Centre is headed by an executive director supported by a technical staff of seven permanent experts recruited by test.¹² A team was formed to cover the various areas of economic and social analysis. CAPES carried out a study on the problem of capacity building in Burkina Faso including a state of the art review, a strategy and a priority action programme. It also reflected on the outcomes of structural adjustment programmes, particularly in terms of Burkina Faso's capacity to absorb aid. The Centre also provided technical support and complementary operational functions for the stakeholders, particularly by producing the requested capacity-building products and making them available on the public and private markets. In so doing, CAPES accomplished a central mission by furthering government action on capacity building, in the process of defining, executing and following up on macro-economic and sectorial policies and poverty reduction.

12 Experts in information and communication management, institutional economics, macro-economics and sociology.

The ISSP is a state research institute created by ministerial order on 27 July 2005. It replaced the *Unité d'Enseignement et de Recherche en Démographie* (UERD, Teaching and Research Unit for Demographics) of the University of Ouagadougou, which was set up by the Government of Burkina Faso in 1991 with financial assistance from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and with scientific and technical support from the *Institut de démographie de l'Université catholique de Louvain* (Demographics Institute of the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium). Over some 15 years, the ISSP (formerly UERD) has conducted several research studies on population and development issues, either on its own initiative or at the request of national and international partners. It ensured the promotion and coordination of demographics teaching at the University of Ouagadougou and in vocational schools. The ISSP also organised introductory seminars and upgrading workshops for executives and institutions affected by population issues. In the framework of these activities, a series of publications was produced by ISSP researchers or collaborators with a view to disseminating their research findings. During the meeting of 9 September 2005 held in Ouagadougou, the Council of Ministers of Higher Education of the member countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (known as UEMOA, *Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine*) designated the ISSP as a 'UEMOA centre of excellence' in the fields of population and health.¹³

As an applied research, training and advocacy institute, and as a facilitator of dialogue on democratic governance, the CGD's fundamental aim is to disseminate knowledge and new ideas in the West African sub-region and in Burkina Faso in particular. Based on its objectives as an independent non-governmental research institute, the Centre develops a portfolio of pluri-annual projects in various areas including periodic reviews of the state of democratic governance, constitutionalism and the rule of law, citizens' participation and democratic culture. To that end, the CGD conducts advisory activities, training, civic education, applied research, and consensus-building on democratic governance and public policy issues. The CGD has already carried out numerous studies on the state of governance in Burkina Faso and survey studies in the political sphere. It also conducts capacity-building activities for national governance stakeholders.

The INSD is a government institute presented as the official statistics department of Burkina Faso. A public establishment of an administrative nature, having its own legal status and financial independence, it is under the technical supervision of the ministry in charge of statistics and the

financial supervision of the ministry in charge of finance.¹⁴ It conducts its activities in the general framework of the national statistics system governed by the law organising and regulating statistics activities.¹⁵ The INSD is responsible for numerous publications of statistics on Burkina Faso.

Support mission of the APRM Panel

Professor Mohamed Seghir Babes, a member of the Panel of Eminent Persons of the APRM, was in Burkina Faso from 19–22 June 2006, heading a six-member delegation on a mission to support the implementation of the review process.¹⁶ The main objective of this mission was to launch the self-assessment process in Burkina Faso. More specifically, the support mission signed a Technical Memorandum of Understanding with the government of Burkina Faso on the peer review mechanism. Under the terms of the agreement, Burkina Faso agreed to allow the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons to conduct technical inspections on its territory and, subsequently, to accept a mission to review the self-assessment process. The support mission therefore reviewed the procedures and mechanisms set in place by Burkina Faso to carry out its self-assessment. It also met with the national organisation and technical research institutes to assess the potential of researchers who could be involved in the process. Finally, it facilitated the development of a roadmap for the national organisation to help expedite the different self-assessment activities.

The support mission marked the official launching of the Burkina Faso APRM review.¹⁷ The Memorandum of Understanding signed during the mission enabled the APRM NGC to work on the formulation of a questionnaire to help the government conduct a national self-assessment in terms of its performances (democracy, governance), but also to diagnose the difficulties faced by the country in those areas. At the outcome of the mission, Burkina Faso began its self-assessment with a view to submitting a report and a national programme of action (PoA) as stipulated and required by the APRM process.¹⁸

¹³ See the ISSP website at the following address: www.issp.bf

¹⁴ Decree No. 2000-508/PRES/MEF of 27 October 2000 by the President of the Republic.

¹⁵ Act No. 012-2007/AN of 31 May 2007 on the organisation and regulation of statistics activities. For further information on all of the activities of the INSD, see its website at the following address: www.insd.bf.

¹⁶ *Rapport d'évaluation du Burkina Faso*, May 2008, p.44. This country review report, of which we have obtained a copy, was not yet officially published at the time of the drafting of this report in July 2008.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The APRM communications strategy

The department of communications and public relations of the APRM PS is in charge of awareness and information missions on the APRM process in Burkina Faso. The aims of this department are:

- To monitor all media and news issues of interest for the APRM;
- To formulate a communications plan for the APRM NGC and to ensure its implementation;
- To ensure the drafting and dissemination of APRM newsletters;
- To create and run the APRM NGC website;
- To ensure strong visibility for the actions of the APRM NGC.¹⁹

Based on the missions assigned to it, the communications department organised numerous awareness and information sessions, during each of which the permanent secretary had the opportunity to present the progress of the ongoing APRM process in Burkina Faso. These information and awareness meetings were organised at every stage of the assessment process. For instance, on 15 February 2007, the APRM NGC organised a meeting with CSOs on the implementation of the process in Burkina Faso. On 10 and 11 January 2008, the Permanent Secretariat of the NGC organised an information and communication workshop on the progress of the self-assessment process in Burkina Faso, with support from the UNDP. The participants were able to review preliminary thematic reports by the four TRIs and formulate recommendations with a view to improving relevance. In prelude to the review mission in Burkina Faso scheduled to take place on 18 February 2008, the APRM PS held a press conference on 14 February 2008 to prepare national opinion.²⁰

Upon analysis, it seems that the missions assigned to the department were not sufficiently fulfilled. Firstly, up to the time of the presentation of the Burkina Faso review report to the APRM Forum, there was no APRM Burkina Faso website. Secondly, it was only in June 2008 – six months after the compilation of the self-assessment report – that the drafting phase of the first newsletter on the APRM process in Burkina Faso began. Thus, the communications strategy of the APRM was inefficient to the extent that it was unable to promote better knowledge of the process by the people and government agencies, which could have facilitated data collection.

19 Article 10 of Decree No. 2007-338/PRES/PM/MAEGR on the duties and powers, organisation and running of the APRM PS.

20 *Sidwaya* daily newspaper of 15 February 2008.

Data-collection methodology

Each of the four TRIs developed its own personal methodology (although they were all quite similar) to enable it to fulfil its mission, which was to administer the APRM questionnaire. All four methodological proposals were then harmonised with a view to homogenising the preliminary PoA, which was put forward following the completion of the different studies.

Centre pour la gouvernance démocratique (CGD)

In determining a sample size for research on democratic and political governance, the CGD faced two constraints: the cost of the study (data collection, processing and analysis) and its aim of achieving precision. In the light of these objective statistical and material constraints, and considering the nature of the information sought, the Centre adopted a combined qualitative and quantitative methodology, based on opinion surveys and focus groups.

Initially, an opinion survey was conducted, focusing on representative and relevant organisations in the area of democratic and political governance. With regard to the organisation of the questionnaire and the formulation of the indicators, a certain number of citizens were also questioned. The researchers were assigned according to the objectives identified in the questionnaire with a diversified and specialised target audience in keeping with the nature of the questions. Thus, for questions relating to conflict prevention and management, government actors in the areas of defence and security and civil society stakeholders active in the field, as well as citizens, were asked to share their perceptions on the subject. The same approach was taken for all nine study objectives.

Subsequently, in order to refine the data, the CGD set up regional focus groups facilitated by caucuses of local civil society organisations.²¹ Through the focus group technique, qualitative data was gathered and then a synthesis was carried out to identify the positions of the group, while naturally pointing out all notable differences, in keeping with the purpose of the focus groups. In terms of numbers, the sample was considerably larger than the 300 people called for in the terms of reference. It should be noted that, on instructions from the APRM NGC, benchmark organisations with local representation were identified to participate in the focus groups. The CGD surveyors also used the benchmark organisations during the documentary review. The division of the national territory into 13 administrative regions constituted

21 Caucuses are groups bringing together the main civil society organisations on the local scale. They are distributed across the country's 13 regions and comprise several working groups (women, youth, research institutes, human rights movements, associations of marginalised persons, etc.).

a natural stratification; each region formed a sample.

In order to successfully implement the process, a technical team was also set up. This team was in charge of leading the entire process of research design, implementation and monitoring as well as the drafting of reports and the PoA. In addition to the senior experts placed under the coordination of the executive director of the CGD, the team also included experienced PhD-level researchers who had already conducted similar research for the CGD, who gathered data in Ouagadougou, and coordinators of civil society organisation caucuses, who had been regional strategic partners of the CGD since 2004, and whose role was to facilitate the regional focus groups. In all, a dynamic team of some 27 people was mobilised for the surveys. Data gathering per se was carried out from 16–30 October 2007.

Practical difficulties were encountered during the pilot phase of the surveys. The government organisations surveyed were sometimes difficult to reach; some required appointments to be set up and researchers were often referred to unwieldy official channels. Sometimes, the respondents required time to prepare their technical responses in advance, or they lacked the ability to respond to certain questions of an elitist nature. Another type of difficulty encountered by the CGD researchers stemmed from the attitude of certain political opposition parties who challenged the APRM itself and refused to answer the questions of the surveyor. To better manage the considerable number of indicators contained in the questionnaire, it was revised by objective and question in view of the indicators and field research requirements. Each surveyor was made responsible for one specific questionnaire objective and was expected to gather the necessary data to inform the questionnaire indicators.²²

Centre d'analyse des politiques économiques et sociales (CAPES)

CAPES set up a technical team comprising a research coordinator, five consultants and two assistants and in October 2007 they began reviewing the APRM questionnaire and developing a new questionnaire to gather popular opinions on issues relating to economic governance and management of public finance. CAPES designed six survey forms covering standards and codes and five objectives: to promote macro-economic policies that contribute to sustainable development; to implement economic policies that are sound, transparent and foreseeable by the government; to promote sound management of public finance; to fight against corruption and money laundering; and to speed up regional integration by contributing to the harmonisation of monetary, trade and investment policies.

²² Interviews with CGD surveyors on 9 and 10 May 2008.

The survey forms on the five objectives were administered to technical organisations such as: the *Direction générale des études et de la planification* (DGEP, the government research and planning agency), the main ministerial departments, the *Direction générale des impôts* (DGI, the agency in charge of income tax), *Direction de la prévision et de l'analyse macroéconomique* (DPAM, a macro-economic forecast and study agency), the *Direction générale des douanes* (DGD, the Customs Agency), the *Direction de la législation et de la réglementation* (the legislative and regulatory agency), the *Direction des politiques économiques* (DPE, an economic policy agency), the *Direction des relations extérieures* (an ECOWAS national unit), the *Direction générale du commerce* (trade agency), the *Département du marché régional, du commerce, de la concurrence et de la coopération de l'UEMOA* (UEMOA regional market, trade, competition and cooperation department), the National Assembly, REN-LAC (a national network aimed at fighting corruption), CEDRES (the Centre for Economic and Social Documentation and Research), BCEAO (the West African Central Bank), labour union confederations (CNTB, CSB, CGTB, ONSL) and the MBDHP (the Burkinabé Movement for Human and Peoples' Rights). In addition to those organisations, all 13 regions of the country were covered by an opinion survey. A sample of 789 individuals was formed based on the demographic weight of the regions and the socio-professional categories of the country in reference to the surveys by the INSD.

Institut supérieur des sciences de la population (ISSP)

The methodology adopted by this public research institute was broken down into four parts: a documentary review; a survey at the central level focusing on officials from administrative structures and non-governmental organisations; interviews with the administrative authorities and opinion leaders at all levels of local government; and an opinion survey of a sample of the general population.

For the documentary review, 12 ministries were chosen based on their role in socio-economic development.²³ In addition, a certain number of non-governmental organisations and other CSOs were identified with a view to conducting a documentary review on the different sectorial policy papers relating to socio-economic development. The documentary review also enabled the ISSP to document part one of the assessment, that is, the standards and codes adopted

²³ These ministries were as follows: agriculture, water and fisheries resources, basic education and literacy, territorial administration and decentralisation, employment and youth, promotion of women, economy and finance, health, higher education and scientific research, information technology, social action and solidarity, promotion of human rights, urbanism and housing (ISSP, *Rapport sur le développement économique et social*, January 2008, p.141).

by Burkina Faso and the mechanisms in place to ensure compliance. The documentary review conducted during this phase along with the initial questionnaire made it possible to develop specific questionnaires addressed to the different ministries mentioned above and certain organisations.

The approach used to conduct the surveys was both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative survey comprised two parts: individual interviews at the local level with administrative officials and opinion leaders and adapted versions of the standard APRM questionnaire which were sent to central-level ministerial departments in Ouagadougou.²⁴ The quantitative survey consisted of an individual questionnaire on major economic and social development policies administered to a sample of heads of households. At each level of local government, interviews were conducted with all of the actors involved through each sectorial development programme as well as with opinion leaders (religious officials, NGO officials, etc.). The aim of these interviews was to document the level of knowledge about sectorial policies and programmes, the level of participation of the actors in the implementation of the different programmes in their respective areas, and opinions on the management and implementation of the policies.²⁵ The surveys were conducted at the regional,²⁶ provincial²⁷ and departmental²⁸ levels.

The ISSP also conducted another opinion survey aimed at a sample of heads of households. The objective of this survey was to obtain grassroots viewpoints on perceptions of governance in terms of social and economic policies in Burkina Faso, their level of participation in the establishment of said policies and how they thought the management and implementation of such policies could be improved.

24 A total of 11 ministries and 11 other organisations took part in this survey (ISSP, *Rapport sur le développement économique et social*, January 2008, p.141).

25 Ibid., p.142.

26 At the regional level, a total of 22 interviews were conducted with regional directors, notably those in charge of: basic education and literacy, health, the economy and finance, agriculture, water and fisheries resources, and social action and national solidarity. In addition to the regional directors, interviews were also conducted with officials from civil society organisations at the regional level, to wit: officials from associations, health mutual coordinators, micro-credit coordinators, officials from NGOs, officials from cooperatives. A total of 27 officials from different organisations were reached (Ibid.).

27 At the provincial level, the same approach used at the regional level was applied, i.e. interviews with provincial directors of basic education and literacy, health, the economy and finance, agriculture, water and fisheries resources, and social action and national solidarity but also officials from civil society organisations. A total of ten provincial directors and 27 officials from organisations were interviewed (Ibid.).

28 At the departmental/communal and village levels, interviews took place with officials and opinion leaders such as village chiefs, customary and religious leaders, village administrative officials, officials in associations in the villages. At this level, 35 interviews were conducted.

In the end, due to financial constraints, it was difficult for the ISSP technical team to ensure a strictly representative sample by drawing households at random. The ISSP used a quota method to select the households, which it felt ensured that the survey units were somewhat representative.²⁹

Institut national de la statistique et de la démographie (INSD)

The INSD is another of the government structures that participated in APRM data gathering. It also encountered numerous difficulties in attempting to keep the pace chosen by the APRM bodies for the formulation of the self-assessment report on corporate governance. According to the ISSP, bureaucratic red tape typical of public administration caused the very long delay by the INSD.³⁰ For example, due to internal procedure issues, the team in charge of data collection did not have timely access to the financial resources allocated for the research. Up to the time of the workshop for the validation of the reports of the TRIs, in January 2008, the INSD report was not yet finalised. The INSD only submitted its report the day before the arrival of the panel experts.

The methodology used by the INSD, was similar to that used by the other TRIs. It included a documentary review and surveys in the field using a predetermined sample. In order to achieve this, the Institute recruited consultants to gather data. Three types of questionnaires were developed and administered to businesses (formal and informal), labour unions and employees. The APRM document that was supposed to be used to collect data had to be adapted since it was not a questionnaire 'but rather a collection of questions or issues' that needed to be broken down into questionnaire form. Like the other TRIs, the INSD acknowledged that it encountered more difficulties with formal businesses than with informal ones. The survey response rate remained low, standing at approximately 50 per cent of formal businesses, despite efforts made to repeatedly contact business leaders and raise their awareness.³¹

Particular problems encountered during data collection

The data-gathering exercise revealed a certain number of insufficiencies and criticisms highlighted by the TRIs, which seemed to be obstacles to the administration of the questionnaires. They included the following:

29 ISSP, *Rapport sur le Développement économique et social*, January 2008, pp.142–146.

30 Ibid., p.142.

31 Interviews with Dansané Ouédraogo, an employee of the INSD.

- The targets did not seem to be informed about the national APRM process despite the publicity campaigns and letters of recommendation that had apparently been addressed to them. In certain situations, the letters were delayed.
- The technicality of the questionnaire in places, led to selective responses, with interviewees only answering the questions involving their areas of competence; the people surveyed found that because the questionnaire was 'written in such formal language', its comprehension was probably negatively affected for the majority of the population.
- The length of certain questions was problematical. An illustration is the question contained in objectives 2 and 4 of the section on political and democratic governance. Some people³² pointed out that the exercise was more like an essay than a typical survey with closed questions answered by Yes or No.
- Information was withheld at certain levels of the public administration and there was a lack of availability of institutes and organisations, especially government institutes and organisations, which always go through official channels to provide the required information to the surveyors.
- At the documentary level, certain lists were out of date or misfiled, such as lists on the ratification of international legal instruments.
- The financial resources allotted to the TRIs, in view of the scope of the work demanded of them, were limited. Each TRI only seems to have received some twenty million CFA francs, whereas they had submitted budgets ranging from 40 to 50 million CFA francs based on their needs.³³
- The time allotted to the TRIs to gather data was insufficient. In all, the TRIs had three months to gather data for the self-assessment. This situation seems to have influenced the quality of analysis of the data collected to the extent that the limited time allotted did not allow the TRIs to conduct in-depth analyses of the findings obtained in the field.³⁴ Two days were set aside for the pooling of the different TRI reports, but in reality, those two days were used by the individual TRIs to finalise their own reports.

Faced with the difficulty of administering the questionnaire to 'officials', the strategy used was to gather the opinions of government institutions' 'resource persons' as ordinary citizens. This enabled the surveyors to overcome the difficulty linked to referrals to official channels which they

32 Information gathered from CGD surveyors and Dansané Ouedraogo, head of the corporate and trade statistics department of the INSD.

33 Information gathered from Mr Jean-François Kobiane of the ISSP.

34 This opinion was put forward by Mr Jean-François Kobiane, ISSP research coordinator in the APRM framework focusing on socio-economic development, in our interview with him.

systematically faced whenever they asked for an official opinion. The technical nature of the questions also created difficulties in obtaining responses, and in certain cases, expertise was required to answer certain questions.

Pooling of the findings of the TRIs

On 4–5 January 2008, following the data-gathering phase carried out by each TRI, the APRM PS organised a two-day common validation workshop to pool and synthesise the individual reports into a single document in order to ensure a certain homogeneity in relation to the various angles of analysis of the TRIs. The pooling workshop took place in Koubry, a community located some 50 km from Ouagadougou, and was attended by all of the TRI research teams involved in the data-gathering process. This phase preceded the validation of the self-assessment report at the national level.

Presentation and validation of the progress report on the self-assessment process

On 10–11 January 2008, the draft national self-assessment report was submitted for validation by nearly 200 national and local actors, from both governmental and non-governmental spheres.³⁵ The workshop participants came from national, central and local government administrations, from the formal and informal private sectors, from CSOs and traditional structures. The validation of the diagnostic report on the state of national governance was a decisive turning point proceeding from the unifying principle of feedback.

The diagnostic proceedings concluded that Burkina Faso had signed and ratified most of the standards and codes of good conduct identified by the APRM. However, the standards and codes were not sufficiently well known by the population and their implementation was not tangible in terms of notably improved living conditions for the people, particularly in the following areas: enjoyment of civil and political rights; transparent and efficient economic and budgetary management; corporate governance in a context of sustainable development; and economic and social development. A preliminary programme of action in each of the thematic areas of the APRM was proposed with the aim of strengthening gains and existing good practices and meeting the challenges identified in areas suffering from serious failings. For Burkina Faso, the assessment report

35 Jean-Baptiste Natama, *Note d'information sur le processus du MAEP au Burkina Faso*, p.8; the APRM PS drafted regular descriptive memos on the APRM process, which were distributed within the Council as information papers.

contributed to the preliminary programme of action in an approach of harmonisation of the activities to be executed with existing programmes such as the priority action plan for the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction (SFPR).

However, the self-assessment report validation workshop was sharply criticised. According to many participants, it was not a genuine validation workshop for the purpose of discussing the content of the draft report resulting from the TRI research findings, to the extent that the assessment report was not actually discussed.³⁶ The meeting seems to have been an information session on the APRM process with brief presentations of the synthesised versions of the four reports rather than a genuine working session on the content of the TRIs' research. It provided an opportunity for most of the participants to receive a synthesis of the report and to make initial contact with the document without being able to make an in-depth judgment on its content. Those questioned on the subject would have preferred to have received the draft report before the workshop in order to formulate relevant criticisms during the validation meeting. The desire of the citizens to contribute to the enrichment of the self-assessment report was legitimate, but, in practice, the APRM PS did not have time to conduct such an exercise due to the imminent arrival of the panel experts. It would have been preferable for the work to have been done at a lower level through regional validations of the national self-assessment report. However, this procedural issue could not have affected the quality of the work of the TRI other than by improving it.

APRM review mission

A review mission by the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons took place in Burkina Faso from 18 February to 16 March 2008 to verify the compliance of the self-assessment process with APRM principles and guidelines and to prepare the official Burkina Faso review report.

Composition and objectives of the review mission

The Burkina Faso review mission was conducted by a two-member team comprising Professor Mohamed Seghir Babes and Madame Marie Angélique Savané, members of the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons.³⁷ Burkina Faso was the ninth country to be reviewed and the second country that

was not a member of the NEPAD implementation committee (so that it was less well informed about the APRM and less well prepared for the process). It was also the third French-speaking country in sub-Saharan Africa.

The mission team comprised 19 African experts from 12 African Union member states, chosen for their skills and experience in the area of governance, and specifically in the thematic areas covered by the APRM. The team included experts from the APRM Panel and Secretariat,³⁸ partner institutions³⁹ and independent experts on the themes of democracy and political governance,⁴⁰ economic management,⁴¹ corporate governance⁴² and socio-economic development.⁴³

In keeping with the APRM mandate, the review mission verified and looked further into the findings of the self-assessment by the APRM NGC of Burkina Faso, on the country's performance in the area of governance. More concretely, the objectives of the mission were:

- To conduct consultations as broadly as possible with all of the stakeholders to increase the depth and breadth of the self-assessment report;

38 Representing the APRM Panel and Secretariat: Professor Mohamed Seghir Babes and Madame Marie-Angélique Savané, mission leaders, members of the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons; Mr Moïse Nembot, coordinator in charge of democracy and political governance and coordinator of the Burkina Faso review; Mr Dalmar Jama, corporate governance researcher and Mme Atany Kagnaguine, support officer to the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons.

39 Representing the partner institutions: Mme Houda Mejri, information officer in charge of gender issues at UNECA; Mr Daniel Gbetnkom, economic affairs officer, UNECA, West Africa sub-region; Mr Guy Fortunat Ranaivomanana, economic affairs and governance officer, UNECA; Mr Donatien Bihute, former vice president, ADB, international consultant, representing ADB; Mme Sylvie Kinigi, former prime minister of Burundi, international consultant, representing the UNDP and Mr Kango Lare-Lantone, governance programme officer at the UNDP Regional Service Centre in Dakar.

40 Dr Yenikoye Ismael Aboubacar, international consultant, former dean of the faculty of humanities of Niamey; Dr Babacar Gueye, associate professor of the faculty of law of the University Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar and Dr Léopold Donfack Sokeng, associate professor of public law at the University of Douala.

41 Dr Mbaya J. Kankwenda, international consultant, CEO of ICREDES, former chief economist of UNDP Africa, former UNDP resident representative and former minister of planning of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Dr Pasteur Just Akpo, Professor at the University of Benin.

42 Dr Karim Ben Kahla, associate professor of management science, University of Tunis.

43 Mr Ousmane M. Diallo, international consultant, former minister of planning of Mali; Dr Mahmoud Ben Romdhane, professor of economic science at the University of Tunis and Dr Omar Saïp Sy, professor of management at the University of Paris.

36 All members of the APRM NGC with whom we met during the drafting of this report acknowledged that the self-assessment report was not discussed (interviews conducted between May and July 2008 with members of the APRM NGC).

37 The newspaper *Le Pays*, No. 4057 of 18 February 2008 'MAEP: la mission d'évaluation du Burkina attendue à Bobo'.

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- To assess the draft PoA submitted by the country and to make suitable proposals;
- To ensure in so far as possible that the self-assessment process carried out by Burkina Faso was technically satisfactory, credible and free from any political manipulation;
- To establish a consensus with the stakeholders on the remaining issues and challenges, as well as recommendations to improve governance in the country.

Thus, the mission was to meet with all of the actors involved in the APRM process in Burkina Faso, particularly the president of the republic, representatives of the legislature and the judiciary, the institutions of the republic, members of government, local government from all regions and certain provinces of the country, political parties, traditional leadership institutions, employers' organisations and the private sector, civil society, opinion leaders, youth movements and women's organisations, groups of disadvantaged people, representatives of the academic world, as well as the media.

Activities conducted during the review mission

The work of the mission began with the official launching of the review by the president of the republic⁴⁴ in the presence of the bodies politic and actors in development, followed by a press conference. Shortly afterward, the head of state granted an audience to the mission, followed by an audience with the prime minister. Next, the mission team spoke with the heads of the institutions of the republic, the president of the National Assembly accompanied by the chairs of the parliamentary working groups and commissions, members of government, members of the diplomatic and consular corps and international organisations, traditional leaders, civil society, and the private sector.

After this initial greeting, the mission team held seminars with the members of the government as a whole (35 ministers and delegate ministers took part in the seminars) during which the review team engaged in dialogue with the ministers on the strategic orientations of the country, the issues and challenges of political and economic governance and socio-economic development that the country is facing or will face in future, as well as possible avenues towards medium- and long-term solutions.

The consultations with the experts were organised around the four themes of the review. During their trips to the field,

44 As reported in the newspaper *Le Pays*, No. 4058 of 19 February 2008, 'Mise en œuvre du MAEP au Burkina: La "vraie" évaluation commence maintenant'.

the participants were divided into four thematic groups and the work of each group was subsequently reported back in a plenary session.⁴⁵

The mission worked in three stages: first in Ouagadougou, the capital and largest city of Burkina Faso where the governmental and diplomatic services are located; followed by a regional stage, during which the mission travelled to all 13 regions of the country (the first time an APRM review mission covered the whole of the geographical territory of a member country); and finally the report at the end of the mission.

The review mission at the central level

In Ouagadougou, the mission team met first with the APRM focal point and NGC to discuss the self-assessment report. Next, over the following five days, the team met with all of the stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, first in a plenary session, then in thematic workshops. The mission team met with all of the heads of the institutions of the republic, to wit: the Constitutional Court, the Court of Cassation, the State Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Higher Council on Communications. The mission team also met with the ombudsman, the grand chancellor of national orders, the National Ethics Committee, the auditor-general's department, the High Authority for the Fight against Corruption, the State Audit Office⁴⁶ and the chairman of the CENI (Independent National Electoral Commission). Immediately following, the mission team interviewed the ambassadors of the G8 countries accredited in Burkina Faso and residing in Ouagadougou (USA, France, Canada and Germany) and the technical and financial partners. The meeting with the ambassadors of the African countries accredited in Burkina Faso and residing in Ouagadougou was one of the highlights of the activities of the review mission. As the APRM is an instrument for the promotion of governance in African states, it provided the experts with an opportunity to draw the attention of the diplomats to the importance of the instrument and the need for African countries to undergo reviews. The meeting also enabled the experts to gather the opinions of the ambassadors regarding governance in Burkina Faso. In addition, the mission also met with the TRIs.

The mission also organised a women's forum, a youth forum, a forum for executives and intellectuals, a media forum, a forum for political parties, and a labour union forum to discuss the subjects and concerns close to the hearts of each organisation. Finally, the mission held theme meetings with

45 Interview with Blanchard Bayala, civil servant to the prime minister and member of the APRM NGC.

46 The State Audit Office (*Inspection générale d'Etat*) is now the State Audit High Authority (*Autorité supérieure de contrôle de l'Etat*, ASCE).

several groups such as the chair of the national governing council of private investors, representatives of the association of banks and financial establishments, representatives of the youths' association, representatives of the association of women entrepreneurs, economic operators and several financial institutions.

The review mission at the local level

The review team then travelled to all 13 regions of the country and held meetings in their respective capitals (Ziniaré, Kaya, Dori, Bobo-Dioulasso, Banfora, Gaoua, Ouahigouya, Koudougou, Dédougou, Tenkodogo, Fada N'gourma, Manga and Ouagadougou). At the local level, the review work carried out by the experts took place in three main successive stages. In each case, the team met with all of the stakeholders first in a plenary session, then in theme workshops, and finally in a plenary feedback session during which the workshop findings were validated. Everywhere it went, the mission team noted with great satisfaction that not only did the people respond in large numbers to the invitation of the APRM, but they also fulfilled the expectations of the reviewers by skilfully and articulately analysing the situation. The trip to Bobo-Dioulasso was a vital component of the expert review mission. On Wednesday 27 February, the delegation visited Bobo-Dioulasso, where it met with various stakeholder groups in the Hauts Bassins region. In the view of the APRM African experts, the Hauts Bassins region was a key stage in the execution of their mission. Indeed, according to delegation head Marie Angélique Savané, as the economic capital, Bobo-Dioulasso was a favourable site for gathering complete and credible indicators. The cosmopolitan nature of the city was also a major asset, reflecting considerable sub-regional integration which could not necessarily be found in the other cities. The city of Bobo-Dioulasso had also been the point of departure for the demonstrations against the high cost of living.⁴⁷

Upon returning to Ouagadougou, the mission had an opportunity to speak at length with the prime minister and the members of government all together. It was an opportunity for the APRM to hear members of government speak on such thorny issues as the multiple party system and politics, corruption, the running of national institutions and the separation of powers, but also on crosscutting issues such as gender equality, youth employment, etc. During that phase, the mission was also able to speak with the association of women entrepreneurs and promoters of women's welfare in Burkina Faso and with the Permanent Secretariat of National Commitments. Finally, a restitution

meeting took place at the end of the stay during a working session presided over by the president of the republic, and attended by the prime minister and the chair of the APRM NGC. During the session, the review team presented the chief provisional findings of the consultations, with a focus on the major achievements of Burkina Faso, but also on the challenges identified by the review.

The broad consultation process initiated by the review mission reached 'approximately 5 000 people'.⁴⁸ The fact that the review took place in a context of crisis linked to social grievances allowed the experts to measure the vitality of democracy in Burkina Faso. The mission was able to gather comments and criticisms on the process, as illustrated by the following:⁴⁹

- Strong mobilisation demonstrating popular interest in the review;
- Trips to all regions of the country marked a notable first among APRM missions;⁵⁰
- The people felt a need for communication and dialogue with their government and asked for more time to discuss their concerns;
- The debates took place in the presence of both parties and all participants expressed their views in their language of choice;
- The participatory development approach raised considerable interest in the population and should be extended to all initiatives and programmes throughout all of their different phases;
- The existence of highly diversified associations, whose mobilisation is vital to support government actors in their day-to-day actions to promote development;
- Poor understanding of the APRM approach by some, who viewed the mechanism as a structure that had come to judge the government.

47 Daily newspaper *Le Pays* No. 4064 of 27 February 2008, '*Evaluation du Burkina par le MAEP: les manifestations contre la vie chère s'invitent dans le bilan*'.

48 Interview with the APRM PS, 2 May 2008.

49 Information note on the APRM process prepared by the APRM PS, internal document, p.9.

50 Based on interviews with members of the APRM NGC and APRM PS.

Financing of the APRM process in Burkina Faso

The implementation of the APRM self-assessment process in Burkina Faso entailed the mobilisation of significant material and financial resources.

The resources for the APRM NGC were supposed to be drawn from annual government budget allocations and other authorised funding sources.⁵¹ In reality, most of the financial resources for the execution the self-assessment process and the running of the APRM bodies were covered by the state budget. In 2007 and 2008, the government granted the APRM PS the sum of CFA 387 186 000, or approximately US \$860 414.⁵² This amount was intended to support the activities of the national body steering the implementation of the APRM.

Funding for the APRM process in Burkina Faso is also covered by the UNDP through a capacity-building programme for republican institutions and gender mainstreaming (*Programme de renforcement des capacités des institutions républicaines et de systématisation du genre*, PRCIREG) of which component 3 applied to the APRM. The programme, which covers the 2006–2010 period, has enabled the APRM PS to benefit from support in different forms: support for participation in international meetings as well as material support (computer and audiovisual equipment, support for the formulation of a communications and popularisation strategy for the mechanism). In 2006, the programme helped the APRM PS to become operational and in 2007 and 2008, the programme promoted the development of work plans. The goal of the first work plan was to facilitate self-assessment and the second work plan, which is ongoing, should

make it possible to popularise the national review report. This programme received the following amounts: 2006: US \$140 000; 2007: US \$248 000; 2008: US \$300 000 (or US \$668 000 over three years).⁵³

In all, according to the information made available to us, financing for the Burkina Faso APRM was supported by the state and the national UNDP office.

51 Article 15 of Decree No. 2007-337/PRES/PM/MAEGR, on the composition, duties and powers and running of the APRM NGC.

52 Cf. government budgets for 2007 and 2008.

53 Information gathered from Delphine Ouandaogo, democratic governance programme officer and gender focal point, UNDP.

Civil society participation

The CSOs of Burkina Faso are characterised by their great numbers and diversity.⁵⁴ The rich and close-knit fabric of associations is the principal strength of CSOs. This pluralism, which is a clear manifestation of the freedom of association, is not only a strong pledge of the independence of civil society, but also a potential source of counter-power and a guarantee against potential totalitarian inclinations on the part of the state or authoritarian tendencies on the part of the political authorities. It also promotes emulation and the emergence of organisational and individual leadership within civil society, which is increasingly aware of its own ability to influence public opinion and to weigh on government decisions as a power of persuasion and an element of counter-power. The special attention devoted to civil society by the public authorities has been a determining factor in their considerable involvement in the APRM process in Burkina Faso.

Civil society participation in APRM implementation took place both upstream and downstream of the process.⁵⁵ First of all, CSOs were strongly represented on the APRM NGC, where, with 12 representatives out of 28, they were more strongly represented than the other structures. This seems to explain the place and importance of CSOs in governance in Burkina Faso.⁵⁶ Prior consultations were organised with civil society

representatives to stimulate their involvement and adhesion throughout the process. Workshops were organised in 2003 and 2005, involving large numbers of CSOs, for the finalisation and operationalisation of the self-assessment process. The distinction of the CSOs was symbolised above all by the selection of the *Centre pour la gouvernance démocratique*, a civil society organisation active in the area of democratic governance, as a TRI responsible for the portion of the self-assessment report focusing on policy and democratic governance. Also, the position of deputy chair of the APRM NGC was allotted to civil society to increase their accountability for the process. Civil society is in charge of the working group on economic and social development.⁵⁷ Throughout the process, CSOs were regularly called upon to participate in data gathering, either by ensuring its organisation⁵⁸ or by sharing their opinions on the theme questionnaires proposed by the different TRIs.

The participation of CSOs was also manifested by the frequent expression of their concerns and apprehensions regarding the APRM process. On 15 February 2007, for example, the APRM national governing council organised a meeting with CSOs on the implementation of the process in Burkina Faso, and its principal objective was to discuss the APRM and particularly the self-assessment report to be produced by the Burkina Faso organisation. The meeting of 15 February was a briefing meeting on the process and the expectations of the NGC vis-à-vis civil society. More than thirty organisations responded to the invitation of the NGC, which was presided over by its chair. Following the intervention of the chair and the heads of all four working

54 Indeed, eleven components of CSOs have been identified: women's organisations, research and training institutes, labour organisations, religious organisations, human rights organisations and special advocacy groups, private media, NGOs and development associations, youth movements, 'marginalised' persons, farmers' organisations, and cultural and artistic organisations (an Extract from CODESRIA-OSIWA, *La gouvernance des organisations de la société au Burkina Faso*. Report produced by Professor Augustin Loda, p.81).

55 Interview with the APRM permanent secretary in Burkina Faso on 2 May 2008.

56 Interview with the deputy chair of the APRM NGC and women's representative on 25 May 2007.

57 Words by the APRM permanent secretary.

58 For this purpose, regional groups of SCOS, i.e. SCOS Caucuses, were mobilised by the TRIs either to collect data or to facilitate data collection.

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groups, the meeting participants pointed out a certain number of insufficiencies regarding both the process in itself and the implementation methods adopted by the NGC.

First of all, CSOs noted that they had been placed before a *fait accompli* in terms of the selection of their representatives on the NGC, who were co-opted through affinities with certain leaders. The participants felt it was important to recall that such practices were not only dubious but also threatened to discredit the initiative as a whole. Secondly, they unanimously deplored the lack of materials (documents) presenting the process, its actors in Burkina Faso, its objectives and the expected outcomes. Indeed, no briefing documents were made available for the participants. This created a sort of suspicion among certain participants who could not help wondering whether the meeting was a sort of preparation for participation in name only or just a means for those in charge to ease their conscience. Even the questionnaire, which is standard and was therefore available from the time the process began, was not made available to the civil society representatives. In summary, the speakers on behalf of civil society expressed some apprehension as to the risk that the weight of the administrative culture marked by the withholding of information and the co-opting of non-representative actors might contribute to making the inclusion of civil society in the APRM a participation in name only.⁵⁹

59 *Sidwaya* daily newspaper, 29 February 2008, 'Bonne gouvernance: les Hauts-Bassins à la loupe du MAEP'.

Submission of the Burkina Faso review report

The APRM panel of experts prepared its National Review Report for Burkina Faso based on the self-assessment report and the provisional programme of action (PoA) prepared by the TRIs. The review report and the comments of the panel on the national PoA were submitted beforehand to the government of Burkina Faso during the month of May 2008 for comment. On 26 May 2008, the government presided by Prime Minister Tertius Zongo in the absence of the president of the republic, held an Extraordinary Council of Ministers for the purpose of examining the APRM review.

According to a statement published at the outcome of the council of ministers, the government of Burkina Faso observed that 'the report points out with great professionalism the opportunities and challenges but also the measures the country must face'. This statement indicates that the public authorities shared with the panel their realisation that there are still obstacles to the process of good governance and economic and social development in Burkina Faso. However, the government expressed some reservations, as, in its view, 'certain considerations, analyses and comments contained in the report warranted improvement, or even qualification or correction. Furthermore, some factual data ought to be re-examined in light of political and socio-economic change in the country'.⁶⁰ The inaccuracy of some data, as pointed out by the government, could be explained by the fact that government institutions did not generally give the TRIs satisfaction during data collection. This lack of collaboration could justify the reservations of the government on some of the factual data.

Following those remarks, the government authorised the bodies in charge of the APRM to submit the Burkina Faso

review report and PoA to the APRM panel of experts. The president of the republic, who was supposed to present it on 29 June 2008 during the 9th Forum of Heads of State and Government of the African Union at Sharm-el-Sheik, Egypt, was unable to do so in the end due to the apparently fully booked agenda of the summit.⁶¹ The Burkina Faso report was finally presented on 25 and 26 October 2008, in the capital of Benin (Cotonou) during the 1st Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the APRM.

60 Excerpts from the final Statement of the Council of Ministers of 26 May 2008, published on 27 May 2008 on the site www.fasonet.bf.

61 Jean-Baptiste Natama, information note on the APRM process, p.11.

Critical evaluation of the APRM process in Burkina Faso

The APRM process in Burkina Faso was marked by a number of insufficiencies, the foremost being the haste with which the process was conducted. The relatively poor quality of the self-assessment could not be offset by the strong political will of the government authorities in the process.

Strong involvement by the political authorities

The operationalisation of the APRM process in Burkina Faso was characterised by very strong involvement of the national authorities. The APRM process was made possible thanks to a clear political will on the part of the various political and administrative authorities of the country, beginning with the president of the republic. First of all, the APRM is a self-criticism instrument that was freely accepted by each state. Secondly, despite a period of hesitation essentially owing to various electoral issues,⁶² the political authorities resumed the process in 2007 with the self-assessment. This political will was essentially manifested through the personal involvement of the president of Burkina Faso who attached the APRM governing bodies to the office of the president with a view to ensuring the leadership of the process. Members of the government, led by the prime minister, then became involved in the mechanism in their respective fields.

⁶² Between 2003 and October 2007, when the self-assessment process began, Burkina Faso held presidential elections in 2005, municipal elections in 2006, and legislative elections in 2007.

A hastily led process

The commencement of the self-assessment process was considerably delayed, chiefly due to the busy electoral schedule of Burkina Faso between 2005 and 2007. The bodies in charge of the implementation of the APRM process were set in place in 2005 and the working schedule of the APRM Panel had planned the launching of the Burkina Faso review process for the fourth quarter of 2005. But Burkina Faso's governmental and political activities were monopolised by the elections that took place between the latter half of 2005 and the end of the first half of 2007, with the organisation of presidential elections in November 2005 and legislative elections in May 2007. This electoral activity could only form an obstacle to the self-assessment, which effectively did not begin until 2007. The self-assessment lasted three months, from October 2007 to December 2007. This gave the impression that, for the bodies in charge of the process, the goal was to draft a report at any cost, even to the substantial detriment of its quality. The different TRIs we met complained of the material lack of time to collect and analyse data.

The low level of grassroots popular awareness of the objectives of the mechanism, partly due to the lack of sufficient time, constituted another handicap to the successful unwinding of the process. During a mission to promote awareness of the visit of the experts, which we attended in December 2007 in the eastern Burkina region, the people with whom we spoke expressed their regret that no similar mission had taken place before the self-assessment process. That would undoubtedly have enabled the people interviewed to respond more calmly to the questionnaires submitted to them.

The insufficient collaboration during data gathering by the

various TRIs on the part of the government services that possessed most of the information also hampered the data-gathering process. Indeed, access to information from public departments was often blocked by official channels which required separate individual authorisations from the senior official of the department in each instance. Questionnaires addressed to public departments generally registered low response rates.

Limited popular adherence and civil society participation

Broad adherence of various strata of Burkina Faso society in the APR mechanism has been an asset in the process. This adherence was notably reflected by the presence of the most representative strata of the population in the coordination structure of the process (APRM NGC) and by the direct participation of the population in the most important stages of the process, from data gathering to meetings with the APRM experts in charge of the review, including validation meetings for the self-assessment report.

However, APRM implementation did not meet with the expected popular enthusiasm leading to ownership and greater involvement of the various segments of Burkina Faso society. Indeed, civil society participation in the process was incomplete. CSOs were formally represented on the APRM NGC, which was the national body in charge of coordinating APRM implementation. However, in the general opinion of the civil society representatives interviewed for the report, CSO members were appointed to the NGC without the participation of the organisations they were supposed to represent. The representatives were effectively co-opted by the government, rather than being elected or appointed consensually by the other CSOs.

Insufficient financial resources

The scope of the data-gathering work also required the mobilisation of substantial financial resources for its completion. However, we have observed that low levels of financial resources were allocated to the TRIs to conduct representative surveys. The low level of resources undoubtedly did not allow the research organisations to travel to a maximum number of locations and enlarge the sample of interviewees.

The lack of sufficient resources seemed to explain the opinion of the people interviewed regarding the low level of campaigns aimed at boosting ownership of the APRM

process by the members of the national commission and the population. Indeed, the training planned for the members of the APRM NGC was unable to take place. In addition, there were no nationwide prep missions in the field to raise awareness in local authorities and populations in preparation for the self-assessment phase.

Integrity of the process and independence of the APRM management bodies

The Burkina Faso self-assessment process was placed in the hands of national bodies: the INSD, ISSP, CAPES and the CGD. Only the CGD is a civil society organisation independent from the public authorities. However, the fact that the other three institutes are government structures does not seem to have impacted on their scientific and intellectual independence during data gathering and analysis in the self-assessment phase. In our interviews with their representatives, none of the TRIs reported any attempts by the authorities to intervene in the conduct of their research or to orient the content of their respective reports. Thus, the control of the process by the president of Burkina Faso was purely administrative due to the fact that the bodies in charge of APRM implementation reported to his office. This control in no way affected the independence of the self-assessment process.

Impact on existing governance and development programmes

The formulation of the APRM national PoA included ongoing initiatives and particularly the focuses of government programmes and plans. The objectives pursued in the PoA will be implemented by national structures that include both government bodies and non-government bodies in charge of similar actions. This will make it possible to avoid overlapping and increase the efficiency of the planned actions. It is expected that the execution of the PoA will take place according to the subsidiarity principle. This means that the PoA will not replace existing sectorial strategies or strategies already undergoing finalisation, but will ensure their consistency to guarantee better impact on beneficiary populations. The strategies include the Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction (SFPR) and the national good governance policy (*Politique nationale de bonne gouvernance*, PNBG).

The SFPR is a framework document whose purpose is to set forth the priority development objectives established by the government. It reflects the essential choices operated

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at the level of priority sectors. The approach underlying the development and implementation of the SFPR is an iterative approach. The government has decided to update the SFPR every three years to integrate the lessons learned from the implementation of the public policies adopted in the document. The SFPR revision process is a government initiative involving broad consultation with all actors in governance. The SFPR comprises four main focuses:

1. Increasing the pace of growth and founding growth on equity;
2. Guaranteeing access to basic social services for the poor;
3. Increasing both employment as well as income-generating opportunities for the poor;
4. Promoting good governance (democratic, economic and local).

In October 1998, the government of Burkina Faso adopted a national good governance plan for the 1998–2003 period. In light of the evaluation of the plan in March 2003, the government reaffirmed its will to promote the principles of good governance in Burkina Faso through the formulation of a national policy on good governance (PNBG). The choice of a national policy on good governance up to 2015 reflects the concern of the public authorities for the need of a strategic orientation document that, on the one hand, clarifies the fourth theme of the SFPR on good governance and, on the other hand, specifies the actions envisaged with respect to international commitments, especially those linked to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the APRM.

It is not yet clear how the subsidiarity principle will work in practice. It is important for the implementation of the PoA to take account of all other existing mechanisms, whether they are part of the SFPR or various programmes (government programmes, presidential programmes, etc.). Consistency between the different programmes is necessary to avoid overlapping or wasted time.

Conclusions and recommendations

Good governance is henceforth at the heart of the process of development in Africa, as demonstrated by the organisation of African forums on governance, of which the seventh took place in Burkina Faso in October 2007, on the subject of state capacity building in Africa. In March 2003 in Abuja, Nigeria, during the sixth summit of the committee of heads of state and government in charge of implementing NEPAD, a Memorandum of Understanding was concluded on the APRM. The purpose of this mechanism is to further the adoption of policies, standards and practices leading to political stability, strong economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration through exchanges of experience and consolidation of successful best practices, including the identification of insufficiencies and the evaluation of capacity-building needs in participating countries (28 in all).

By adhering voluntarily to the APRM on 9 March 2003, Burkina Faso undertook to take all necessary measures to facilitate the development and implementation of a national action programme with a view to improving its performances in the areas of democratic, economic and financial governance, socio-economic development and corporate governance.

For Burkina Faso, the APRM process to which it committed itself on 20 March 2003 represents an incontestable capacity-building tool. Having adopted a national PoA on good governance well before the advent of the APRM, Burkina Faso undertook, on September 2003, the elaboration of a second plan of the same nature to serve as the foundation for its national policy on governance and to ensure the consistency of its strategic focuses with those established in the framework of the APRM.

Economic and social progress aimed at improving the living conditions of the people, as referred to in the SFPR, does not seem to have got off the ground, as witnessed by the demonstrations against the high cost of living in February 2008. Corruption also seems to be recurrent in Burkina Faso society, despite the implementation by the public authorities of a major institutional mechanism to fight against the phenomenon. Thus, the review process was able to point out some of the weaknesses of governance that have been repeatedly underlined by national actors. All of the actors in governance hope that the national PoA produced by the process will be more than just another programme with little chance of actually being implemented.

In order to improve the APRM process in Burkina Faso, we recommend the following actions and measures, certain of which have been suggested by the persons we have interviewed:

1. Ensure restitution of the expert review report to the people in the different regions of Burkina Faso; or, preferably, publish the review report so that it is accessible to all citizens;
2. Enhance the participatory and inclusive nature of the APRM process, as well as the independence of the APRM bodies, by including representatives of various social strata and by increasing their independence in relation to the government. In particular, the bodies set up to ensure the monitoring of the PoA should be politically independent, like the corresponding structures in Ghana and in other countries;
3. Avoid bringing an institutional response to the diagnosis established by the experts in their review report and, instead, act on the concerns expressed by the citizens. Indeed, the feelings of the people

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- reflect the ineffectiveness of the existing array of state organisations;
4. Organise a national workshop on ownership of the PoA to enable the different social strata to gain familiarity with its contents and thereby motivate them to play a parallel role in monitoring and evaluating its implementation;
 5. Strengthen the capacities of the members of the APRM NGC to enable them to master the concepts of the APRM and the APRM process so that they can fulfil their role as interfaces between the national APRM body and the grassroots population;
 6. Strengthen the institutional capacities of the APRM SP to enable it to carry out monitoring and evaluation during the PoA operationalisation phase;
 7. Make the APRM Burkina Faso website operational and publish all documents relating to the different stages of the APRM in the country on that site;
 8. Ensure the circulation of information within national bodies in charge of the APRM process in order to make sure that the same level of information is shared by all;
 9. Define a mechanism for the involvement of the TRIs in the process of PoA implementation, monitoring and evaluation in light of their wealth of experience in various areas of governance;
 10. Adopt a communications plan in conformity with APRM guidelines in order to ensure greater visibility and stronger ownership of the process by the primary stakeholders – the grassroots population;
 11. Increase the scope and depth of local community media involvement in the APRM process communications strategy in light of their proximity and accessibility to grassroots populations;
 12. Adopt a mechanism to boost the work of the TRIs by enabling them to work in synergy with a view to harmonising their data-gathering methods and techniques to obtain self-assessment reports whose consistency is unquestionable;
 13. Set in place a lightweight structure for the monitoring and evaluation of the PoA in collaboration with the existing consultation frameworks for the operationalisation of the SFPR.

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List of persons interviewed

At the APRM National Governing Council (NGC)

- Emmanuel Blanchard Bayala, representing the prime minister
- Teeg Wendé Aymar Kabore, representing youths
- Soumaïla Lingani, representing labour unions
- Adelaïde Zabramba, representing women, deputy chair of the APRM NGC;
- Maria Lougue, representing women;
- Timothée T. Soulama, representing the ministry of labour and social security;
- Félix Ouedraogo, representing the media;
- Albert Djigma, representing customary authorities;
- Rasmané Ouedraogo, representing the ministry of the environment and quality of life;
- Baloma Marcel Sandaogo, representing the ministry of the civil service and state reform;
- Salvador Yameogo, member of the National Assembly;
- Malick Sawadogo, member of the National Assembly;
- Yacouba Ouedraogo, representing labour unions.

At the APRM Permanent Secretariat (PS)

- Toussaint Natama, APRM permanent secretary;
- Benjamine Douamba, head of communications;
- Parfait Zio, communications officer;
- Hervé Kouraogo, APRM PS technical advisor.

At the technical research institutes

- Luther Yameogo, CGD researcher;
- Jean-François Kobiane, head of the research unit on education and population at the ISSP, research coordinator on economic and social development in the framework of the APRM self-assessment;
- Dr Abdoulaye Zonon, macro-economist at CAPES;
- Dansané Ouedraogo, head of the department of corporate and trade statistics of the INSD;
- Placide Some, INSD survey official.

At the United Nations Development Programme

- Delphine Ouandaogo, programme officer and gender focal point.