

Presentation by Chris Landberg from the Centre for Policy Studies

The presentation focused on possibilities for civil society participation in the AU, NePAD, and the APRM?

What is NEPAD: History, Objectives and Activities

- ♣ Fore-runner for both AU and APRM
- ♣ Aimed at facilitating and consolidating the economic liberation of a politically liberated Africa
- ♣ Promote partnership between African governments and other development stakeholders on one hand and between Africa and the outside world for purpose of development

Basic conditions for such a partnership:

- Africa should show a great political will to realize such partnership by promoting conducive conditions for:

- ♣ economic growth
- ♣ good governance,
- ♣ peace and security.

International community on the other hand should commit more to:

- ♣ Foreign aid, debt relief and debt cancellation.
- ♣ More specifically, the most developed (G8) countries should make an effort to open up their markets to African exports and review their subsidies to agricultural sector given the negative impact that this have on African agricultural productivity.
- ♣ Contribute financially, materially and in terms of human resources towards peace keeping initiatives in Africa

Consensus: In summary:

- ♣ All African countries need development: development is at the center of initiatives for peace and security, political stability and good governance.
- ♣ Therefore for such development to come about, there must be peace and security, political stability and good governance.
- ♣ Development is also the central objective in continental interventions like Nepad, APRM, AU, ECOWAS, SADC etc.

AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MACHANISM (APRM)

What is the APRM?

- ♣ It is not a punitive tool (with which member states punish each other for non-compliance)
- ♣ It is instead a voluntary mechanism aimed at promoting and encouraging member states to commit to good governance in their political, economic, corporate and development systems.

What does APRM mean for the civil society movement?

- ♣ It is an acknowledgement that regional and continental challenges such that CSO cannot afford not to engage with formations of influence on the continent, like Nepad, AU and APRM.

Goal of the APRM:

- To promote dialogue on development issues and facilitate the evaluation of national dialogue between civil society and governments.

What APRM does:

- ♣ It promotes the adoption of policies, standards and practices that will lead to political stability, economic growth, sustainable development and regional integration (i.e. it embraces a holistic approach to development).
- ♣ To achieve objectives of sustainable development and regional integration, APRM implements strategies like:
 - Poverty eradication
 - Gender equality
 - Decentralization of power (i.e. strengthening the provincial governments and municipalities given their proximity to the people)
 - Capacity enhancement for all stakeholders to (be able) to participate more meaningfully in development process
 - Promote broad-based economic empowerment
 - Promote environmental sustainability

APRM's perspective of good governance:

- "Well-functioning and accountable institution that is also regarded as legitimate, and in which all people participate in decision making that affects their lives on daily basis.
- Such a system is characterized by:
 - ♣ Rule of law,
 - ♣ Equality before the law
 - ♣ Freedom to join political parties or trade unions of ones choice
 - ♣ Participation of all people in free and fair elections
 - ♣ Political system that recognize and respect separation of powers (executive, legislature and the judiciary)" (UN/Kofi Annan's definition)

APRM Self Assessment will include (4 areas):

- ♣ Democracy and Political Governance
- ♣ Economic Governance and Management
- ♣ Corporate Governance (in civil and government circles)
- ♣ Social Issues e.g. management of HIV/Aids etc.

Stages in Self Assessment Process:

- ♣ Stage One: Self-assessment by individual government and CSO and reports thereof sent to Nepad Secretariat

- ♣ Stage Two: APRM committee then visits the country concerned to assess how stakeholders in that country (i.e. govt. and civil society) understand development with respect to the (4) identified areas.
- ♣ Stage Three: APRM committee then produces their own report based on their own observations as well as the contents of the national report compiled by the stakeholders.
- ♣ Stage Four
- ♣ Next the APRM committee report is then distributed amongst all its (23) member states that will review it and contribute with inputs, comments etc. and finally release a final report within six months period. The final report will highlight any limitations, inefficiencies, and bias against certain issues within the four areas of focus.

Conclusion

Implications of Peer Review Process for CSOs:

- There is no guarantee that governments neither can nor will take their civil society seriously but civil society can steer their governments into the right direction on the basis of the APRM committee report.
- Further the relatively well-off civil society organisations based in the urban cities could reach out to least resourced ones in the rural areas.