

***Peer Assessment***

**The Ghana APRM Process: A Case Study**

A paper prepared for the 2007 Bergen Seminar:  
*Governance Assessments and the Paris Declaration:  
Towards Inclusive Participation and National Ownership*

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## Introduction

In January 2006, President John Kufuor of Ghana completed a process he had set in motion three years earlier, when he formally gave notice that Ghana would accede to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Ghana's performance was generally hailed as a success, conferring on the country and his administration the APRM badge of good governance, even as initial independent assessments questioned if this reputation was fully justified.<sup>1</sup> This paper examines the context within which the Ghana APRM process was conducted, the nature of the assessment, the assessment process, and how the outcome of the assessment process was used.

## Summary

The Ghana APRM assessment was conducted in circumstances under which the government, the opposition, civil society, and the country at large, were coming to terms with a new political dispensation, including the fact that the space available for non state actors to monitor and comment on the activities of government, was at least in principle, more open than it had been for some time.

The decision to accede to the assessment was made by a relatively new administration in the belief that it was a win-win situation. By placing responsibility for the assessment on an appointed body of respected individuals, the President succeeded in elevating the process above day to day party politics. Additional steps that could have been taken to strengthen this tendency might include underpinning APRM institutions by an act of parliament, and appointing its members on fixed, but staggered terms, so that at any one time there are relatively new and relatively experienced members.

The assessment, conducted by four reputable independent research institutes who are on record as saying that their respective surveys were carried out without political interference, called for in depth examination of the country's performance in four thematic areas: political governance, economic management, corporate governance, and socio-economic development. The indicators measured were numerous and interrogated prevailing circumstances through some 58 questions. The bulk of the questions, however, called for either enumerations of what was being done to achieve certain outcomes, or to rate the country's performance in specified areas. The nature of the information gathered was largely qualitative. Without the preparation of an appropriate framework, it will be difficult to make time series or cross country comparisons. It is understandable that given the fact that it was the first time an APRM assessment was taking place on the continent, it should be as un-prescriptive as possible. However, it would be less efficient to employ this approach in subsequent assessments. Therefore, when the questionnaire is reviewed it should be done to provide answers that will allow comparisons across time and space.

Relatively speaking, the public awareness raising and consultation aspects of the assessment were not as comprehensive or detailed as the technical assessment component. The number of people accessed was relatively low, as were the numbers of people consulted to validate the results of the assessment. This has left a section of

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<sup>1</sup> Opoku, Eric Albert: Effective Stakeholder Participation in the APRM Process for the Promotion of Democratic Governance: A Case Study of Ghana, United Nations Development Programme, Oslo Governance Centre. December 2006

Ghanaian civil society feeling that the process has not been as participatory as it would have wished. To achieve this would have required a bigger staff at the secretariat, a larger budget, a longer preparatory period before the assessment began, a different set of objectives, or a combination of all these four alternatives. It might also be an option to conduct a stakeholder survey between the end of the first phase of the assessment process and the implementation of the POA, and use the findings as a basis for moving forward. On the other hand, civil society groups could have made a greater effort to engage with the process.

On completion the results of the assessment, in particular the national Programme of Action with an estimated cost of \$5.5 billion, was accepted by the government, with the President leading a special session of cabinet to examine the findings and proposals. The Programme of Action has been incorporated into the country's medium term expenditure framework and administrative plans. However, for the APRM to be the primary source of African governance, other strategies will need to be harmonised into the APRM rather than the other way around.

Oversight responsibility for monitoring implementation of the Programme of Action has been given to the national APRM governing council. It is proposing to set up district level oversight committees, possibly coordinated by the district chief executive. This approach, however, carries the risk of bureaucratising or politicising the process.

While the APRM Panel's Country Review Report has been widely circulated within Ghana, the country's own self assessment report has remained outside the public domain. It would be useful if the governing council could take the bold step of releasing the CSAR, so that the people of Ghana and others may see in full how their institutions are performing.

## **The Context of the Governance Assessment**

John Kufuor of the National Peoples Party (NPP) won the presidential elections in December 2000, defeating the NDC of Ft Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings. Rawlings had ruled the country since coming to power in a military coup in December 1981, but was precluded by the constitution from contesting for a third presidential term. His time in office had two distinct constitutional phases. The first, until 1992, was as a military leader in power through the force of arms. The second, following the elections in 1992, was as an elected leader in power because of the will of the people. The early days of his time in power had been characterised by the mobilisation of the working class against Ghana's ruling elites, middle classes and traditional sources of power. This was a period when People's Defence Committees (PDCs) organised neighbourhood groups, and Workers' Defence Committees (WDCs) organised workplace groups. For a while, these sites of 'people's power' threatened to challenge and overthrow the established order. In the end they were reined in and eventually neutralised, as older forms of authority reasserted themselves. On the economic front, Rawlings had appeared to mount a strategic challenge to Ghana's location and role in the international economy, and in particular the power of the IMF and World Bank in, and within, the architecture of Ghana's economic decision making. On the other hand, the Ghanaian economy was in dire straits and required restructuring. A radical IMF designed option was placed on the table. However, this was not favoured by some of the more anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist associates of Rawlings. A viable alternative could either not be found or was not acceptable, and eventually the Rawlings regime adopted the IMF strategy. Ghana as a result underwent one of the more comprehensive structural adjustment and stabilisation programmes. Its

main elements were fiscal discipline, tax reform, a competitive exchange rate, trade liberalisation, interest rate liberalisation, privatisation and liberalisation of inflows of foreign direct investment. The result in macro-economic terms was improved export levels, better government finances, and reduced levels of inflation, but aligned to high levels of debt and in the end relatively low levels of new foreign investment outside the traditional export orientated mineral and other raw material sectors of the economy.

When President Kufuor was sworn in on 7 January 2001, it could be expected that he would wish to distance his party and himself from the previous government. In reality the two were closer in economic terms than met the eye. While President Kufuor gave every indication that he sought to strengthen and entrench the fledgling multi-party democracy he had inherited, on the economic front there is no reason to believe that he was not comfortable with the general strategy of the Rawlings government with respect to the continued liberalisation of the Ghanaian economy and its open and relatively unfettered articulation into the global economic system. It can be argued that both of these objectives were served by embracing the APRM, which was one of the outcomes of a long dialogue between African governments and the G8 countries to nudge African governments towards improved governance as represented by multi-party democracy and a liberalised economic policy framework.

#### *The driving force behind the assessment*

The origins of the APRM lie in the Millennium African Renaissance Programme (MARP), originally championed by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa. It was eventually fused with the Omega Plan, a parallel proposal supported by President Wade of Senegal, and after the fusion, emerged as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Although presented as an African programme there was much to suggest that NEPAD was the result of a triangulated deal between Anglophone Africa, Francophone Africa, and European and American governments. The deal was that Africa would get its political and economic house in order in approved ways and the G8 would in turn help with additional debt relief, aid, market access, and non-traditional foreign investment.

Africa's proposals for this new beginning were presented to the G8 summit of 2002 in Kananaskis, Canada by the presidents of Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. In response an Africa Action Plan was adopted by the G8 which provided for a range of initiatives intended to assist Africa, within the framework of an open globalised economy underpinned by free movement of goods, services, and investment. As NEPAD developed, it was decided that a mechanism for monitoring governance on the continent could provide objective measures of the performance of Africa's leadership. The APRM was developed within the overall context of NEPAD as a means to help African countries to demonstrate that they had bought into the new agenda, for it was a condition set by the G8 that they would judge and reward Africa's performance on a country by country basis.<sup>2</sup>

When the APRM idea was launched in 2002, a number of African countries had already embarked on poverty reduction strategy programmes, as part of which they had implemented self-assessments. These, however, were not identical to what was envisaged

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<sup>2</sup> G8-2002 Africa Action Plan Kananaskis Statement "We welcome this commitment. In support of the NEPAD objectives, we each undertake to establish enhanced partnerships with African countries whose performance reflects the NEPAD commitments. Our partners will be selected on the basis of measured results." Paragraph 4

under the APRM, and, perhaps more importantly, could not like the APRM be presented as an African initiative. The indication, therefore, was that access to what was on offer from the G8 would be easier with, rather than without, a successful APRM assessment. However, President Kufuor must also have had his eye on Ghana's internal political dynamics. On the one hand, since his was a recent administration, any deficiencies found in Ghana's governance could not be placed at his door. By the same token, his administration could be presented as the one that cleaned up the mess created by the previous regime.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, while the findings had the potential to be a source of embarrassment to the outgoing administration, they had little potential to embarrass his own.

Hence, the decision to engage in the APRM was informed by a number of considerations, among them a desire to help embed the APRM approach to development within Ghanaian politics, to place Ghana in pole position to receive international support from G8 countries and the international institutions they hold sway over, and have the responsibility for any negative findings placed at the door of the outgoing, rather than, incoming administration.

#### *Stakeholder agreement before assessment commenced*

The decision to accede to the APRM was very much one within the power of the president to take, and once taken, he invested political capital into the process. On completion he led the cabinet in a special retreat to discuss its findings, and his input was important in securing the government's endorsement of the Programme of Action. However, like some of the other assessments undertaken by Ghanaian governments, the APRM originated from outside Ghana. The need for it was driven by the need to have Ghana pass the new tests being instituted by African governments as part of their dialogue with the G8, but the people of Ghana cannot be said to have played a significant role in initiating the assessment.

## **The Nature of the Assessment**

### *The depth and breadth of the assessment*

The APRM process is an exercise intended to last between six and nine months, and involves assessment of the country's performance in four 'thematic' areas: political governance, economic management, corporate governance, and socio-economic development. The questionnaire issued by the APRM continental secretariat, contained some 58 questions: 21 on democracy and good governance, 16 about economic management, 12 on corporate governance, and 9 on socio-economic development. The secretariat was responsible for the day to day administration of the process, and answered to a panel of eminent persons appointed by a sub-committee of heads of states representing participating countries. There was some leeway for Ghana to introduce country specific issues, which it did, bringing in themes such as chieftaincy and land tenure. The APRM rules require that research bodies independent of the government should conduct the assessment. They also require that the assessment should be participatory and involve civil society. Many of the questions were open ended and allowed for countries to present material they thought was relevant.

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<sup>3</sup> Gruzd, Steven 'Africa's Trailblazer: Ghana and the APRM', *Services Delivery Review (SDR)* Vol.4 No.3, 2006

The resulting Ghana Country Self-Assessment Report (CSAR) produced by four Technical Research Institutes (TRIs) came to some 1,200 pages, based on social survey interviews with some 1,200 people on matters of political governance, 1,000 on socio-economic development, and about 600 people each on matters of economic management and corporate governance.<sup>4</sup> The body responsible for overseeing the APRM process in Ghana, the national APRM governing council, was directly responsible for raising awareness of the APRM among the population and consulting them about its findings. An estimated 50,000 people were engaged in these processes.

The APRM came with a comprehensive list of questions issued by the continental secretariat, based on what the African Heads of State had approved as the appropriate indicators. But by requiring that civil society should be involved in the process, it opened up the possibility for a wide range of perspectives to be included in the results of the assessment and Programme of Action that was developed on the basis of the assessment. The questionnaire was modified by all the TRIs to enable them to ask questions in a format amenable to social survey research methods.

#### *What was measured*

An analysis of the questionnaire shows that 56 of the 58 questions were open, and that compound questions predominated over simple ones. Almost all the answers called for either enumeration of policies and initiatives intended to achieve specific outcomes, or a rating of national performance in certain areas.

Nature of questions		Structure of questions				Type of answers requested		
open	closed	simple question	2 part compound question	3 part compound question	more than 3 part compound question	listing	unspecified rating scale	dichotomous
52	6	18	28	8	4	34	18	6
	58				58			58

Under the heading democracy and political governance, the APRM questionnaire sought to identify activities and initiatives that:

- Prevent and reduce intra- and inter-state conflicts
- Enshrine constitutional democracy, including periodic political competition and the opportunity for choice, the rule of law, citizen rights and supremacy of the constitution
- Promote and protect economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights as enshrined in African and international human rights instruments,
- Uphold the separation of powers including the protection of an independent judiciary and an effective legislature

<sup>4</sup> The Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) was given responsibility for democracy and political governance, the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER), conducted the survey on socio-economic development, the Centre for Policy Analysis (CEPA) examined economic management, and the Private Enterprise Foundation (PEF) issues of corporate governance.

- Ensure accountable, efficient and effective civil servants and other public office holders
- Fight corruption in the political sphere
- Promote and protect the rights of women
- Protect and promote the rights of the child and young persons
- Promote and protect the rights of vulnerable groups, including internally displaced persons, refugees and disabled persons.

Measurements on economic management sought to measure to what extent policies exist that:

- Promote macroeconomic policies that support sustainable development
- Implement sound, transparent and predictable government economic policies
- Promote sound public finance management
- Fight corruption and money laundering
- Accelerate regional integration by participating in the harmonisation of monetary, trade and investment policies.

As part of the examination of the quality of corporate governance. the assessment measured the quantity and quality of programmes that generally direct and control the activities of corporations by:

- Promoting an enabling environment and effective regulatory framework for economic activities
- Ensuring that corporations act as good corporate citizens with regards to human rights, social responsibility and environmental sustainability
- Promoting adoption of codes of good business ethics in achieving the objectives of the corporation
- Ensuring that corporations treat all their stakeholders (shareholders, employees, communities, suppliers and customers) in a fair and just manner
- Providing for accountability of corporations, directors and officers.

Finally the assessment of socio-economic development required Ghana to measure improvements in well being and standard of living through the use of policies which:

- Promote self-reliance in development and build capacity for self-sustaining development
- Accelerate socio-economic development to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication
- Strengthen policies, delivery mechanisms and outcomes in key social areas, including education and combating of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases
- Ensuring affordable access to water, sanitation, energy, finance (including micro-finance), markets, ICT, shelter and land to all citizens, especially the rural poor
- Progress towards gender equality in all critical areas of concern, including equal access to education for girls at all levels
- Encourage broad-based participation in development by all stakeholders at all levels.

## The Assessment Process

### *The political dynamics of the process*

There were three key players in the politics of the APRM assessment. One was the government and related state structures; the other was the opposition, who were perceived by the government as ready to dismiss the process as being under government manipulation, and finally civil society, who expected to be offered a prominent role in the process, in line with the provisions of the APRM.

Ghanaian civil society may be characterised by possessing a high level of ideological pluralism, technical competence, and a track record of activism. This state of affairs is a legacy of the country's political history. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, had a strong and comprehensive political agenda best characterised as populist, socialist and pan-Africanist. The existence of this project provoked strong reactions among those sections of Ghanaian society who opposed them. On gaining independence, his government sought to bring all civil society groupings within the umbrella of his socialist pan-Africanist project. Their coping strategies included active or passive acquiescence, through to passive or active resistance. In any event, the seeds were sown for ideologically rather than ethnically based politics in the country. Another legacy arising from an emphasis on free education for all, was that Ghana ended up having one of the largest and most educated middle classes on the continent. The tendency for interventionist government returned with the arrival of Jerry Rawlings, who in the early days of his rule attempted to supersede rather than to co-opt autonomous civil society organisations through the PDCs and WDCs. Meanwhile, the economic policies of the PNDC to privatise and roll back the frontiers of the state stimulated the culture of self employment in all sections of Ghanaian society, including the middle classes, and the setting up of NGOs was one way forward. Partly as a result of this history of interventionist government, not to mention the succession of military rulers, the framers of the 1992 constitution set up a political dispensation in which the default position of social organisation is one of freedom of association, expression and non-discrimination on grounds of religion, gender, disability, and ethnicity. The two terms of the elected Rawlings government laid the foundations for a new relationship between civil society and the political authority. President Kufuor's New Patriotic Party (NPP) government, which came from a tradition that was not statist, could be expected to build on the evolving political culture. Nevertheless, this is not a path easily trodden, as the example of the debate around the freedom of information act demonstrates. While giving strong indications of wishing to introduce such an act, the government is also behaving in ways that could suggest otherwise.<sup>5</sup>

President Kufuor decided that the assessment should be overseen by a relatively small group of persons, to be known as the national governing council, who were given formal authority to manage the process on Ghana's behalf. Within the context of the APRM, this group or person termed the National Focal Point have sole authority to engage the panel of eminent persons and the secretariat on behalf of the country. Perhaps the first salvo fired by civil society in its engagement with the government during the Ghana APRM

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<sup>5</sup> The president was reported by the Ghana News Agency on 17 May 2007 as saying that freedom of information was a potentially dangerous weapon that needed to be planned for, while the Attorney General was reported by the *Daily Dispatch* as saying that 'Ghana has not reached a stage where it needs and can successfully implement a Freedom of Information Law'. The formulation suggested less than whole hearted endorsement of the idea of a freedom of information act.



process was in response to the announcement by Dr. Francis Appiah, the chief executive of the Ghana APRM secretariat, during a workshop organised by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) in November 2003. In the meeting, Dr. Appiah indicated that the members of the Ghana APRM governing council would be appointed in the near future. The groups present 'were openly angry with their government, dismissing claims that wide consultation had occurred.'<sup>6</sup> Their response apparently served to delay the announcement of the governing council by three months. When the announcement came, the membership of the national APRM governing council consisted of individuals who, although of standing, had not been designated to represent civil society even though some were from civil society. In any event, by conferring formal independence on the governing council, it was harder for the government's political opponents to claim that the government was able to interfere with the assessment process. Sections of civil society were also concerned that the process of appointing the TRIs had not been transparent. There were no invitations to tender, and instead contracts were awarded to the four organisations the governing council determined should carry out the work. Fortunately, the organisations chosen were institutions with a good reputation. Although awareness raising was conducted in nearly all of the country's regions, they were designed to inform rather than to consult on the content of the assessment or the Programme of Action arising from it. The dedicated consultation process itself was characterised by a relatively small number of events, involving a relatively small number of stakeholders. As the process continued, the number of civil society groups involved became fewer instead of larger, and arguably their level of engagement shallower rather than deeper. The effect of the way the process was managed led to some groups distancing themselves from the process. A number of heads of organisations who attended the early events during the process, failed to honour subsequent invitations.

Thus, the APRM was introduced in a context where an incoming administration was keen to distance itself from the heritage of its predecessor now in the novel position of not being in power, and where civil society was keen to utilise and expand the spaces provided by the new political dispensation, but finding the opening not as wide as they had hoped. To be effective, the APRM needs to remain above party politics. Possible ways of achieving this could include underpinning APRM institutions by an act of parliament, and appointing its members on fixed, but staggered terms, so that at any one time there are relatively new and relatively experienced members.

### *Mechanisms for engaging local stakeholders*

The main mechanisms for engaging stakeholders were sensitisation and consultation. The governing council took on the task of raising public awareness about the APRM, while the TRIs conducted the assessment. Sensitisation consisted of a series of meetings and seminars across the country held roughly from June to September of 2004. They were when then temporarily suspended because of the parliamentary and presidential elections of 7 December, after which they resumed until around February 2005. They included stakeholder fora in nine of the country's ten regions, with one session doubling for two regions during which the APRM was explained to participants.<sup>7</sup> There were also separate special sessions for the security services, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and

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<sup>6</sup> Gruzd, Steven 'Africa's Trailblazer: Ghana and the APRM', *Services Delivery Review (SDR)* Vol.4 No.3, 2006 p.23 (Journal of the South African Department of Public Services and Administration).

<sup>7</sup> Ghana NAPRM-GC web page: [http://www.naprm-gc.org/home.php/publications/1<sup>st</sup> RSforum report](http://www.naprm-gc.org/home.php/publications/1<sup>st</sup>RSforum%20report) and 2<sup>nd</sup> RSforum report.

trade associations, the physically challenged (disabled), youth groups, the National Council for Civic education (NCCE), and the media. Altogether a total of 13 sensitisation meetings took place between May 2004 and April 2005. A much smaller series of consultation events took place after the TRIs had produced their findings, which were then scrutinised in validation meetings for various civil society groups.

The sensitisation meetings had a standard format consisting of introductions by members of the APRM secretariat or governing council, followed by a question and answer session and then by break out sessions to discuss one of the four thematic areas, concluding with a plenary for reporting back. The records of these meetings suggest that there was a high level of engagement and that a number of pertinent issues were raised especially during the question and answer sessions. Some of the more common suggestions were that the national governing council should hold district rather than regional level fora, conduct thorough stakeholder validation of the country self assessment report before its submission to the APRM panel, ensure minority group participation, stress the importance of a freedom of information act, strengthen the engagement of the NCCE with the process, make presentations relating to the process in Ghanaian languages instead of just English, and translate the APRM questionnaire and other documents into Ghanaian languages.<sup>8</sup>

Official estimates suggest that some 50,000 people benefited from the sensitisation process. Of these, however, only about 1,200 participated in the series of seminars described above, suggesting a penetration ratio of 0.5 percent of the adult population, meaning that many adults were not in fact made aware of the APRM process. Data from the Secretariat indicates that over half of those attending the sensitisation seminars were state sector representatives.<sup>9</sup> Arguably, not enough ordinary stakeholders were covered by the sensitisation process.

The three most important of the five national consultation and validation events were the national stakeholder workshop in Akosombo in May 2004, attended by around 200 people; the national self-assessment report and national Programme of Action deliberation meeting in February 2005 attended by approximately 50 people, and the national validation meeting in April 2005. The first was intended as an introduction to the APRM, while the second was held to enable invited civil society groups to critically assess the findings of the TRIs. The final set of three meetings was for participants to validate or approve the content of the reports constituting the assessment and the national Programme of Action. They generally lasted more than one day, thereby providing adequate time for engagement with the matters at hand. However, the meetings were held in or near Accra, the capital, and were invitation only events. Although there had been an intention to hold some validation meetings in other parts of the country, these did not materialise, nor could attendees count on any assistance to help them with travel to, or accommodation in, Accra. All documentation was circulated at the meeting itself, which limited the ability of participants to meaningfully engage with the subject matter at hand. Finally, participants to the consultation and validation meetings were not generally aware of what use, if any, had been made of their contribution to the debates during the sessions. This was sometimes cited as contributing to the waning levels of attendance at validation events. The net effect of these factors was to produce a process which secured a

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<sup>8</sup> Ghana NAPRM-GC website: <http://www.naprm-gc.org/home.php> (click on publications then on 1st RSForum).

<sup>9</sup> Based on an analysis of Ghana NAPRM Governing Council web site: <http://www.naprm-gc.org/home.php/publications/1<sup>st</sup>RSforum> report and 2<sup>nd</sup> RSforum report.

certain level of civil society engagement, but left some prominent members of this group feeling that, although they had indeed been invited to the party, this was little compensation since they had anticipated, rightly or wrongly, playing a significant role in helping to organise it.

#### *How the process was coordinated*

At the continental level the APRM process was overseen by the Panel of Eminent Persons (PEP), who have the responsibility of ensuring that participating governments honour the undertakings in the MoU signed with the African Union. At the national level the Ghana APRM governing council, supported by its secretariat, supervised the country self-assessment and conducted the sensitisation and consultation elements of the assessment. During the course of the process, the governing council made a strategic alliance with the National Council for Civic Education (NCCE), a body with extensive experience in conducting public education campaigns. The fact that the technical research institutes were allocated the task of conducting the assessment exercise helped to ensure that that aspect of the exercise was seen to be free from political interference. Even though the TRIs had been appointed without a competitive process, their reputation and the quality of their work, generally acclaimed, tended to remove grounds for criticism. The governing council was supported by a small secretariat, perhaps too small for the enormity of the task it faced. The members of the governing council personally participated in the sensitisation process, thereby assuring that at least one of their members was present. This added to the legitimacy of the process.

The first of the APRM's five stages was the self-assessment phase, which comprised three main events. The APRM country support mission arrived in Ghana in May 2004, led by Dr Chris Stals, the member of the panel of eminent persons designated to oversee the Ghana process. The mission held a number of meetings with members of the government and others, arriving at a common understanding on the rules, processes and principles of the APRM. The visit of the country support mission was also used to sign the technical MoU between the government and the Panel. The way was now clear for the country to commence the self assessment, and deliver the key outputs of the process, namely the Country Self-Assessment Report (CSAR) and the Programme of Action (POA). Within the assessment phase, the work of the TRIs was crucial. First they examined the questionnaire and recast it so that they could conduct social surveys. Their work was examined by independent assessors appointed by the governing council. It was then critically examined by members of civil society. This process helped to secure acceptance of the results that came out of the assessment. By March 2005, the national APRM governing council was in a position to submit the CSAR and the POA to the Panel and the Government of Ghana. During the second phase of the assessment, the panel dispatched a country review mission to examine the process that had generated the CSAR and the NPOA, and to help build a national consensus on the way forward. During the third phase, the panel used the CSAR and other information it had independently gathered on Ghana to produce the Country Review Report (CRR). The government was given an opportunity to see and comment on factual matters relating to the CRR. As part of the penultimate phase, the panel presented its report together with the comments of the government to the APRM Forum or the meeting of participating heads of state in June 2005. Six months later, as part of the final stage of the APRM process, the CRR was made public.

### *Defining stakeholder engagement*

The MoU requires participating governments to ensure that civil society groups 'participate in the development of the national Programme of Action.' This requirement may be seen as having both technical and political import. As a technical requirement it was adequately fulfilled by the nature of the work of the TRIs. However, the same cannot be said about the sensitisation and consultation processes. Definitions of civil society abound and the definitions used in the APRM vary across documents. The base document, the document on organisation and process, and the MoU signed on accession, contain definitions which, while overlapping, are not identical. However, there is a repeating core that includes trades unions, women, youth, civil society, the private sector, rural communities and professional associations, around which the various definitions coalesce.<sup>10</sup> All these groups were included in the sensitisation and consultation phases.

## **The Outcome of the Assessment Process**

### *How the results of the assessment were used*

The primary purpose of the Country Self-Assessment Report (CSAR) is to serve as the basis for the APRM panel's own Country Review Report (CRR). The 1,200 page Ghana CSAR was distilled into a 400 page CRR and presented to a meeting of participating heads of state, including of course President Kufuor of Ghana. This process of presentation of the Ghana country report to, and its subsequent discussion by, the APRM Forum constitutes the peer element of the peer review mechanism. The second purpose of the assessment process is incorporation of the Programme of Action into the country's medium term expenditure framework. The government readily and publicly committed itself to implementing the POA. To give effect to this, the governing council's mandate was extended to include the process of implementing the POA, and they were also made part of the process of monitoring budgetary expenditure.

### *Are the results of the assessment being integrated into national development planning?*

Ghana's POA is estimated to cost \$5.5 million over five years, and will have a significant impact on Ghana's planning and budgetary practice. The first phase in incorporating it into the national planning process was to harmonise the APRM with Ghana's existing planning and budgetary framework, which are the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II), the Results Matrix of Development Partners, and the Multi-Donor Budget Support Matrix, as well as the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals.<sup>11</sup> A practical manifestation of this is that the Governing Council now participates in the consultative group known as the Consultative Group on Pillar III – Governance and Civic Responsibility, which was formed by the government to harmonise all governance programmes.<sup>12</sup> This allows the governing council to actively engage in ensuring that the Programme of Action, which provides details of the expected outputs, outcomes, costs and implementing agencies on a project-by-project basis, is being acted upon.

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<sup>10</sup> Memorandum of Understanding establishing the African Peer Review Mechanism, 9 March 2003, <http://sites.dbsa.org/aprm/index3.php?>

<sup>11</sup> Bartholomew Armah, 'Towards Policy Coherence: Integrating APRM with Existing Processes (MDGs and PRS)', paper presented at the APRM Continental conference 'Africa's Bold March to Capture the 21<sup>st</sup> century – The role of the APRM', 8-10 May 2007, Accra, Ghana.

<sup>12</sup> Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Ghana National Programme of Action for the Period January – June 2006, p.14.

### *To what extent has the assessment developed local capacity?*

One of the direct effects of the assessment and the resulting Programme of Action is that it set out in a clear and readily accessible fashion what was to be done, when, at what cost, and by whom. Thus stakeholders are much better able to monitor the progress or otherwise of the various programmes and projects contained in the Programme of Action. A number of civil society groups are effectively monitoring developments within their respective thematic areas. However, they have been not so good at sharing this information with one another, nor have they set up mechanisms for doing so, as a result they are not able to collectively conduct advocacy for the issues of concern to them.

The governing council has been working on a programme to place the task of monitoring implementation of the Programme of Action in the hands of 'district level oversight and implementation committees'. These will be a consortium of bodies at district level coordinated by the district chief executive. The potential weakness of this system is that the district chief executive is an appointee of the head of state, and as such might find it difficult to monitor the national executive.<sup>13</sup> It also risks bureaucratising and perhaps politicising the process.

### *Dissemination of the results of the assessment*

The content of the Country Review Report was widely distributed. Initially sections of it were serialised in the national papers. Then some 7,000 copies were printed and distributed to individuals and public and private institutions within the country.<sup>14</sup> Finally, it was made available through the national governing council web site. Since the implementation of the POA began, the governing council, as required by the provisions of the APRM, has produced a half yearly progress report on its implementation which is made available to the general public.

However, the same cannot be said of the Ghana Country Self-Assessment Report (CSAR). The only means the general public may access the content of this document is to read the quotes or references to it contained in the Panel's Country Review Report. One page of the CSAR has the following words across the bottom of the page: 'This is a confidential working document of the African Peer Review Mechanism and should not be quoted or published until the review process is complete and the country report is released in its final form.'<sup>15</sup> Although the terms of this embargo have been fulfilled, the governing council has yet to place this document in the public domain. Unfortunately, the provisions of the APRM are silent on if and when the CSAR should be made public.<sup>16</sup> Given that the understanding was that it was the country and not the government that was been

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<sup>13</sup> Dr Emmanuel O. Akwetey – Executive Director, Institute for Democratic Governance  
Nana Oye Lithur – Chief Executive, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Emmanuel Nkonu – Coordinator - International Campaign for Corruption Free Schools, Kwabena Yarko Otoo – Research Officer, Ghana Trades Union Congress, Afi Yakubu – Director, Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA).

<sup>14</sup> Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Ghana National Programme of Action for the Period January – June 2006, p.12.

<sup>15</sup> Ghana Country Self-Assessment Report, section on corporate governance – p.124.

<sup>16</sup> This is true of the Base Document; Guidelines; The MoU on Technical Assessment and Country Review; Objectives, Standards and Criteria; Organisations and Process; the Questionnaire; Democracy and Political Governance Initiative; Conditions for Sustainable Development; Peace and Security Initiative; and indeed the NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance.

assessed, it seems somewhat perverse that having participated in the country self assessment exercise, those that took part should be denied the right to see how their input has been utilised, and more generally, that the people of Ghana who were the subject of the assessment should be denied the right to learn in full what was found out about the functioning of their institutions.