

**STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY THROUGH NEPAD:
The Role of African Civil Society**

**Report of the conference held 25 – 27 May 2003
Johannesburg, South Africa**

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Sunday 25th may 2003: Opening Remarks

Guest Speaker: Mme Speaker Nthloi Motsamai, Speaker of the National Assembly of Lesotho & Chairperson of the SADC Parliamentary Forum

Subject: Address by Hon. N. Motsamai - Book Launch Compendium of Elections in Southern Africa - Rosebank Hotel 25 May 2003

**EXCELLENCY HEAD OF THE ROYAL DANISH EMBASSY
EXCELLENCIES REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NEW ZEALAND HIGH
COMMISSION EXCELLENCIES HEADS OF THE DIPLOMATIC MISSION AND THE
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS HERE PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE DONOR
COMMUNITY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EISA MEMBERS OF AFRICAN
CIVIL SOCIETY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**

It truly gives me a great pleasure and honour to address this distinguished gathering of eminent personalities from across Africa, on the occasion of the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) Book Launch - Compendium of Elections in Southern Africa and a conference on "Strengthening Democracy through NEPAD" the role of African Civil Society".

I wish to take this opportunity to convey a special warm Southern Africa welcome to you all, especially our brothers and sisters who have come afar and indeed have sacrificed their precious time and engagements to participate in this event.

Distinguished participants, I invite you to join me in commending EISA for this publication of the Compendium of Elections in Southern Africa. This is most certainly a matter for congratulation and rejoicing between EISA, partners, and friends. This publication is a unique collection of baseline information on fourteen SADC countries, covering topics such as: voter registration processes, electoral systems, electoral administration, civil education, comparative socio-economic data, etc.

With this piece of work EISA has seemingly put a mirror in front of us as respective countries in this region. This publication has taken us back in memory with regard to socio-economic and political history of our countries. Therefore this indeed is fittingly a time for reflective perceptions. It's time for measuring achievements, it's time to analyze the anatomy of the shortcomings and make new resolutions.

Distinguished participants, as partners journeying together in pursuit of peace in this continent, we have to engage in concerted efforts to strengthen the institutions of democracy such as the Electoral Commissions. This would go a long way in ensuring the type of election which would guarantee us peace which we so desperately need as a basis for efforts to uplift our continent from misery.

Elections are a very important basic element of the NEPAD initiative. Elections are procedures by which communities choose representatives who will hold the national office. They are a mechanism through which the will of people is expressed. They are a fulfillment of democracy which in turn must be founded on an unwavering commitment to fundamental human rights. This is encapsulated in Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 as follows:

“Everyone has the right to take part in the government of their countries, directly or indirectly, through freely chosen representatives. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government, this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures”.

It follows therefore that at the end of the day the election process is a NATIONAL BAROMETER, and there can be no doubt that, it needs to be managed meticulously at all times, by all concerned. We all are aware of the need for the election process to enjoy an increasing public confidence and integrity.

In view of the preceding text coupled with my personal experiences while I participated in SADC Parliamentary Forum election observation missions some of the countries in the region, it is my strong conviction that time is now opportune for EISA to challenge the Electoral Commissions Forum of the SADC countries to establish the Code of Ethics for themselves, to establish a Peer Review Mechanism for monitoring each other. This would go a long way in ensuring transparency, accountability, and acceptable standards in election management.

Having perused through the Compendium I believe a suggested Peer Review Mechanism would deal with some of the challenges posed in the text such as - whether the legal and administrative apparatus currently in place throughout much of the Southern Africa is sufficient to guarantee democratic electoral outcomes.

It is pertinent to note at this juncture that, establishing a strong election monitoring machinery has always been one of the top priorities of the SADC Parliamentary Forum. This was identified as an integral part of the Forum's democracy and good governance programme that would guarantee a meaningful role in ensuring free and fair elections. As a result thereof a document known as the Norms and Standards for Election Observation in the SADC countries was developed. It provides the guidelines which are used to assess whether the electoral process has been free and fair.

Distinguished participants are invited to note that, the five countries that are mentioned in the Compendium as having had their last elections in 1999 are going for another round of elections next year in 2004. The SADC Parliamentary Forum is intending to continue sending the observers missions. I am optimistic to believe that the next series of the Compendium will reflect the duly desired progress. I want to take this opportunity to mention that Lesotho has indeed in this just ended election, which was hailed as a success story by both the local and international observers, demonstrated the progress I am talking about.

Distinguished participants allow me to once again pay tribute to EISA for taking an initiative to convene this Conference which has brought together experts and opinion leaders from Africa, to share ideas and explore the best practices in the context of strengthening democracy on the continent through NEPAD. I can't help but marvel at EISA's precision and accuracy in planning, as this day pleasantly coincides with the Africa Day Celebration, whose unequivocal message is Peace, Unity, and Prosperity.

Through this consultative forum, we feel in our humble opinion that we are doing what we firmly believe in - consulting and engaging, involving and listening. As it is sometimes noted, gathering the right people is often as important as trying to collect the right information. We cannot overemphasize the value of the expertise and experience in the heads of all of you gathered here tonight.

We remain convinced that good alternatives can only emerge where there is diversity of thought as the saying goes "choice cannot survive where there are no alternatives." Free debate, a lot of thinking out aloud and lateral thinking are yet another fertile ground for alternatives. Consequently we look forward to the final product of this consultative process. We look forward to the informed policies that will help to bring a better life to the majority of people of this continent.

The theme of this conference: "Strengthening Democracy through NEPAD: the role of African civil society", challenges us to make a critical analysis of other key elements of NEPAD. In the preceding text we focused our attention to strengthening institutions of democracy with particular emphasis on electoral commissions. We may now wish to examine the role of civil society in governance. Despite numerous definitions at different fora by different groups of people, governance is summarized as "the manner in which national affairs are run by those institutions and public officers with a mandate to do so". Depending on various attributes, governance can be classified as good or bad.

As it is commonly observed, good governance presupposes democratic governance, while bad governance denotes authoritarian governance which is actually a poor form of governance.

Civil society plays a critical role in strengthening democracy in that, it brings about the movement from a bureaucratic administration to a more representative administration. Civil society brings about active co-operation and an ongoing commitment in the process of policy formulation and implementation between politicians, senior management, frontline workers, and citizens.

Civil society encourages the divergence from the traditional regime-driven policy process to one where there is a multiplicity of negotiated determinants of the problem identification, formulation of policy principles, setting of objectives, development of options according to agreed criteria, and the formulation of an implementation strategy. The manner in which this is done and the contribution at various stages in the process characterize democracy. The dynamism of linkages underscored above ascribes to democracy as being about partnerships of all stakeholders in an endeavor to bring about synergies of efforts and resources. As described above, it emerges that civil society strengthens democracy through fostering of complex relationships, not only among different institutions of state, but among all the stakeholders, from the most powerful titans to the poorest and most vulnerable people on society's margins.

By strengthening democracy, civil society is indeed strengthening a key ingredient of the NEPAD initiative, subsequently this has a net effort of sustainable peace, security, stability, and development.

Partnerships bring about mutually reinforcing roles that government, parliaments, civil society, and the private sector play in entrenching democracy and the unique relative strength and contribution of each actor to the process is of great value.

The experience of many new democracies on the continent suggest that the state acting in isolation, cannot build the political culture of good governance and accountability necessary for the survival of democracy. The task thus falls squarely on the shoulders of the civil society. Since the inception of the African Union in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa and the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), African Leaders have identified strengthening of partnerships as a strong weapon of tackling the formidable challenges that have befallen our continent.

It is therefore incumbent upon the members of the African civil society to take up the challenge tonight, use the next two days to seek ways and means of developing appropriate practical strategies and mechanisms for engagement in NEPAD and African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), intended for monitoring of the observance or lack thereof of the rules of game among members. APRM is seen as yet another important factor in strengthening democracy in our respective countries. It should be recalled that democracy is universally recognized ideal as well as a goal. It is a basic citizen right to be exercised under conditions of freedom and equality. Therefore achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between women and men in the conduct of the affairs of society.

Distinguished participants there can be no democracy without the participation of women, without the sector of the society which comprise more than half of the world population.

May I take this opportunity to bring to your attention the concept of, Gender and Development; A Declaration by Heads of State or Government of the southern African Development community (SADC), pledging the thirty percent representation of women at all levels of decision-making positions by the year 2005. SADC Parliamentary Forum is exemplary in this regard in that, it has achieved the desired percentage of women in its Plenary and is moving towards forty percent, it's just the question of working out the modalities with member parliaments of bringing the chairpersons of National Women's Caucus to the Plenary.

Distinguished participants, grappling with issues of identifying your space in bringing about the success of NEPAD, should not in anyway divert your attention from the calamities of HIV/AIDS, famine, poverty, malaria, as their impact threaten the very existence of the human kind.

It is crucial therefore, that whatever strategies and mechanisms that are agreed upon include matching responses to these catastrophes. In conclusion, I wish to place on record our sincere gratitude to the Danish Embassy, the New Zealand High Commission whose financial contribution to this conference and effort to promoting democracy and good governance on the continent is highly appreciated.

Distinguished participants, I urge all of you to take this occasion as a moment of inspiration and a call for fresh commitment to the ideals of democracy and the NEPAD initiative. I avail myself of this opportunity to wish you fruitful deliberations in your tireless efforts in the daunting task of finding lasting solutions to problems that face our continent.

Having concluded my remarks I now declare the "Compendium of Elections in Southern Africa" launched and the Conference on "Strengthening Democracy through NEPAD: the role of African Civil Society" officially opened.

Monday 26th May 2003

Session 1: The Democratization Process in Africa

Chair: Professor Tom Todge, South Africa

Dr. Khabele Matlosa of SAPES Trust presented a paper that examined democratic consolidation in Africa from the Southern African perspective. He argued that the democratization process in Africa should be judged not by the frequency of elections or changes in government, but by the improvement in economic well-being of the people. While important strides have been made toward establishing democratic governance in Africa generally, and in Southern Africa in particular, more work needs to be done to make African democratic systems more conducive to development.

An important task in evaluating democratic consolidation, therefore, is the link between democracy and poverty reduction. Beginning with a review of Africa's history of authoritarian governance since independence, Matlosa's paper moved on to a critique of the development model now dominant in Africa. He argued that NEPAD demonstrates the position of political elites in Africa today—they would like to pursue autonomous development paths, but in practice their policies are neo-liberal and dependent.

Mr. Daniel Pienaar from the Democracy and Governance program at the Human Sciences Research Council presented a paper prepared by himself and his colleague, Dr. Doreen Atkinson, entitled *Thinking Globally and Acting Local: NEPAD and Local Government*. The paper argued that the type of governance, and, specifically, service delivery envisaged by NEPAD, should start at the local level. The paper pointed to challenges at the local level and how they correspond with NEPAD's 'sectoral priorities', including the delivery of infrastructure and social services, integrated development planning and service delivery, the devolution of functions to municipal government, intergovernmental fiscal flows, and promoting an effective customer interface.

During the subsequent discussion, Professor Tom Lodge who was the discussant, agreed with Doctor Matlosa that democratic progress should be judged by development criteria, and that there was a need to have an economic dimension to democratic progress. Countries that fail to do this remain vulnerable to democratic reversals. Unfortunately, Africa's decade of democratization shows little evidence of developmental democracy, Professor Lodge said. Poverty and economic inequality in many African countries is getting worse. Uganda has had some economic success, but Uganda in no way conforms to the liberal democracy prescribed to Africa. Professor Lodge criticized Dr. Khabele's paper reference to the Zimbabwean land reform program as an example of developmental democracy, noting that land reform can be carried out well or badly, and expressed doubt that Zimbabwe's land reform program will bring about a real reduction in poverty.

Other contributors commented further on the connection between politics and economics, and argued that it was important for civil society to engage in the economics of NEPAD. One contributor stressed the need for civil society to assess whether NEPAD can help bring ordinary people into integrated national and continental markets, and another argued that an important role for civil society will be to serve as a link between citizens and the corporate world. Another contributor stressed the centrality of accountability. Because successful development cannot be achieved with corrupt leadership, the essential link between democracy and development is the

ability to hold representatives accountable. Others concentrated on the challenges Africa's economic problems present to the democratization that NEPAD promises. These challenges include the difficulty of building democracy in countries where the population consists of 85% peasants, and the difficulty of holding elected officials accountable when a majority of voters in Africa are illiterate. Civil society can help address some of these challenges through, for example, voter education.

Professor Lodge noted that Atkinson and Pienaar's paper presented an administrative picture of local government, one that focused on 'customer interface,' and risked seeing local government only as a vehicle for spreading the functions of the central government. He argued that this approach fails to address the idea that local government should be about local politics. He also noted, however, the fact that real local autonomy carries the risk that local elites will capture and abuse local resources. Several contributors joined with Professor Lodge in stressing the weaknesses of seeing local government only as an administrative function. Contributors noted, for example, a "technocratic obsession," and the fact that politics in South Africa, for example, have increasingly concentrated on presidential priorities. There was agreement that local elections should also be given priority.

Session 2: The Institutional Framework for Civil Society's Inclusion in Governance

Chair: Dr. Bulhan Hassen, Somaliland

Dr Rod Alence, from the Department of International Relations at the University of the Witwatersrand, presented a paper that considered the empirical relationship between democratization and the quality of governance. Recognizing that observers from both sides of the structural adjustment debate have agreed that poor governance in Africa harms development, the paper sought to identify how political institutions affect governance. Based on quantitative analysis of 73 developing countries, including 29 African countries, and controlling for income and region, he found that democratic political competition does tend to be associated with better governance. However, this correlation depends on an indirect relationship. Democratic political competition tends to increase the presence of institutional checks on executive authority, which are in turn correlated with improved public service and reduced corruption. Controlling for the impact of institutional checks on executive authority, political competition has no independent effect on the quality of governance. The data demonstrated no evidence of 'African exceptionalism.' Instead, the relationships between political competition, checks on executive discretion, and good governance appear to be very similar in Africa and developing countries in other regions. These findings point to the conclusion that an important role for civil society in improving governance in Africa could be in helping to define the limits of executive discretion.

Mr. Noel Kututwa, deputy director of the Human Rights Trust of Southern Africa in Zimbabwe, presented an outline of civil society's participation in governance institutions. Defining civil society as the group of organizations whose members are engaged in non-state activities, he contrasted civil society with political society and economic society, but he observed that civil society draws its character from its interaction with these other spheres. He noted several ways that civil society can contribute to better governance, including strengthening institutions, ensuring government accountability, and creating partnerships to allow for the participation of all stakeholders. He cited several ways that civil society could achieve these objectives, including the creation of dialogue, training, and advocacy. He cited challenges to meeting these objectives, including the fact that civil society is often not taken seriously by government, the difficulty in acquiring sustained funding given the risk of donor fatigue, as well as the fact that civil society is sometimes preoccupied with criticizing the government, and that members of civil society

organizations sometimes pursue their personal interests ahead of social interests. He noted that while it can serve democracy, civil society is not democratically elected.

During the discussion, several contributors joined with Dr Alence in stressing the importance of restraints on executive discretion, the diversity of political circumstances in Africa makes it difficult to draw general conclusions about the role of civil society in governance institutions across the continent. In some cases, formal political contestation exists, but this competition does not include all of the essential features of democracy.

Contributors from Somaliland and Swaziland highlighted the particular difficulties facing all social groupings, including civil society organizations, in political environments that are hostile to democracy. In Somalia, where a repressive and violent regime and eventual state collapse lead to the secession of Somaliland in 1991, political elites as a class were predatory. However, the subsequent history of Somaliland demonstrates that power is not impermeable, and that civil society can create its own space. In Swaziland, democratic freedoms are prohibited by law, although political organizations such as Pudemo are trying to open space for civil society to interact with the institutions of governance. While one contributor criticized Dr. Alence's reliance on literature that emphasizes the neo-patrimonial nature of African politics, Dr. Alence stressed that he considered his paper a critique of that literature, noting the lack of evidence for 'African exceptionalism.'

In response to Mr. Kututwa's presentation, contributors pointed out the need to sharpen the definition of civil society, highlighting the fact that civil society is neither homogeneous nor consensual. Because of its heterogeneous nature it is difficult to talk of civil society working coherently in the public interest, as different parts of civil society define the public interest differently. Several contributors disagreed with Mr. Kututwa's assertion that civil society is not democratic, stressing that leaders of civil society organizations do represent the membership of those organizations, and are democratic in that sense.

Session Three: NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

Chair: Dr. Stephen Gelb, South Africa

This Session reviewed and assessed the political components of NEPAD and in particular assessed whether the African peer review mechanism can enhance democratic consolidation in Africa.

Dr. Chris Landsberg, Director of the Centre for Policy Studies, argued that the simple answer is no, and a more nuance answer is that this question is based on the wrong premise. If the APRM is intended to help consolidate democracy in Africa than it is based on the assumption that democracy is already established. The APRM, the paper asserted, is not intended to promote democratic consolidation, if anything the APRM was seen as a socializing tool to encourage best practices and to reward good behavior. It is not intended to be a punitive tool or measure; what it should do then is to encourage, help nurture and promote the further democratization of the continent.

He further stated that the APRM has created false expectations. There is an expectation that the APRM will replace conditionality and that it will become the agency to whip deviant states into line. This is not so, as the paper contended the APRM is designed as a socializing instrument, one that would encourage states to learn from, emulate each others good conduct, best practices and democratic behavior. The paper gave a brief overview of the kind of political agenda currently

emerging from Africa. More recently, the presenter stated that the process of setting up the AU, establishment of NEPAD, the design of the peer review mechanism, restructuring process of SADC and ECOWAS are all attempts to break with the past; addressing the question of how Africans should be governed. He concluded by indicating that the Peer review Mechanism if properly handled and implemented can make important contributions in the area of Africa's governing elites, although it faces a number of risks at hand. On the one hand the presenter argued the APRM is seen as promising too much and on the other there is a real risk that some African leaders will see it as a legitimizing tool for all their old political and economic malpractices.

Dr Stephen Gelb, the Executive Director of the Edge Institute presented a paper on South Africa, Africa and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The paper argues that NEPAD, formerly known as the New African Initiative (NAI) can add most value in terms of enhancing prospects of development by focusing on multilateral governance processes. It represents an invaluable opportunity to civil society to enable it to contribute to the development trajectory. The paper indicated a number of reasons why NEPAD needed to focus on governance. These were that African states were weak and proved unable to implement development policies in the post colonial era. A number of challenges were pointed out by the presenter to explain why this may be the case for most African states. A number of problems with interstate relations were carried forward to the post colonial period which weakened the possibility of strong states emerging in Africa. These were further weakened by the policies and politics of Breton Woods' institutions. The presenter offered several recommendations/suggestions on how the APRM should be governed/instituted. The APRM's focus should not be on imposing conditionality, it should focus on government processes. It needs to involve institutions that encapsulate governance in society; institutions which enable transparency and accountability. He further pointed out that the APRM should be voluntary and not compulsory, but countries must be ready to pay a certain price for their involvement. This price could even be a partial cessation of sovereignty. He concluded by pointing to a number of challenges that NEPAD will face during its implementation. Firstly the presenter argued, that states in Africa are weak, and these are most likely to oppose NEPAD and its various quarters to promote good governance. This is a political conflict that will need to be addressed. Secondly there is the issue of competing priorities within NEPAD. The presenter emphasizes that the focus of NEPAD should be on good governance, although not all would agree. And lastly the G8 and the rest of the industrialized countries will need to play a crucial and ongoing role; however issues regarding coordination of aid, problems of aid delivery and debt relief processes will need to be addressed before their role can be determined.

In response to these papers the participants raised a number of questions and made some corresponding remarks to the issues raised in the presentations. A few questions were asked on whether there was anything comparable/similar to the APRM in Africa? A few participants remarked that they were uncertain if the APRM would demonstrate anything different to what is being understood now, they asked to know what the real incentive for undergoing the APRM was. Others also raised concerns on who owns NEPAD. There has been talk about African countries not fully subscribing to the principles of NEPAD.

Other contributors argued that the focus in NEPAD should be on political governance, and this happens to be the weakest area in NEPAD. The APRM does not provide space for civil society. The only chance NEPAD and the APRM had for being different from the past if they functioned outside the AU.

Some stated that it was important to revisit the thinking behind NEPAD. The pretension in something new lies in the fact that there is a new engagement between partners. There is a subtle shift in position. Also NEPAD is predicated on building comparative advantage; there are some fundamental issues that need to be resolved, such as there has to be an amount of civil authority, there must be interference from the civil society. African civil society must hold leadership accountable and the APRM must be made punitive.

The participants finally concluded their remarks by asking the presenters to enlighten them more on the external factors to the NEPAD process. It has been said that there is a lot of involvement of the G8 in NEPAD, who are constantly liaising with the NEPAD secretariat in South Africa. Some of the participants needed clarification on the relationship between NEPAD's framework and the World Bank vision; and the similarities that might exist.

Session 4: *ELECTORAL PRACTICE AND DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA*

Chair: Ms. Katy Diop, Senegal

Festus Okoye, presented a paper entitled "*Civil Society and Democratization in Africa: The Nigerian Experience*", in which he examines the development, role and limitations of Human Rights and Pro-democracy NGOs in Nigeria. He argued that the civil society, including labour movement and other professional association played a very critical role in bringing an end to military dictatorship in Nigeria. Although, most human rights and pro-democracy groups are structurally weak and lack the requisite capacity for deepening democratic governance, nevertheless, they continue to play a critical role in fostering democracy in Nigeria. The civil society groups through the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) formed a local election monitoring group to observe the election processes in Nigeria. TMG deployed a total of 10,000 monitors to observe the 2003 general election. It is critical that domestic observers defines clearly their own understanding of "free and fair elections," and develop a common set of criteria for assessing the outcome of elections.

Denis Kadima, presented a paper entitled "*Elections and Democracy in Africa: The Need for Common Standards for the African Peer Review Mechanism*". The paper descriptive in nature and highlights the problems facing electoral administration in Africa – structural and procedural and suggested a need for mainstreaming election norms and standards into the *Peer Review Mechanism* (APRM) as a tool for assessing electoral processes in Africa. The election norms and standards is an avenue through which civil society on the continent could participate in formulation and implementation of the APRM.

During the ensuing discussion participants expressed concerns over various issues related to the conduct of free and fair elections in Africa. Amongst are: voter apathy and appropriate level of voter turn out for elections; freedom of association; organizational weaknesses within political parties contesting election; need for political parties to abstain from elections that are considers unfair; role of security forces in elections; and assess and regular update voters roll. Participants further postulate the need for conceptual clarity on the dichotomy between rural-urban civil society in African society and ways of incorporating community based agencies through popularizing APRM as an entry strategy into NEPAD processes.

The presenters generally agreed with the concerns expressed by the participants. Festus Okoye however noted the need for civil society to engage security forces in dialogue and in wide spread civic education on their role in elections as agents of peace and stability. Voters roll need to regularly update because people die everyday and minors become adult. One effective

mechanism for cleaning voters roll is to have a national population bureau linked to electoral commission which would be responsible for issuing identity document and death certificate.

Tuesday 27th May 2003

Session 5: The Way Forward for African Civil Society

This session was divided into two commissions

Commission One: Identifying the Organizational and Networking needs of African Civil Society to engage in the APRM: Constraints and Strategies.

- Generate awareness consciousness
- Engage in ensuring publicity and information sharing between countries
- Generate report
- Identify NEPAD nodes in countries to be liaised with EISA in conjunction with the Initiative's objectives

Country visits: role of civil society in connection to country visits

- Lobby for the composition of the team
- Identify existing expertise
- Submit names of experts on the issues involved
- Begin preparations of involvement for civil society on the team
- Develop own report to assess new recommendations or if its in agreement with the government

Public release of APRM report:

- Develop Action plan for implementing report
- Copy and disseminate report, make it available
- Simplify, translate and open up debate for report at the grass root level
- Lobby for inclusion in national plans, to be relevant in the areas various governments are interested in

Having a line of communication and establishing links among civil society is usually a problem, therefore the following areas are needed:

- Establish focus person/groups
- EISA to plan to reach 2/3 umbrella organizations in each country
- Create a data base for easy access

Constraints/Challenges

- Funding
- Skills
- Sustainability
- Governments' preparedness
- Language barriers
- Inclusivity of civil society organizations

Strategies envisaged

- Establish a programme to assess progress
- To be engaged in norms and standards of credible governance

Strategies to ensure the above

- Engage in research
- Network among ourselves
- Continuously train and retrain
- Engage in civic education
- Resource mobilizations
- Lobby to be heard
- Monitoring and evaluation: Continuously ask ourselves where we are; are we strategizing; are we on track?

Commission 2: Action Plans: participation of African Civil Society in the APRM **Explore the constraints and develop strategies**

The team approached the task by sharing country experiences and their understanding of these experiences. They appear to have some similarities and disparities of country engagement.

Common constraints:

- The origination of the model; it was crafted exclusive of civil society
- Different levels of understanding of NEPAD, fragmented at national and regional level
- Lack of funding
- Lack of understanding of NEPAD and APRM propositions
- Lack of coordination with regards to civil society
- Identified a need for a mechanism to filter through the different stages of how civil society can operate
- Civil society needs to define and clarify the areas where they can partnership

Strategies: turning problems into opportunities

- Establish a mechanism for coordination at the national, regional and continental level, to guide civil society to a common understanding
- Need a data base to inform civil society of who is doing what
- Need partnerships with national parliaments
- Work with existing structures such as SADC PF
- Address the relationship between foreign and domestic observers to establish a similar documenting framework
- Recognize the need for a forum coordinated by EISA to link up with NEPAD secretariat and to come up with a declaration
- Ensure different strategies to work towards empowering civil society at all levels
- Include marginalized groups; the notion of inclusivity should apply at all levels

Debate/discussions/recommendations on group plans:

- Use low cost activism to be able to promote NEPAD issues instead of expensive venues

- Caution should be taken on developing a declaration. This is quite an involved process. The root that participants can take is produce a press release and the coordinating institute can deal with developing it.
- If the next step is to have a forum there will be some practical hurdles. This suggests a new structure and presumes that participants have a mandate from their institutes
- To ensure effective coordination the civil society can identify NEPAD nodes for EISA to coordinate
- It might provide a challenge for a single track institute such as EISA to coordinate a multi track set of issues
- There's a need for cross fertilization/capacity sharing across regions. How can civil society cross fertilize. This should be an immediate aspect to look into.
- Without an elaborate structure there is a need for some sort of Forum, the only obstacle would be if individual members/participants have a mandate
- EISA to establish communication with the AU secretariat with a view of harmonization with different working groups. A provisional working group has been established from several meetings, the fact that participants from this meeting are not represented in this group requires some coordination with this provisional group.
- Both the NEPAD and the APRM reports are speaking of engaging civil society in the process. There is a risk of being co-opted and input not being taken seriously. Let the node therefore be formally communicated at the national level and be formally recognized. With this intervention/entry level participants and EISA can then assess the degree to which the governments are taking civil society seriously.
- In between declarations and press releases there should be a communiqué which expresses some of our concerns in advance to the AU conference in Maputo in July.
- A declaration requires a working group to agree on it, to proceed with it in view of the Maputo conference. This should be a shared responsibility between the working group and should be part of the lobbying process
- Coming up with a communiqué or declaration seems somewhat hasty. It is more important to look at the internal organization on how to continue with the work in a practical way. Need to seriously think about establishing a working group that will think about the next steps. Need to suggest a working group to be identified to work minimally until next steps can be determined
- Need to include a broader representation of marginalized groups and not maintain the status quo. Hence EISA is to remain the core coordinating institute but also agree on having a working group from different regions to work with EISA and to think on the next steps and issues

Next Steps:

- Share preliminary reports with in country civil society
- Take advantage of immediate opportunities i.e. AU meeting in Maputo
- Issue a communiqué to formalize the meeting
- Discuss the practicalities of disseminating the communiqué
- Work on the composition of the working group as well as the group that will be working on the communiqué

Communiqué members:

Khabele Matlosa
David Obot
Tim Hughes
Hajia Rekiya Enemona Momoh-Abaji
Mariem Shaba
Claude Kabemba

Working group members:

West Africa: Mr. K Guie (Cote D'Ivoire) and (Nigerian Woman)
East Africa: Felix Owuor Odhiambo (Kenya), Dr. Hassen Bulhan (Somaliland)
South Africa: Collins Magalasi/ Emmanuel Ted Nandolo (Malawi) and Ketlhomilwe Moletsane (Botswana)
Central Africa: Yves Choula (Cameroon) and Xavier Bahaya (DRC)

Claude Kabemba to lead the initiative