

**CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE
AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM PROCESS
IN RWANDA**

Kigali, January 2007



LIGUE DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE DANS LA RÉGION DES GRANDS LACS (LDGL)

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Foreword

African states have undertaken a growing number of commitments to respect good governance since the African Union (AU) replaced the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 2002. By the Constitutive Act of the AU, African states are bound to promote human rights, democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance. More specific commitments in relation to good governance are included in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

In becoming only the second country to open itself to the critical and rigorous examination of the APRM, Rwanda has contributed to the process of giving a practical form to the mechanism, which many other states have since adhered to. Now is the time to evaluate the degree of credibility of the process and the extent to which it was a genuinely inclusive process, as required by the official guidelines for countries to prepare for and participate in the APRM. This is what the Ligue des droits de la personne dans la région des grands lacs (LDGL, the League for Human Rights in the Great Lakes region) has attempted in this report: *A Critical Review of the African Peer Review Mechanism in Rwanda*.

This report – which was produced with the support of AfriMAP but represents the views of the LDGL, a close observer of the process – analyses the extent to which the APRM in Rwanda respected the criteria of effectiveness and credibility defined by the founding documents of the APRM, in particular the extent to which it was open, participatory, transparent and accountable. The report reviews the challenges faced during the process, including the lack of technical expertise at national level, the weakness of civil society participation, and difficulties of accessing information. The report also considers the opportunity for dialogue that the APRM process has

opened up between different sectors of society in Rwanda. Further dialogue will be needed to overcome the challenges identified by the process and to allow a broader participation of civil society in the implementation of the programme of action (PoA) 2005–2008 adopted in June 2006 for Rwanda by the APR Forum.

The LDGL and Rwandan civil society should be supported in their essential role in the independent monitoring of the efforts of government and its development partners to achieve the objectives of the APRM PoA.

Ozias Tungwarara
Director
Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy
Project – AfriMAP

Preface

The purpose of the present report is to present the main observations and conclusions drawn from an analysis of the Rwandan experience with the implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Through this evaluation, the LDGL wishes to discern the level of involvement of the various stakeholders in the implementation of the APRM and the circumstances under which the process was carried out.

A specific focus was placed on the quality of the participation of non-governmental stakeholders in the self-assessment process in Rwanda with a view to determining the degree of inclusiveness of the process. From this standpoint, the report focuses essentially on the self-assessment process itself, rather than on the substantive conclusions it produced.

The present review essentially draws on:

- i) an analysis of the self-assessment report submitted by Rwanda to the APRM Secretariat in South Africa (Rwanda Country Self-Assessment Report for the African Peer Review Mechanism);
- ii) an analysis of the comments and recommendations of the APRM assessment mission; and
- iii) an analysis of the relevance of the approaches and strategies adopted by the national structures set in place and the panel of experts during the APRM review of Rwanda.

The methodology used to conduct this review was aimed at assessing the level of involvement of the various stakeholders, including the Rwandan government, the APRM continental secretariat and non-governmental stakeholders within Rwanda, especially civil society and the private sector.

Data was gathered through documentary analysis and individual interviews with representatives chosen from the various sectors involved in implementing the review process. Interviews were held with more than one representative of each sector to promote synergy and ensure better circulation of information and ownership of the elements of the analysis.

The report will begin by reviewing the background to the foundation of NEPAD and APRM and their goals; the role of the different stakeholders in implementation; the results expected; and the level of implementation of the actions aimed at achieving the goals, before presenting the principal observations identified. Finally, the report will issue a certain number of recommendations.

The present study was conducted thanks to the support of the Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AfriMAP), a project of the Open Society Institute's network of African foundations. The LDGL wishes to thank AfriMAP for its precious support. While the staff of AfriMAP provided constant support for our research and precious assistance in the drafting of this report, the LDGL takes sole responsibility for its editorial content.

Sanane Joseph Chiko
Chair, LDGL

Introduction: The APRM, a NEPAD programme

On 9 March 2003, Rwanda was among the first countries to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), thus agreeing to submit to a peer review of its performance in relation to good governance in the following four thematic areas: democracy and political governance; economic governance and management; corporate governance; and socio-economic development. On 13 July 2006, at the Hotel des Mille Collines in Kigali, a report was published identifying the challenges Rwanda faces in these areas, as evaluated by an external review team, together with a programme of action (PoA) to address the problems identified.

Between those two dates, Rwanda undertook for the first time in its history a comprehensive self-assessment of its political, economic and social governance. All government departments, all public administration sectors and a good part of the private and non-governmental sectors took part in this review, to varying extents.

The self-assessment process thus undertaken constituted Rwanda's implementation of the APRM, which is one of the programmes of NEPAD, the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development and the African Peer Review Mechanism

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a strategic framework setting out a 'vision for Africa's renewal'. Five heads of state initiated NEPAD – Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa – and its founding document was

formally adopted by the 37th summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Lusaka, Zambia, July 2001. NEPAD is now a programme of the African Union (AU), successor to the OAU, though it has its own secretariat based in South Africa to coordinate and implement its programmes. Successive AU summits have proposed the greater integration of this secretariat and NEPAD in general into the AU processes and structures.

NEPAD's four primary objectives are to eradicate poverty, promote sustainable growth and development, integrate Africa in the world economy, and accelerate the empowerment of women. It is based on underlying principles of a commitment to good governance, democracy, human rights and conflict resolution; and the recognition that maintenance of these standards is fundamental to the creation of an environment conducive to investment and long-term economic growth. NEPAD seeks to attract increased investment, capital flows and funding, providing an African-owned framework for development as the foundation for partnership at regional and international levels.

NEPAD is governed by a Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC). The HSGIC comprises three states for each region of the African Union, with President Obasanjo (Nigeria) as elected chair, and Presidents Bouteflika (Algeria) and Wade (Senegal) as deputy chairmen. The HSGIC reports to the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government. There is also a steering committee, comprising 20 AU member states, to oversee projects and programme development.

In July 2002, the Durban AU summit supplemented NEPAD with a Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. According to the Declaration, states

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participating in NEPAD 'believe in just, honest, transparent, accountable and participatory government and probity in public life'. Accordingly, they 'undertake to work with renewed determination to enforce', among other things, 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 adherence to the separation of powers, including protection for the independence of the judiciary and the effectiveness of parliaments.

The Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance also committed participating states to establish an African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to promote adherence to and fulfilment of its commitments. The Durban summit adopted a document setting out the stages of peer review and the principles by which the APRM should operate.

In March 2003, the NEPAD HSGIC meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, adopted a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the APRM. This MOU effectively operates as a treaty. It entered into effect immediately in Abuja, when six states agreed to be subject to its terms, including Rwanda; as of June 2006, 25 countries had acceded. Those that do not are not subject to review. The March 2003 meeting also adopted a set of 'objectives, standards, criteria and indicators' for the APRM. The meeting agreed to the establishment of a secretariat for the APRM, also based in South Africa, and the appointment of a seven-person panel of eminent persons to oversee the conduct of the APRM process and ensure its integrity.

The APRM Secretariat, functioning by late 2003, developed a questionnaire based on a wide range of African and international human rights treaties and standards to guide participating states' self-assessments of their compliance with the principles of NEPAD. Its questions are grouped under four broad thematic 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 APR Forum, made up of representatives of the heads of state or government of all states participating in the APRM. At this point, the formal process of peer review was ready to start: the meeting identified the first four countries to undergo review as Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius and Rwanda.

Each country to be reviewed is assigned to one of the seven eminent persons, who consider and review reports, and make recommendations to the APR Forum. The seven eminent persons are: Marie Angelique Savane (Senegal), Chairperson; Adebayo Adedeji (Nigeria); Bethuel Kiplagat (Kenya); Graça Machel (Mozambique); Mohammed Babes

(Algeria, replacing the original Algerian appointee, Mourad Medelci); Dorothy Njeuma (Cameroon); and Chris Stals (South Africa). At the national level, participating countries establish a national focal point and a national coordinating committee to drive the review process and liaise with the APRM Secretariat.

The APRM documents identify five stages in the review process. The first and most important is that of self-assessment. A country support mission from the APRM Secretariat led by the assigned eminent person visits the participating country to ensure a common understanding of the rules, processes and principles of the APRM. The team liaises with the country focal point and organises working sessions and technical workshops with stakeholders; the eminent person signs a memorandum of understanding with the government on modalities for 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. The self-assessment is supposed to involve the broad participation of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations as well as government ministries and departments.

Secondly, a country review team – also led by the eminent person and made up of representatives of the APRM Secretariat and of the APRM partner institutions, which include the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank and other institutions – visits the country to carry out broad consultations, clarify any issues that may require discussion, and help to build national consensus on the way forward.

During stage three, the country review team drafts its own report on the country, based on the information it has gathered during its review mission and on independent issues papers developed by the APRM Secretariat, and shares its findings with the government. Based on the self-assessment report and the country review team's report, the country finalises its PoA outlining policies and practices for implementation. In the fourth stage, the country review team's report and the PoA are presented at the APR 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. Finally, after the report has been considered by the APR Forum, it is tabled at the AU Summit, before being made public.

The implementation of the APRM in Rwanda

Chronology of the APRM process in Rwanda

Rwanda signed the memorandum of understanding establishing the APRM on 9 March 2003, the day it was adopted, thereby committing itself to peer review and becoming a member of the committee of participating heads of state and government (known as the APR Forum).¹ In August 2003, the Government set up a National NEPAD Steering Committee in charge of coordinating the participation of Rwanda in NEPAD and guiding the APRM process. The Steering Committee was composed of 17 members and chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, who was also the special representative of the President of the Republic to NEPAD. With the exception of a representative of civil society, a representative of the private sector and a representative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the 14 other members of the committee were civil servants from governmental and parastatal institutions. They were appointed by the government on the basis of their responsibilities in institutions directly involved in the NEPAD programmes, including APRM.

In February 2004, in Kigali, Rwanda hosted the first meeting of the APR Forum, during which it submitted its candidacy to be one of the first four countries to undergo a peer review. This event marked the beginning of the APRM implementation process in Rwanda, which was marked by the following milestones:

- In March 2004, a National NEPAD Secretariat was created within the Office of the President of the Republic,

1 Doc NEPAD/HSGIC/03-2003/APRM/MOU.

led by an executive secretary, to serve as a focal point for NEPAD and the APRM in Rwanda.²

- From 24 to 26 March 2004, the National NEPAD Secretariat, with the support of the National NEPAD Steering Committee, organised a national information conference on the APRM, attended by over 200 participants representing all of the important interest groups in the country, in order to inform them of the commitment made by the government of Rwanda to submit to the APRM process and to seek their active contribution to its success. The conference established a group of 21 members, chiefly government officials, to form a technical team in charge of the initial processing of the questionnaire and its translation into Kinyarwanda. This group, which formed four technical review teams corresponding to the four APRM governance areas, was also in charge of preparing the initial responses to the questionnaire questions.³
- From 8 to 12 April 2004, the four technical review teams held a retreat in Kinigi (in the former province of Ruhengeri), in order to review the progress of the self-assessment, enhance their respective self-assessment reports and establish a consolidated preliminary report.
- In April 2004, an APRM coordination office was created within the National NEPAD Secretariat and a coordinator appointed, who was also the APRM focal point in Rwanda. However, for budgetary reasons, the APRM coordination office was unable to obtain any other human resources until November 2004, so that, during its first seven months of operation, the only staff member

2 Following the creation of the National NEPAD Secretariat, the NEPAD Steering Committee reverted to a symbolic role, although it theoretically supervises the activities of the National NEPAD Secretariat.

3 Rwanda NEPAD Secretariat, *Annual Report 2004*, p.8.

of the coordination office was the coordinator/APRM focal point in Rwanda.

- On 3 May 2004, the technical review teams submitted a progress report and a preliminary report on the self-assessment to a meeting of APRM participants. The meeting formulated recommendations and additions to the preliminary report.
- From 21 to 24 June 2004, an APRM support mission, led by Mme Marie-Angélique Savané of the panel of eminent persons, visited Rwanda. The mission reviewed the preliminary self-assessment report, led several discussions with various partners from the government, civil society and the private sector and approved the national plan for the completion of the initial self-assessment report. The mission also strongly recommended the formation of an APRM National Commission that would be more independent from the government to supervise the APRM process activities. The commission, whose much larger membership included representatives of government, the legislature, judiciary, civil society and the private sector,⁴ was immediately created at a second APRM national conference and its inauguration took place on 24 June 2004. It took over responsibility for leading the APRM from the National Steering Committee.
- From 24 to 26 July 2004, the APRM National Commission held its first meeting in the former province of Umutara (Akagera game lodge) during which it drafted its strategy and review plan.
- On 28 September 2004, the National NEPAD Secretariat organised a one-day training workshop for civil society, with a view to raising awareness for greater participation in the national self-assessment process. The training was facilitated by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA).
- On 27 November 2004, the APRM National Commission met and decided to submit the self-assessment report to another national conference for validation.
- On 17 December 2004, the APRM National Commission organised a conference in Kigali to validate the self-assessment report. It was attended by 83 people, including members of the National Commission and other representatives of the government, civil society, the private sector, the church, and international organisations. A 400-page summary of the draft self-assessment report was presented by the National NEPAD Secretariat's executive secretary and the APRM coordinator based in the secretariat. Criticisms were formulated, though no major challenges were put forward as the report had not been distributed beforehand to allow more in-depth study, and the recommendations were recorded.
- In January 2005, the observations of the validation

conference were integrated into the report by the technical review team. The report was then submitted for a technical review by the Africa Institute for Political Analysis and Economic Integration (AIPA), an independent interdisciplinary research institute based in Cape Town, South Africa. The AIPA formulated proposals on the Rwanda self-assessment report, which were integrated into the report during a drafting and editorial supervision session led by the Rwandan branch of the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa, OSSREA. The report was then submitted to the continental APRM Secretariat in South Africa in March 2005.

- From 18 to 30 April 2005, an APRM country review mission led by Ms Dorothy Njeuma, a member of the APRM panel of eminent persons, visited Rwanda in order to carry out the country review mission on governance in Rwanda. At the conclusion of their stay, during which the external experts met repeatedly with members of the government, public officials, the APRM National Commission, members of civil society, etc., they formulated comments on the Rwanda self-assessment report and submitted their own independently prepared report to the government of Rwanda.
- From 3 to 11 June 2005, the Rwandan party analysed the report of the panel of eminent persons and responded to the comments of the APRM country review mission; this response has been acted and appended to the published official APRM report on Rwanda.
- On 19 June 2005, the draft of the Rwanda country review report and PoA for corrective measures for the failings identified were submitted to the third summit of the APRM Forum in Abuja, Nigeria, and given a preliminary discussion. The report was returned to the APRM Panel and the Rwandan government to finalise the PoA.
- On 30 June 2006, the final Rwanda APRM country review report prepared by the panel of eminent persons and the APRM Secretariat, together with the PoA agreed to by the government, was submitted for review by the fifth summit of the APR Forum and the African Union, held in Banjul, The Gambia, where it was formally adopted. It was subsequently published in Kigali on 13 July 2006.

National APRM structures

The APRM review process in Rwanda was led by the following four bodies: the National NEPAD Secretariat, the APRM National Commission and its thematic subcommittees, and the four technical teams that led the research. In addition to these permanent structures, APRM meetings and conferences were convened sporadically for the participants in the process. Two of these meetings, in March and June

4 A list of the APRM National Commission is attached as Annex 1.

2004 took important decisions on the leadership of the process. The implementation of the APRM process was coordinated throughout by the APRM coordination office in the National NEPAD Secretariat. The NEPAD Steering Committee was responsible for overall supervision of the APRM process until June 2004, when it was replaced in that role by the APRM National Commission.

a) The National NEPAD Secretariat

The National NEPAD Secretariat is headed by an executive secretary, who is also the special adviser of the president on NEPAD matters and his representative on the NEPAD Steering Committee. The role of the National NEPAD Secretariat is⁵:

- to coordinate Rwanda's participation in NEPAD and to supervise all NEPAD activities in Rwanda, including the APRM process;
- to provide technical support for the government in all matters relating to NEPAD;
- to coordinate the dissemination of information on experiences with good practices, through regular organisation of briefing meetings and development of tools for the dissemination of information on the programmes adopted in the framework of NEPAD;
- to maintain an information network with the national secretariats of other member states and with other NEPAD stakeholders;
- to be responsible for the organisation and coordination of NEPAD meetings and forums⁶;
- to reinforce and disseminate advocacy for NEPAD/APRM at the national level and to promote broader involvement of the various actors with a view to increasing popularisation of information on NEPAD programmes including APRM among the population to facilitate the activities of the review process;
- to maintain an up-to-date database of information on political and economic developments in Rwanda;
- to draft background documents for APRM missions visiting Rwanda, to propose performance indicators for Rwanda, to monitor performance and provide feedback to the different actors involved in the process;
- to identify and present current national laws, codes and regulations, practices and procedures and explain their correlation with the promotion of good governance.
- to draft and submit to the continental secretariat of the APRM, an annual progress report on the implementation of the PoA produced by the peer review process;

- to report regularly to the National NEPAD Steering Committee on progress in the implementation of NEPAD programmes.

The National NEPAD Secretariat played the central role in the organisation of the entire review process, including managing the logistics of all meetings relating to the self-assessment, such as those held by the technical review teams and the APRM National Commission and its subcommittees. The National NEPAD Secretariat also liaised with the continental APRM Secretariat to organise the APRM technical support mission in June 2004 and the country review mission in April 2005, manage the logistics for the missions during their stays in Rwanda, receive their comments and ensure that they were taken into account in the subsequent phases of the process. Finally, the National NEPAD Secretariat liaised with the international partners who supported the process financially, including UNDP, the UN development funds for children and for women (UNICEF and UNIFEM) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

b) The APRM national conferences

The National NEPAD Secretariat organised the APRM national conferences in March and June 2004, each attended by 200 participants invited by the National NEPAD Secretariat with an eye to including all of the different socio-economic strata of the country (government institutions, parliament, parastatal commissions, civil society, private sector, churches, universities, etc.). The Secretariat also organised the December 2004 meeting held to validate the self-assessment report.

The March 2004 APRM national conference selected the technical teams which carried out the first self-assessment consultations for the APRM framework from March to June 2004. The June APRM national conference created the APRM National Commission and four thematic subcommittees.

c) The Steering Committee and the APRM National Commission

From March to June 2004, APRM activities were coordinated by the National NEPAD Secretariat and supervised by the NEPAD Steering Committee. Of the 17 members appointed by the government to form the steering committee, 14 were high-level government officials, accompanied by one civil society representative, a representative of the private sector and a UNDP representative.

During the 21–24 June 2004 visit to Rwanda by the APRM technical support mission led by Mme Marie-Angélique Savané, she remarked that the leadership of the process ought to be placed in the hands of a more representative

⁵ *Rwanda NEPAD Magazine*, Issue No. 001, May–July 2004, p.17–18.

⁶ For example, the National NEPAD Secretariat was responsible for organising the 1st APR Forum and 9th Summit of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC), held in Kigali on 13–14 February 2004.

structure. An inclusive APRM national conference was immediately convened and chose 50 members to form the APRM National Commission. While the representation of state agents remained preponderant, the commission was more representative of a range of national interest groups than was the original NEPAD Steering Committee.⁷

The APRM National Commission was initially chaired by the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning and subsequently by the general manager of the Société nouvelle d'assurance au Rwanda (SONARWA), a state-run insurance company. She reports to the president of the Republic⁸.

The principal responsibilities of the commission are⁹:

- to represent all stakeholders in Rwandan society;
- to formulate guidelines throughout the review process;
- to supervise the operation of the process in order to ensure that it includes all the 'driving forces' of the nation;
- to identify key sectors and ensure that they are included in the review programme;
- to contribute to the drafting of a national PoA aimed at correcting the failings identified by the review;
- to ensure that the national plans of action are consistent with the local plans of action;
- to provide information on the grass-roots situation and ensure that it is taken into account in the commitments of the national PoA; and
- to be available for consultation during visits to Rwanda by country review missions in the framework of APRM.

Throughout the self-assessment process, the national commission met regularly to receive the reports of the reviews conducted by the thematic subcommittees.¹⁰ The members debated the different points until consensus positions were arrived at, added further information where necessary and formulated guidelines for the next stage.

d) *The thematic subcommittees*

The conference which agreed the appointment of the APRM National Commission also created four thematic subcommittees within the commission, based on the four areas of governance that are the focus of the APRM review (democracy and political governance, economic governance

and management, corporate governance, and socio-economic development). The thematic subcommittees worked in close collaboration with the respective technical teams that served as their executives, to enhance the report of the members of the subcommittees. The APRM subcommittees were led as follows:

- the democracy and political governance subcommittee was chaired by a member of the Senate;
- the economic governance and management subcommittee was chaired by the managing director of the mixed-capital insurance company SONARWA;
- the corporate governance subcommittee was led by the vice president of the Fédération rwandaise du secteur privé (FRSP), the Rwandan chamber of commerce; and
- the socio-economic development subcommittee was led by the executive secretary of PROFEMME, a collective of women's development organisations.

While the technical review teams (which had been active since March 2004) continued to carry out consultations and prepare reports, they now enjoyed the support of the corresponding thematic subcommittees of the APRM National Commission. These subcommittees gave critical reviews of the various mid-term reports, and formulated new guidance to the technical teams based on meetings held at the level of the subcommittees first, and then of the National Commission. The thematic subcommittees proceeded by consulting public documents; organising sectoral meetings (during which the questionnaires were distributed and explained); and then opening a debate on each question and noting the responses gathered, which were then submitted to the National Commission for discussion, before recording them in the self-assessment report.¹¹

e) *The technical review teams*

The review work was prepared by the technical teams formed within the 21-member group appointed by the first APRM national conference held from 24 to 26 March 2004. Composed of unpaid volunteers chosen for their technical expertise in the four APRM governance areas, these teams were made up mainly of government officials. Their mandate was to carry out the preliminary processing of the questionnaire supplied by the continental APRM Secretariat, and especially to translate the questions into Kinyarwanda and adapt certain of them to the Rwandan context, as well as to do the initial work of processing the responses to the questionnaire to prepare a preliminary report.¹²

7 The composition of the Commission is set out in Annex 1.

8 *Rwanda NEPAD Magazine*, Issue No. 002, November 2004, p.20.

9 'Rwanda APRM National Commission,' briefing paper available online at <http://nepad.gov.rw/pages.php?subaction=showfull&id=1129150827&archive> (17 March 2006).

10 The Commission met four times between June and November 2004. The principal meetings of the Commission are listed in *Rwanda NEPAD Magazine*, Issue No. 003, June 2005, p.16.

11 See 'NEPAD is set to steer Rwanda's Progress', interview with Claver Gatete, personal representative of the President on the NEPAD Steering Committee, in *Rwanda NEPAD Magazine*, Issue No. 002, November 2004, p.6.

12 Rwanda NEPAD Secretariat, *Annual Report 2004*, p.10.

The 3 May 2004 meeting extended the mandate of the technical review teams to include technical auditing of the APRM process under the coordination of the National NEPAD Secretariat and the supervision of the NEPAD Steering Committee, and later the APRM National Commission and its thematic subcommittees.

Financing the APRM

The implementation of the APRM process depends chiefly on government support. Indeed, the cost of the internal national APRM process is covered by the country itself.¹³ It is the government that takes the initiative to submit to the process, which begins with an internal self-assessment exercise. The resources required to implement the self-assessment are mobilised either internally or from donors.

In the case of Rwanda, a NEPAD trust fund was set in place in August 2004 by the Africa Bureau of UNDP in order to receive African and outside contributions towards the funding of the APRM. A NEPAD programme implementation support project (Projet d'appui à la mise en œuvre des programmes du NEPAD) was created at the UNDP office in Rwanda.¹⁴ It provided support for the APRM process in Rwanda as one of the activities of NEPAD/Rwanda. The budget for the 2005–2007 period was US\$2 426 050. According to APRM officials, only 50 per cent of the total was actually raised (the government of Rwanda contributed US\$100 000, the UNDP contributed US\$500 000, DFID contributed US\$540 000, UNICEF gave US\$60 000 and UNIFEM provided US\$21 000).¹⁵

Managed by UNDP, the NEPAD trust fund directly finances the activities submitted to it by the National NEPAD Secretariat, including activities linked to the APRM process. The LDGL has not been able to gain access to the figures of the trust fund in order to determine the portion of the fund that was in practice allotted to the APRM process.

Thus, external support for the self-assessment does not seem to have materialised to any great extent, so that the Rwandans involved¹⁶ and also the members of the panel

of eminent persons¹⁷ have complained of the volunteer nature of the work of the members of the APRM National Commission and its thematic subcommittees and above all of the technical review teams, in light of all the work they accomplished in terms of data gathering and processing. Indeed, this situation has been an obstacle to their level of commitment and the proper conduct of their work.

Methodology applied in the conduct of the APRM process

The questionnaire provided by NEPAD was the foundation document for the research carried out for the APRM self-assessment process in Rwanda. However, in the context of Rwanda, where the vast majority of the labour force is illiterate, a questionnaire of this kind needed to be combined with a combination of various other methods of data collection according to the sector and target population, such as direct interviews, or answering questions in open workshops.

The methodology used consisted of organising meetings with groups of stakeholders representing various social and professional sectors, to whom the contents of the questionnaire were explained; they were then asked to answer the questions on the spot. The members of the technical review teams then processed the various viewpoints collected to obtain the responses to the questionnaire. The responses to the questionnaire, as formulated by the technical review teams were then submitted to the corresponding subcommittees of the APRM National Commission, which formulated criticisms, corrections and recommendations to be taken into account by the technical teams.

The questionnaires processed in this manner were compiled by the technical teams into a single self-assessment report, which was submitted to the plenary meeting of the APRM National Commission, for further quality control. The report adopted by the National Commission was then submitted to the national conference of participants for a final validation in December 2004, before being sent to AIPA for an external, expert review. The suggestions made by AIPA were integrated into the report by OSSREA, which produced the final edit before the report was sent to the continental APRM Secretariat. The APRM Secretariat then appointed a team led by Ms Dorothy Njeuma, a member of the APRM panel of eminent persons, to conduct the country review mission. The mission first analysed the report before travelling to Rwanda where it conducted meetings to verify its contents.

13 AU/NEPAD, Guidelines for countries to prepare for and participate in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), NEPAD/APRM/ Panel3/Guidelines/11-2003/DOC8.

14 Rwanda NEPAD Secretariat, *Annual Report 2004*, p.38. See also the UNDP website in Rwanda: http://www.unrwanda.org/undp/Poverty_Project3.html

15 Interviews with Mr Aimable Kabanda, APRM Coordinator, NEPAD-Rwanda Secretariat, Kigali, March 2006.

16 Members of civil society and the APRM focal point.

17 Draft report of the APR panel on the country review of the Republic of Rwanda, p.15.

Distribution of the questionnaire provided by NEPAD

According to Mme Marie-Angélique Savané, chair of the panel of eminent persons, ‘the aim of the questionnaire is to promote national dialogue on development issues and facilitate the country reviews based on the realities expressed by all of the social stakeholders. It is therefore important to have a much broader representation within the national structure coordinating the APRM process, as well as a broader dissemination of the questionnaire and the active participation of all of the stakeholders in drafting responses to the questions.’¹⁸ To achieve this objective, the questionnaire needs to be popularised to the greatest extent possible; but, in light of the low level of awareness of APRM among the grass-roots population both in Kigali and in the provinces, this does not seem to have been the case in Rwanda.

In June 2004, the questionnaire was effectively distributed only to the representatives of various sectors within the APRM National Commission. Subsequently, a few large commercial companies such as the Bralirwa brewery and the MTN/Rwandacel telephone company were targeted and received the questionnaire directly in order to put forward their opinions on the questions asked in the socio-economic governance section, as the National Commission had noticed that the private sector contribution was still not sufficient.¹⁹

Consultation meetings regarding the questionnaire

Several consultation meetings were held both in Kigali and in the provinces. Participation in the provinces was variable. For example, according to lists of participants we were able to consult, 25 participants attended a meeting organised in the province of Butare and 29 attended a meeting in Umutara, while only 10 participants attended a meeting organised in the province of Gikongoro. The consultation meetings were organised by members of the technical teams and thematic subcommittees of the APRM National Commission.

Usefulness of the questionnaire in the Rwandan context

The self-assessment report underwent a long review and validation process that made it possible to answer all of the

questions on the questionnaire provided by the continental APRM Secretariat. Certain answers in the self-assessment report, however, were very succinct and could have been more detailed. One such example is the response that was made to a question on access to justice for all: the report is very laconic and makes no mention of a very important reform to create new lower-level tribunals, that was under way at the time and whose purpose was to bring the judicial system closer to the people. Some of those interviewed also noted that certain questions were not necessarily suited to the specific context of Rwanda.²⁰ The technical teams were obliged to reformulate or break down the questions, and adapt them to the Rwandan context, particularly since the questionnaire needed to be translated into Kinyarwanda in order to make it accessible to a wider audience. That is how, for example, the APRM National Commission came to add an additional subquestion on the Gacaca process, used to try lesser genocide suspects, as the initial questionnaire did not address this important aspect of Rwandan justice.

Drafting and quality control of the report

The Rwanda self-assessment report was written by the members of the technical teams, after reviews by the thematic subcommittees of the APRM National Commission and the plenary meeting of the Commission under the coordination of the National NEPAD Secretariat.

For quality control purposes, the draft report was submitted to AIPA for review in February 2005. According to the coordinator of the APRM bureau within the National NEPAD Secretariat, who is also the APRM focal point in Rwanda, AIPA made a real contribution and formulated policy proposals, particularly in the PoA accompanying the report.²¹ The report was then submitted to the OSSREA research centre for editorial supervision and finalisation.

The official Rwandan self-assessment report was submitted by the government to the APRM continental secretariat in March 2005.

The APRM country review mission and report

After reading the Rwandan national review report, an APRM Secretariat review team led by Prof. Dorothy Njeuma, a member of the panel of eminent persons and vice chancellor

18 Mme Marie-Angélique Savané, ‘Syllabus de formation de la société civile et les ONG’, Kigali, 28 September 2004.

19 In *Rwanda NEPAD Magazine*, No. 002, November 2004.

20 Interviews conducted by the LDGL, March 2006.

21 Interview with the APRM focal point in Rwanda, March 2006.

of the University of Buea in Cameroon, visited Rwanda from 18 to 30 April 2005 and organised interviews with various government, private sector and civil society stakeholders, in Kigali and the provinces. At the end of the exercise, the APRM review team presented the findings of its own country review report to the National NEPAD Secretariat, which responded to certain points of the draft country review report that did not coincide with the viewpoints of the national self-assessment report. The comments of the Rwandan party were appended to the APRM country review report, which was then submitted to the continental APRM Secretariat in South Africa. In addition, the government and country review team developed a PoA to correct the failings identified. The final country review and the PoA were then debated by the APR Forum of heads of state and government, in a preliminary discussion at the June 2005 meeting of the forum, and then again in June 2006, where they were formally adopted.

Non-governmental sector participation in the APRM process

The participation of civil society in the APRM process can be observed on two levels. At the level of the Rwandan institutions conducting the process, civil society was represented on the APRM National Commission, the central body directing and conducting the process, and was also consulted in the meetings organised by the technical subcommittees. At the level of the continental bodies, civil society was also consulted by the APRM external review missions, including the country review mission to enrich and validate the APRM panel's own report, which visited Rwanda from 18 to 30 April 2005. The final country review report prepared by the APRM panel includes certain civil society viewpoints that do not necessarily coincide with those of the government, particularly in relation to the assessment of democracy and political governance.²² Representatives of Rwandan civil society within the APRM National Commission interviewed in the context of the review commented that they appreciated the open and participatory nature of the process.²³ Nonetheless, civil society participation was, overall, both belated and insufficient.

Belated participation

The discussions held in the framework of the APRM meetings were relatively free and participatory. However, civil society representatives were not given enough time

to sufficiently prepare their contributions through prior discussions and research within their organisations during the self-assessment phase. Following the comments of the APRM technical support mission in June 2004, the Rwandan NEPAD Secretariat became aware of the need for more significant civil society involvement in the process. Until that time, self-assessment had consisted of answering the questionnaire essentially according to the viewpoints of the government.²⁴ That is why civil society training/awareness only began six months after the process was launched.

Indeed, although the APRM process was launched in March 2004, except for a few members of the National Commission, civil society was not really involved in the process until late September, when the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), invited by the National NEPAD Secretariat, facilitated a civil society training/information workshop on the APRM. This was just two months prior to the validation of the final self-assessment report on 17 December 2004. The training focused on (i) an explanation of the APRM process; (ii) a guide to the assessment questionnaire; and (iii) the 'self-assessment' aspect of the process. The aim of the training was to attract civil society interest in participating in the process. During the workshop, explanations of the APRM process, its standards, its questionnaire and the role of civil society throughout the process were covered in an hour and three quarters, followed by 40 minutes of questions and discussion. The afternoon was devoted to the organisation of group work aimed at developing a PoA for the drafting of

22 See draft report of the APRM review panel on democracy and political governance, particularly on the points relating to the rights of the Batwa minority, freedom of expression, the role of Gacaca, etc.

23 Interviews conducted in Kigali, March 2006.

24 Draft rapport of the APRM technical support mission: *Report of the APR Panel on the country review of the Republic of Rwanda*.

a coordinated civil society strategy to be submitted to the government and the APRM secretariat.

While the initiative was positive, a workshop lasting less than three hours was far from sufficient, in light of the scope of the material to be covered and the in-depth reflection that should have taken place. A single day of training in the context of the workshop was not sufficient preparation for civil society to participate effectively in the APRM process. Although this workshop was a first step in raising the awareness of civil society, it did not give rise to any new strategies for the coordination of its action, outside of the existing platforms that were represented within the APRM National Commission. Before launching consultations in the framework of the APRM, especially outside of Kigali, the civil society organisations expected the government to extend awareness activities to the provinces and districts in order to reach the grass-roots organisations.

Low level of representation

Civil society participation in APRM bodies and meetings was not broadly representative. In Kigali for instance, civil society collectives such as CLADHO, CCOAIB, PROFEMME, IBUKA, CESTRAR and CAURWA were chosen to participate in the different meetings of the country self-assessment process, including the meetings organised for the APRM technical support mission and the country review mission.²⁵ They also participated in the technical consultations organised by the four thematic subcommittees (democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance, and socio-economic development).

The self-assessment process was essentially conducted by the technical teams, under the coordination of the National NEPAD Secretariat and the supervision of the NEPAD Steering Committee and later the APRM National Commission. The APRM National Commission was formed in June 2004, upon recommendation by the APRM technical support mission to Rwanda, to take responsibility for the APRM process and ensure that the process did not depend on the Steering Committee, which was perceived to be a government

organ.²⁶ This does not seem to have entirely resolved the problem, since the National Commission has some fifty members, of which 60 per cent represent governmental and parastatal institutions, while civil society and the private sector are respectively represented by only 20 per cent and 13 per cent of the members.²⁷ And yet external viewpoints should have priority in order to avoid giving the impression that the government is assessing itself.

The peer review mechanism constitutes a very important framework for dialogue on the main national issues. Rwandan civil society should seize this opportunity for advocacy. It should be proactive and equip itself to participate effectively in the process, in order to take part in making the rules instead of simply following them. The participation of civil society in the National Commission should not be restricted to representatives of collectives, but should also include representatives of individual organisations that are more technical.

Civil society was very poorly represented in the consultations carried out in the countryside by the APRM review panel from 18 to 30 April 2005. A dozen meetings were organised in the provinces (one meeting per province). For example:

- In the former province of Butare, of 25 participants attending an APRM consultation meeting, only four were representatives of civil society organisations (PROFEMME, DUHOZANYE, GIRIMPUHWE, APIDERBU and the Adventist Church), one represented an international non-governmental organisation (CARE), two represented the private sector, and the rest were provincial and district civil servants.
- In the province of Gikongoro, of 10 participants attending the meeting, there were no representatives of civil society and only one of the private sector.
- In the province of Umutara, 29 participants attended the consultation meeting, of whom 11 were farmers, seven represented cattle breeders, one an NGO (World Relief Umutara) and four businessmen.
- In the province of Byumba, 20 participants attended the consultation meeting, including two church representatives (Episcopal Church of Rwanda) and three private sector representatives, while the rest were civil servants.
- In the province of Gitarama, 14 participants attended the meeting, including one representative of a civil society organisation (CEPAF), two NGOs (UCF-YWCA and UDEE) and two private-sector representatives (FRSP).
- In the province of Cyangugu, 17 participants attended the

25 CLADHO: Collectif des Ligues et Associations des Droits de l'Homme (Collective of Human Rights Leagues and Associations); CCOAIB: Collectif de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui des Initiatives de la Base (Collective for Consensus-Building among Organisations Supporting Grass-roots Initiatives); PROFEMME is a collective of women's advancement organisations; IBUKA is a collective of organisations of genocide survivors; CESTRAR is a collective of trade union organisations and CAURWA is a collective of Batwa native associations.

26 Draft Report of the APR Panel on the Country Review of the Republic of Rwanda.

27 See table in Annex 1.

meeting, including two church representatives (Rwandan Episcopal Church and Assembly of Pentecostal Churches of Rwanda), three individuals representing two NGOs (Doctors Without Borders Belgium and CORDAID), while the rest were civil servants.

- In the province of Kibungo, 22 participants attended the consultation meeting, including nine representatives of religious confessions (Rwandan Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church of Rwanda, AMURT-Islam, Eglise Bon Berger, Evangelical Restoration Church, Eglise Evangélique de la Bonne Nouvelle au Rwanda, Eglise Evangélique de la Bonne Volonté au Rwanda, Free Methodist Church and Assembly of Pentecostal Churches of Rwanda), one person representing an NGO (UDEE), a journalist, a representative of a popular bank and 10 civil servants.²⁸

Furthermore, the civil society representatives attending the meetings held in 2004 in the provinces to distribute the questionnaire and gather information affirmed that they only attended a single meeting, during which they were expected to read the questions and answer them directly; others barely remembered. Those who remembered were all unanimous in saying that they would have liked to be more familiar with NEPAD in general and APRM in particular. They also regretted that they had heard no more about it and asked us what had happened since.²⁹

The foregoing demonstrates that the time allotted to the consultations organised by the APRM review team in the countryside was insufficient and the level of civil society participation very low. Civil society needs to organise to intensify consultations with the population beforehand but also to effectively occupy the space for dialogue opened up by the APRM process. The question resides in the quality/quantity/diversity of the contribution of civil society, not only in Kigali but also and especially in the backcountry. According to Marie-Angélique Savané, chair of the panel of eminent persons, 'the contribution of Rwandan civil society was real but limited'.³⁰ Furthermore, the midterm report of the panel of eminent persons indicated: 'It was noted for example that the Rwanda APR Technical Team had already answered the APR questionnaire incorporating

predominantly government opinions and figures, without the crucial input of other stakeholders capable of guaranteeing overall national ownership.'³¹

Certain civil society positions that were not included in the self-assessment reports were reflected in the country review report of the panel of eminent persons, based on opinions expressed during the April 2005 two-week country review mission. These include, for instance, positions on the Gacaca process, democracy and political pluralism, the separation of powers, minority rights, agrarian conflicts, etc.³² The fact that these opinions were not included in the original self-assessment report was due to the initial lack of civil society representatives in the technical review teams in charge of gathering data and recording answers, and also to the low level of representation within the APRM National Commission.

28 Drawn from the lists of participants in the assessment meetings in the provinces.

29 Interviews conducted in the provinces in March 2006, with the participants of the meetings organised in 2004 throughout the country in the framework of APRM.

30 *DIALOGUE*, the quarterly bulletin of Partnership Africa Canada, No. 4, April/June 2005

31 Draft report of the APRM technical support mission, 'Report of the APR panel on the country review of the Republic of Rwanda'.

32 See draft report of the panel of eminent persons on democracy and political governance.

General assessment of the APRM process in Rwanda

A government-dominated process

The APRM was conducted by a coordination office housed within the National NEPAD Secretariat. The resulting limited administrative and management autonomy had a negative impact on the conduct of the APRM process. It was unable to attract skilled and motivated human resources other than the volunteer staff made available to it by government NEPAD structures. The independence of the APRM National Commission was affected by the overrepresentation of government members, although this composition did ensure easy access to official state data and documentation. On the other hand, this dependency on official sources meant that in the eventual PoA there were relatively few departures from the programmes already established by the government.

The self-assessment liberally quotes positions and statistics drawn from official documents, suggesting that the public archives were used as the major source of answers to the questionnaire. This observation was also made by the panel of eminent persons in their report.³³ Non-governmental stakeholders (including civil society organisations and the private sector) were consulted, but do not seem to have had much impact on the answers made to the questions by the civil servants forming the technical teams established several months earlier. Indeed, the answers to the questions required references to legislative texts, administrative decisions, statistics and research work, and the government databases were the principal source of information.

33 Draft Report of the APR Panel on the Country Review of the Republic of Rwanda, p.15.

One of the reasons for the preponderance of government positions stems from the fact that, during the processing of the questionnaire, the cart seems to have been put before the horse. When the APRM questionnaire was distributed with the involvement of the National Commission in June 2004, it had already undergone initial processing by the technical teams – made up of civil servants for the most part – formed during the first national APRM conference three months before. In April, the four technical review teams had already met at a retreat in Kinigi to review and enhance their preliminary responses for the self-assessment report; this could introduce a certain bias into the work of those who were to examine it subsequently. Furthermore, the questionnaire was not distributed sufficiently in advance,³⁴ nor was it distributed beyond a small circle of individuals to whom it was given directly, plus a few people in their immediate entourage. Thus the information about the APRM process was not necessarily passed on to grass-roots organisations and opinions on the answers to the questions were not obtained from ordinary people. It was pointed out that not enough time was allotted to the respondents to answer such a complex questionnaire, which often required elaborate research.³⁵

The purpose of the civil society training workshop held in October 2004, two months before the validation of the self-assessment report, was to raise civil society awareness to

34 All of the participants in the process interviewed told the LDGL that they had become aware of the existence of the APRM at the same time they were expected to answer the questionnaire.

35 Interviews in Butare and Gitarama with two questionnaire respondents, March 2006.

participate actively in the process. However, civil society organisations note that they did not receive the questionnaire in enough time beforehand to familiarise themselves with it and the process in order to give a meaningful response on behalf of their respective constituencies.³⁶

Strengths and weaknesses of the APRM National Commission

The strength of the APRM National Commission lay in the total support it enjoyed from the government, which is reflected in the fact that it included numerous important figures, hence its strong mobilisation capacity. Indeed, there is cause to salute the impressive quantity of information that the Commission was able to include in its initial self-assessment report. The principal source of this information was the government. In the specific case of Rwanda, had this task been given to non-governmental stakeholders, at least where the initial assessment was concerned, they would have experienced difficulties in mobilising competent human resources in sufficient number, especially on a volunteer basis. With few exceptions, most Rwandan civil society organisations are still emerging, and their internal resource mobilisation capacity is virtually nil. Under such conditions, failing external aid, they would have been unable to line up the necessary human resources to accomplish such an appraisal.

The weakness of the APRM National Commission lay in the imbalance between the preponderance of representatives of governmental or parastatal institutions within the body and the low level of representation of non-governmental stakeholders, especially civil society and the private sector. The same situation was also reflected in the executives of the ad hoc technical subcommittees, in which civil servants were also preponderant.

On the one hand, the majority governmental representation within the Commission was inevitable from certain standpoints. For such intensive work to be carried out on a volunteer basis, it was necessary to appoint technical civil servants as members of the technical teams that served as the executives of the subcommittees. Only government employees could be temporarily seconded to the APRM process, and only they could more easily obtain access to the databases of the various government institutions. On the other hand, however, the imbalance between participants from governmental structures and representatives of the non-governmental sector seemed to be much more pronounced

than required for the purposes of access to government sources. For example, all four members of the technical team supporting the subcommittee on democracy and political governance were civil servants (the APRM coordinator, an official from the Ministry of Local Administration, a senator and an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The same applies to the technical team supporting the subcommittee on socio-economic development, which was made up of five civil servants (the executive secretary of the National NEPAD Secretariat, three officials from the Ministry of Finance and a member of parliament).³⁷ Greater civil society presence in the technical teams of the technical subcommittees would surely not have prevented access to government data.

As the goal of the APRM was to assess to what extent the rules and standards of good governance were adhered to by essentially governmental institutions, there is cause to question the limits of the objectivity of the review of state institutions by subcommittees whose members were, in majority, employees of the state. An external perspective would be more suitable for detecting failings and defects.³⁸ However, it is generally agreed that no government interference was observed during the conduct of the self-assessment process, other than the strong state presence in its organisation.³⁹

Lack of identification of national priorities and recommendations for government action

According to the APRM focal point in Rwanda, the recommendations produced by the APRM process have already been taken into consideration and policies adapted or adopted, as the case may be. In this context, he cited the example of an administrative reform that reduced the number of provinces from 12 to four; the number of districts from 106 to 30 and the number of sectors from 1 545 to 500, in order to give them real power in the realisation of the decentralisation policy. However, overall, the self-assessment report repeats the priorities, recommendations and strategies of the government as they are quoted in the various official documents prepared outside of the APRM framework.⁴⁰

³⁶ This was pointed out by several individuals interviewed by the LDGL in March 2006.

³⁷ Interviews with the APRM coordinator, Kigali, March 2006.

³⁸ Draft report of the APR panel on the country review of the Republic of Rwanda, June 2005.

³⁹ Interviews conducted in the provinces in March 2006.

⁴⁰ For example, in the section on democracy and political governance, references were made, inter alia, to the following documents: the *PRSP Implementation progress reports* of June 2003 and October 2004; *The evaluation of the decentralisation process in Rwanda, September 2003, VNG International*; the 2001 and 2002 annual

Indeed, the APRM process took place in Rwanda at a time when numerous new reforms, in almost every area, had just been put in practice or were about to be implemented.⁴¹ In these circumstances, in most cases, it is still too soon to judge the value of these programmes.

Difficulties due to the questionnaire

An assessment using a written questionnaire is an effective method if the aim is to be systematic. However, its use should be adapted, particularly in certain highly sensitive sectors such as human rights and freedoms. In light of the culture and the recent history of Rwanda, it is reasonable to assume that certain respondents would be more comfortable providing oral answers rather than written ones. The process suffered from lack of time to process the questionnaire and the ambiguity of certain questions or their inappropriateness in the Rwandan context.⁴² A member of the National Commission also pointed out that the overly complicated or even equivocal nature of certain questions made them difficult to understand for a sizeable element of the Rwandan population.⁴³ For instance, in the section on “Democracy and Political Governance”, question 4 reads: *How has decentralisation contributed to improving the quality of governance?* and subquestion (i) says: *Provide **proof** that decentralisation has led to an **improvement** in broader participation by the grass-roots population.* This formulation may lend to confusion, as it may be understood as requiring an answer that is necessarily positive. As they were translated into the local language, such questions were more or less clarified by the technical subcommittees. For example, the abovementioned subquestion was reformulated as follows in the translation: *Provide **examples** of the **impact** of decentralisation on the participation of the grass-roots population.*

reports of the Human Rights Commissions; the reports of the annual conferences of 2001, 2002 and 2003 of the unity and reconciliation commission. In the section on economic and managerial governance, references were essentially made to the information and statistics provided by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) and the Central Bank (BNR).

41 The new constitution of 2001, the new strategic development plan (Vision 2020) and the new poverty reduction plan (PRSP) launched in 2001, at the end of the political transition and the setting in place of institutions created by the elections of 2003, in-depth reforms of the judicial system (2003–2004), the administrative system (launched in 2001), and the education system, rampant privatisation and near-total withdrawal of the Government from the business sector, experimentation with Gacaca popular courts, etc.

42 Rwanda NEPAD Secretariat, *Annual Report 2004*, p.10.

43 Rwanda NEPAD Secretariat, *Annual Report 2004*, p.44.

Opportunity for dialogue between civil society and the government

There is no doubt that the APRM process opens a very important chapter in terms of dialogue between the state and non-state stakeholders including civil society. As noted by Mme Marie-Angélique Savané, chair of the panel of eminent persons, who led the June 2004 APRM technical support mission, ‘one objective that is rarely mentioned is that the mechanism should enable the countries to learn to dialogue. ... We stress the need for such dialogue and for a consultation framework between the three stakeholders. That is why the review mechanism also promotes consultation, so that people debate, negotiate and agree on minimum platforms.’⁴⁴

The initial trend in the conduct of the APRM process in Rwanda was to carry out the self-assessment without necessarily seeking out the contribution of civil society; but the latter had to be included at some point. The weaknesses identified during this initial evaluation of the APRM in Rwanda were due to two main factors: inexperience and shortness of time. Inexperience first and foremost because the APRM is a new mechanism and Rwanda has been one of the first African countries to experience it. Thus, there were no precedents to refer to. Hopefully, the lessons learned from this initial exercise will be used to improve the structures and practices, taking account of the opinions and points of view of all parties. Secondly, it was generally agreed that the consultations with non-governmental stakeholders were carried out at high speed and on a tight schedule. It should be recommended in future to give non-governmental stakeholders sufficient time to better prepare their contributions.

Finally, the space for dialogue opened up by the APRM process is a valuable opportunity to establish a sustainable culture of dialogue between civil society and the government. This opening should not be wasted by Rwandan civil society, which should reflect on the ways and means of capitalising on the opportunity. Civil society should be proactive and not reactive and should prepare its contributions so that it is not just an onlooker but a major partner in the process. One worry that was widely shared was the tendency of the strong interest in civil society raised by the APRM process at the outset to progressively fade.⁴⁵ The representatives of civil society institutions and groups who were involved in the assessment process two years ago had had no information on the progress of the review as it went forward nor on the other NEPAD programmes in Rwanda. It is vital to organise

44 *DIALOGUE*, the quarterly bulletin of Partnership Africa Canada, No. 4, April/June 2005.

45 Interviews conducted in the provinces in March 2006 (see list of interviewees in Annex 2).

a campaign to provide information and popularise the goals of NEPAD and the APRM, in order to heighten interest and increase involvement on the part of civil society. In light of this need, the LDGL and CLADHO organised information seminars in February 2004 on NEPAD and on the economic partnership agreements with the European Union (EU) under the Cotonou Agreement between the EU and developing countries. However, these seminars were restricted to Kigali and there was no follow-up enabling the organisations to become involved in the self-assessment process. There should be more activities of this kind, but above all they should be increasingly extended to the provinces. Perhaps a focal point should be appointed by civil society to closely monitor and remain in permanent contact with the governmental structure in charge of monitoring NEPAD, so as to develop permanent constructive relationships around civil society involvement in the process.

Lack of national expertise

The fact that Rwanda entrusted its self-assessment report to a foreign organisation, AIPA, for technical review is in itself revealing of the lack of domestic capacity and self-confidence that characterised this initial experience with the APRM assessment process. The situation was recognised and deplored by the National NEPAD Secretariat itself.⁴⁶ In this same context, a foreign institution (SAIIA) was brought in to organise a one-day training workshop for civil society. This recourse to foreign expertise may also be explained by another weak link in the process, which was the fact that such an important undertaking was placed in the hands of volunteers. To be more effective, a core technical structure should be set up that is both competent and representative, that would in future be placed in charge not only of the entire phase of data collection and analysis and drafting of reports during the self-assessment process, but also of monitoring the implementation of the PoA on the strategies identified in the APRM context, so that foreign expertise would only be used on a one-off and very limited basis.

The lack of expertise also affected civil society, which was unable to capitalise on the space for dialogue provided by the APRM process. To avoid the risk of being superficial and general in its analyses and recommendations, civil society should deploy experienced human resources to monitor the different areas of governance that are the focus of the APRM, so that they have solid, well-documented and regularly updated databanks at their disposal.

⁴⁶ Rwanda NEPAD Secretariat, *Annual Report 2004*, p.10.

Conclusion and recommendations

The adoption of the APRM is an important milestone, to the extent that African heads of state agreed to submit to a mechanism that regularly questions and criticises their respect for standards of good governance. Rwanda should be applauded for having agreed to be among the very first African countries to submit to the peer review process. While imperfections have been noted here and there, the APRM process has launched a dynamic of dialogue and consultation between government institutions and non-state stakeholders including civil society. We must now maintain and strengthen this nascent spirit of confidence and partnership.

Rwandan civil society must be more proactive and equip itself to participate effectively in the process, in order to take part in making the rules rather than simply following them. During the next APRM review process, civil society should organise internal consultations beforehand, so as to render its contribution more effective. Development partners, particularly the EU and UNDP, should provide financial support for a sustainable capacity-building and institutional-support programme for Rwandan civil society, to equip it with the expertise it needs to fulfil its expected role as a partner in development.

The participation of civil society in the APRM National Commission should not be restricted to representatives of civil society coalitions only, but should include representatives of more technical individual organisations.

Analytical documents should be distributed early enough to give civil society delegates sufficient time to consult each other and harmonise their views on their participation in the current stage of the process.

Now that Rwanda's APRM report and national programme of action (PoA) has been debated and approved by the APR Forum, the government, in collaboration with civil society, should organise a national awareness and popularisation campaign on NEPAD and APRM, and galvanise public opinion on the implementation of the PoA.

Civil society should also set up structures to monitor the implementation of the national PoA and adherence to the norms and standards of the APRM. An APRM focal point within civil society would be useful in this respect. The focal point would coordinate civil society activities involving the APRM and interface with the government, and APRM national bodies and continental structures.

Annex 1: Composition of the APRM National Commission

No	NAME	TITLE	INSTITUTION REPRESENTED
A. Central government			
1.	Donald KABERUKA	Minister of Finance	Chair of the Commission
2.	Solina NYIRAHABIMANA	Minister in the Office of the President	Office of the President of the Republic
3.	Jeanne d'Arc MUJAWAMARIYA	Secretary of State	Ministry of Education
4.	Protais MUSONI	Minister	Ministry of Local Administration
5.	Marie-Christine NYATANYI	Secretary of State	Ministry of Local Administration
6.	Augustine SEBUDANGA	Secretary General	Office of the Prime Minister
7.	Célestin KAYITARE	Secretary General	Ministry of Commerce
8.	Anne GAHONGAYIRE	Secretary General	Ministry of Gender and the Family
9.	Johnson BUSINGYE	Secretary General	Ministry of Justice
10.	Emmanuel BIZIMANA	Secretary General	Ministry of Infrastructure
11.	Grégoire KARAMBIZI	Secretary General	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation
12.	Jean Claude MUNYABIKARI	Secretary General	Ministry of Land, Habitat and Protection of the Environment
13.	Désiré NDUSHABANDI	Secretary General	Ministry of Health
B. Local governments			
14.	Augustin KAMPAYANA	Chair	Association of local governments of Rwanda (RALGA)
15.	Ramathan BANGAYABO	Mayor	District of Cyanzarwe
C. Legislature			
16.	Dr Augustin IYAMUREMYE	Senator	Senate
17.	Stanley SAFARI	Senator	Senate
18.	Emmanuel NDAHIMANA	Parliamentarian	Chamber of Deputies
19.	Bernadette KAYEZU	Parliamentarian	Chamber of Deputies
D. National commissions and supervisory institutions			
20.	Jean Baptiste HABYARIMANA	Chair	National Commission for Unity and Reconciliation
21.	Damien HABUMUREMYI	Executive Secretary	National Electoral Commission
22.	Zainabu KAYITESI	Chair	National Human Rights Commission
23.	Janvier KANYAMASHULI	Executive Secretary	National Tender Board
24.	Gervais NTAGANDA	Auditor General	Office of the Auditor General
25.	François KANIMBA	Governor	National Bank of Rwanda
26.	Bernardin NDAYISHIMYE	Deputy Ombudsman	Office of the Ombudsman
27.	Jamal NDUNGUTSE	Executive Secretary	National Youth Council

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E. Judiciary			
28.	Julien HAVUGIYAREMYE	Judge	Supreme Court
29.	Alberto BASOMINGERA	Proxy Holder	Supreme Court
F. Civil society organisations			
30.	Jacqueline RUSIRIBYA	Chair	PROFEMME
31.	Théogène GASANA	Chair	Council for consensus building among organisations supporting grass-roots initiatives (CCOAIIB)
32.	Silas SINYIGAYA	Executive Secretary	Collective of human rights associations (CLADHO)
33.	Eric MANZI	Executive Secretary	Association of labour unions of Rwanda (CESTRAR)
34.	Francis Xavier NGARAMBE	Chair	Association of Genocide Survivors (IBUKA)
35.	Jean Pierre SAFARI	Student Representative	Kigali Institute of Science Technology and Management (KIST)
36.	His Eminence Emmanuel COLIN	Bishop	CNLS and religious organisations
37.	Francis MUTEMBEREZI	Former Governor of the Central Bank	Civil society
38.	Dr Uzziel NDAGIJIMANA	Rector	School of Finance and Banking (SFB)
39.	Zéphyrin KARIMBA	Chair	Association for the promotion of the Batwa
G. Private sector			
40.	Marie Claire MUKASINE	Chair	Association of insurance companies
41.	Etienne GAKWAYA	General Manager	Amazi ya HUYE
42.	Amandin RUGIRA	Chair	Association of commercial banks
43.	Francis Xavier UDAHEMUKA	Chair	Association of local growers
44.	Aimable KARYABWITE	Chair	ICT
45.	Marco NSENGIMANA		Professional Association
H. Other			
46.	Aimable KABANDA	APRM Coordinator	NEPAD – Rwanda
47.	Abbas MUKAMA	Member of Parliament	Forum of political parties

NB: The above list of members of the commission is not set in stone; it is merely an indicative of the proportionate representation of the various sectors.

Annex 2: List of interviewees

	Name	Organisation/Function
1.	KABANDA Aimable	APRM Rwanda Focal Point
2.	SINYIGAYA Silas	Civil society (Executive Secretary – CLADHO)
3.	MUPENZI Georges	Civil society (Chair of Plate-forme société civile Rwanda)
4.	RUSIRIBYA Jacqueline	Civil society (Executive Secretary – PROFEMME)
5.	MUJAWAMARIYA Prisca	Civil society (Executive Secretary – CCOAIB)
6.	NDAHUMBA Jean Baptiste	Private sector (Butare)
7.	GATWAKAZI Titiane	Civil society (PROFEMME – Butare)
8.	NTIRISHUMWAMABOKO Concorde	Civil society (APIDERBU – Butare)
9.	MARENGO Jeanine	Former Province of Gikongoro (Director)
10.	KALISA Alphonse	Civil society (Gikongoro)
11.	NKUSI John	Private sector (Chair Small Cattle Trade Cooperative –Mutara)
12.	NTAKIRUTINKA Fred	World Relief (INGO – Umutara)
13.	UWIZEYE Velens	Lawyer-Umutara
14.	NZAMWITA Déo	Private sector (Director Small Cattle Breeding Cooperative) – Byumba
15.	NGABONZIZA Prime	Civil society (UDEE – Byumba)
16.	Mgr NZABAMWITA Séverien	Catholic Church – Byumba
17.	MUKASHEMA Adeleine	Civil society (YWCA – Gitarama)
18.	KABARINDA Jacqueline	Civil society (CEPAF – Gitarama)
19.	SERUCACA Joël	Private sector – Gitarama (UGCD)
20.	MUSANGAMFURA Médard	Private sector – Gitarama (Regional Coordinator ARDI)
21.	MUTEZINKA Joséphine	MSF – Cyangugu (INGO)
22.	Mgr RWUBUSISI Geophrey	Anglican Church – Cyangugu
23.	RWAMUDANGA Eliezer	Private sector – Kibungo (UNATEK)
24.	KAYIJAMAHE Jean	Regional Pastor of the ADPR Church – Kibungo
25.	ABIYINGOMA François	GTZ – Kibungo
26.	KARIMBA Zéphyrin	Civil society – Chair of CAURWA

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