



every **voice** counts!



*My Voice Counts
and so does
Yours...*

*Speak Out!
For Rights &
Choice!*

History of the APRM

The origins of the APRM can be traced to the year 2001. In July of that year at the 37th Summit of the Organisation of African Unity (now the African Union) held in Lusaka, the Head of State and Government of the member states of the AU set out a new vision for the development of Africa, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

NEPAD's main objectives were outlined as:

- Eradicate Poverty
- Promote sustainable economic growth
- Help intergrate Africa into the global economy
- Promote gender equity and women's empowerment

In order to reach these objectives, good governance was identified as a fundamental requirement. On 8th July 2002, at the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, African leaders adopted the NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance.

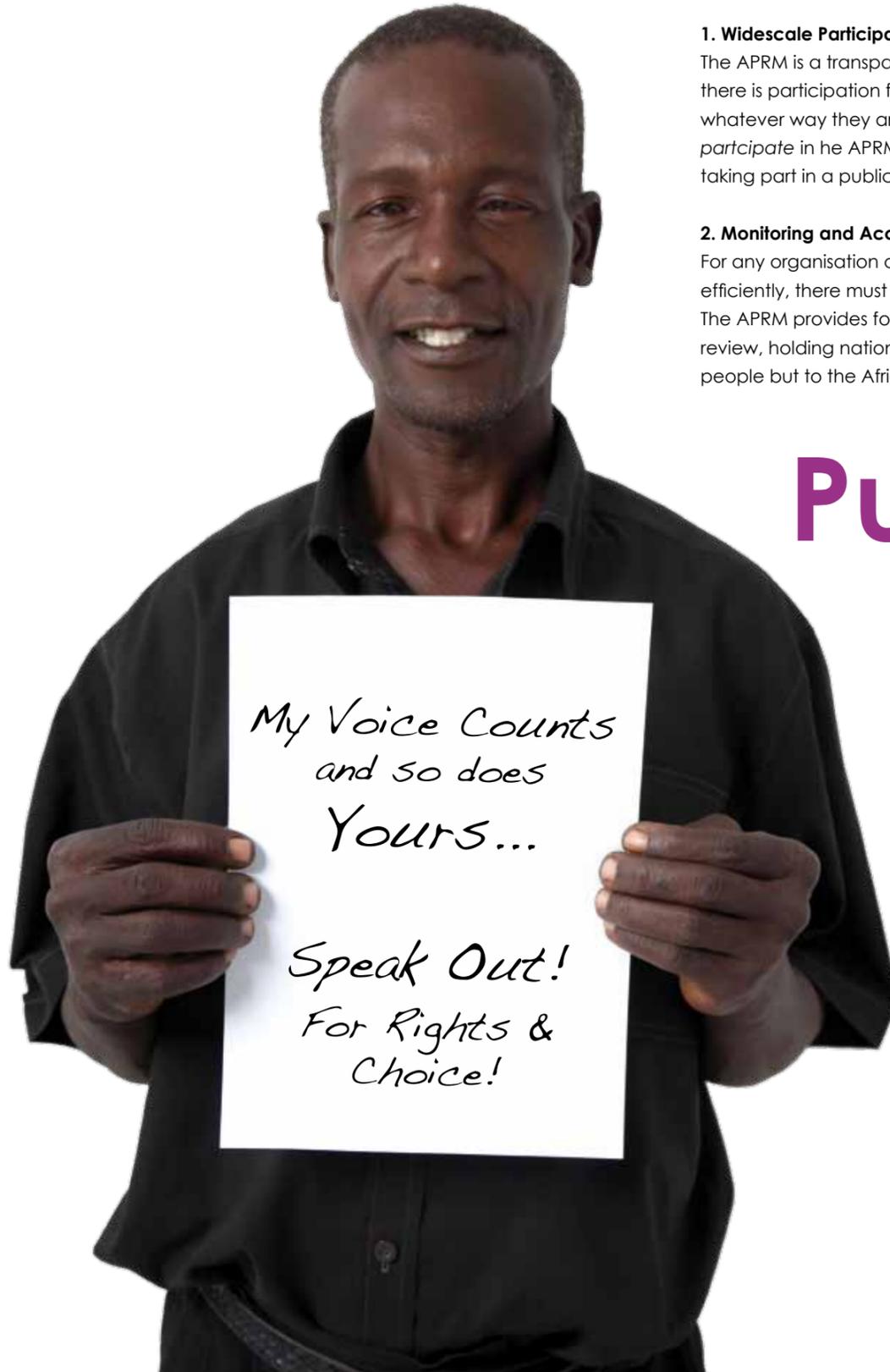
The NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance places emphasis on democracy, human rights, free, fair and regular elections, transparency and accountability in both public and private sector among others.

Article 28 of the Declaration provides:

'For the establishment of an African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) on the basis of voluntary accession. It is the task of the APRM to promote adherence to and fulfilment of the commitments contained in the Declaration.'

African Leaders also agreed that participation in the APRM would be voluntary and based on mutually agreed codes and standards of democracy, political, economic and corporate governance.

Zambia acceded to the APRM on 22nd January 2006 at the African Union Summit held in Khartoum, Sudan.



Benefits of the APRM

The APRM is a tool for ensuring good governance and has many benefits for Africa and for Zambia.

1. Widescale Participation in Governance

The APRM is a transparent tool and it can only work if there is participation from every concerned citizen in whatever way they are able. There are many ways to *participate* in the APRM such as getting information, taking part in a public hearing and so on.

2. Monitoring and Accountability:

For any organisation or country to run effectively and efficiently, there must be monitoring and accountability. The APRM provides for both self monitoring and peer review, holding nations accountable not only to the people but to the African continent as well.

3. Shared experiences and capacity building

The APRM encourages learning from peers, and capacity building where necessary. If the country self-assessment report has identified problems, in a country report, the APR Forum will suggest ways on how the problems can be handled. Also through country reports there is sharing of "best practices" so other countries can adopt policies that have worked in similar environments.

4. Plan of Action provides clear indicators

Having a Plan of Action which is developed during the APRM process means that there are clear and measurable outcomes. This will be a good tool for all stakeholders to ensure that governments are on track.

Purpose of the APRM

The African Peer Review Mechanism is an important undertaking for Africa and its people. Its main purpose is to bring about positive change by encouraging the adoption of policies, standards and practices that will bring political stability, economic growth and sustainable development. The APRM encourages Africa and Africans, to adopt a culture of accountability and provides a means of addressing issues that can effect good governance such as corruption and misplaced priorities.

The APRM is concerned with all areas of society and good governance, but in particular the following four areas:

1. Democracy and Good Political Governance
2. Economic Governance & Management
3. Corporate Governance
4. Socio-economic Development

Participation in the APRM is voluntary; a country must volunteer to be reviewed by signing a Memorandum of Understanding. In the APRM base documents this is termed 'Voluntary Accession'.

For the APRM to be effective, it requires the participation of all stakeholders in the country, including government, political parties, parliament, NGOs, private sector, academia, women's groups, trade unions and the community. This is because development of a country does not rest with the government alone; its citizens must actively participate to ensure the change they want to see.

A key benefit of the APRM is that it allows participating countries to not only take account of their own policies and practices, and monitor progress towards improvements but also to learn from other African countries that have successfully implemented policies that have driven their growth.

The APRM enhances Africa's ownership of its own development agenda and process.

frequently asked

QUESTIONS

What is the African Peer Review Mechanism [APRM]?

The APRM is a self monitoring initiative of the Heads of State of the AU. It is open to all member states of the AU who want to voluntarily conduct an assessment of their governance policies and practices with a view to making improvements in the gaps identified during the self assessment process. It allows participating member states of the AU to ensure that their policies and practices are in line with the political, economic, social and corporate governance values and standards agreed with the framework of NEPAD.

What is the purpose of the APRM?

The main purpose of the APRM is to encourage the adoption of policies, standards and practices that will support political stability, economic growth and sustainable and social development. The APRM promotes good governance by providing the means for addressing issues impacting on governance such as corruption and misplaced priorities. It allows participating countries to not only review their own policies and practices but also to learn from other countries, especially success stories on how best to move forward in solving governance related problems.

How will the APRM process avoid being manipulated?

The NGC, is an autonomous (that is independent from the government) body that is made up of many different people from all walks of life and so aims to be as representative as possible. Furthermore although government is given a chance to respond to the Country Self Assessment Report, the comments of government will not change the main report, but they will be added to the back of the report for transparency.

What is NEPAD?

NEPAD is a new vision for the development of the African continent. It was announced in Lusaka in July 2001 by the predecessor of the AU, the OAU.

Its main objectives are to:

- Eradicate Poverty
- Promote sustainable economic growth
- To help intergrate Africa into the global economy
- To promote gender equity and women's empowerment

Good governance is key to the achievement of these objectives and APRM is the vehicle for ensuring that good governance prevails on the continent.

How will these areas be measured?

The APRM relies on codes and standards that have been agreed upon by member states of the AU. These codes and standards come with detailed tools and methods for self monitoring- and provide *Indicators* (specific examples of how the items can be measured) Indicators are used as the means to determine whether the criteria, codes and standards have been met.

What are the principles of APRM?

The guiding principle of the APRM is that reviews should be technically competent, transparent, believable and free of any political manipulation.

How is the APRM conducted?

To begin, a country must voluntary agree to undergo the APRM. Zambia consented to this in January 2006. The government then must appoint a focal point for the APRM, in Zambia that is the Minister of Justice. After the APRM national structures have been put in place, a Country Support Mission (CSM) from the APRM continental secretariat will visit the country to advise on the philosophy, rules and processes of APRM as well as the participation of all stakeholders and provide support in all aspects of the national processes.

After this preparatory stage, there are five stages which follow:

Stage 1. Information gathering through national processes on the critical areas to be measured (political, economic, corporate governance and socio-economic development.) At this stage there is also the "Country Self Assessment", which is questionnaire based. The Country Self Assessment report will include a Plan of Action for the future. This information is fed back to the APRM Secretariat. The APRM Secretariat also prepares its own assessment, making up a background document. These two sources or information will serve as preparation for the Country Review Visit.

Stage 2. Country Review visit made by a Country Review Team that consists of experts from other African countries and institutions. Wide and varied consultations with government, political parties, parliamentaries, civil society (including media, trade unions, academia, business and professional bodies, women, youth, and rural communities) are held. This process clarifies and generates more information than at Stage 1.

Stage 3. The Country Review Team drafts a report on the information and activities of Stage 1 and 2, making reference to the Plan of Action. Discussions will be held with the government of the country under review, to check for accuracy and allow for any official responses to the report. These responses do not change the report but they will be added as additional information to the report. However, the government may ammend its Plan of Action at this stage, based on recommendations in the draft report.

Stage 4. The APRM secretariat submits the report to the APRM Forum of Heads of States and Governments. This forum allows for the peer review of the country's report. There is discussion of the report, and if necessary certain action can be taken. It is at this stage that any 'peer pressure' if necessary, will be applied. For instance if there are problems in the country under review, and it is willing to improve the situation, the countries in the APRM will provide whatever assistance is possible.

Stage 5. The report is formally and publicly made available at important continental and sub regional organisations of the reviewed country. After which the report is also available to all members of the public.

What is being reviewed in the APRM?

The APRM is interested in governance issues in all areas of society but focuses on four thematic areas namely:

1. Democracy and Good Political Governance:

This area is concerned with political systems, electoral processes and participation of people in a free and fair political environment. The constitution is also taken into account and it should reflect the democratic attitude.

2. Economic Governance and Management:

The APRM monitors public financial accountability, corruption in the public sector, regulatory frameworks and general financial transparency. This transparency is key in promoting economic development and reducing poverty.

3. Corporate Governance

Corporate governance refers to how corporations are run- these can be private or public corporations. It means ensuring that there is a balance between economic and social goals, and individual and community goals. Good corporate governance is transparent and provides for accountability to shareholders/stakeholders, employees, customers and communities while taking consideration of the physical environment.

4. Socio-economic Development

Good governance, democracy, peace and security are important to eradicating poverty. However the development of human and physical resources is also key. Every effort must be made to promote socio-economic development, which takes into account gender equality, human rights, availability of funds to the social sectors, and government, private sector and civil society working in partnership.

How do I participate in the APRM?

You can participate in the APRM in a number of ways.

The most important thing is first learning more about the APRM and sharing that information with friends, family, coworkers, church mates- everyone you come in to contact with! Once you are equipped with the knowledge, you can participate in more concrete ways.

During Stages 1 and 2 of the APRM process, the country self assessment is made widely available. Anyone can fill in this questionnaire, as best as they can and send it back to the APRM Secretariat. In this way your voice and your opinion is heard.

There are also formal consultations with government officials, parliamentarians, political parties, media, academia, trade unions, NGOs, community based organisations, women, youth and private sector.

Once the country report is made public, civil society will also have a key role in using this information to monitor government and keep it accountable based on the Plan of Action.

What are the types of review?

There are four types of reviews:

- a) There is a *base review* which is the first country review and it is carried out within 18 months of a country becoming a member of the APRM;
- b) There is a *periodic review* that takes place every two to four years;
- c) A member country can, for its own reason, *request for a review* that is not part of the periodically mandated reviews; and
- d) Early signs of impending political and economic *crisis* in a member country would also be sufficient for instituting a review.

Who does what in the APRM process?

APR Forum: This is the Committee of the Heads of State and Government of the countries taking part in the APRM. They can be thought of like the Board of Directors of a company; they have the highest decision-making authority, and have final say. The APR Forum also appoint the APR Panel, review the country reports and provide support or peer pressure to ensure that any problems in the country review are improved.

APR Panel: This is a panel of people that manage the operations of the APRM. They make recommendations of the APR Forum. The panel is made up of 7 respectable people who are committed to Africa's development. The panel members are nominated by the participating countries in the APRM and may serve for up to four years.

APR Secretariat: The secretariat provides all administrative support for the APRM, it is based in South Africa.

APR Country Review Team: These are appointed by the APR panel and only come in to play when there is a country review process. They are of varied backgrounds so that they will have a balanced and professional review process.

APR focal point: Every participating country puts in place a focal ministry or government office which plays an important role in communication and coordination between the APR Secretariat and the APR Panel. It also develops the self monitoring mechanisms and ensures that all stakeholders have access to the process.

National Governing Council(NGC): This is where the main implementation of the APRM at national level takes place. The NGC works with all stakeholders and members of the public and private sector, having consultations and discussions.

What happens after the review?

After the review, the country should implement its Plan of Action. The country will also have periodic reviews every two to four years.

Why Should I participate in the APRM?

The APRM provides you the opportunity to work with government to help improve our nation. It gives you the chance to talk about all the problems and challenges that you feel exist in the country. These issues can then be tabled in the Plan of Action, so in this way you are able to actively contribute to making a plan for Zambia.

The APRM process can only work if there is transparency and public participation, furthermore only you have your thoughts, opinions and creativity. Every voice counts!

What benefit is the APRM to Zambia?

The APRM provides a clear way of checking that we are on track with development and economic growth. At the same time, the APRM allows us to also learn from other countries that have had successes in other areas, so that we can see which "best practices" can be tried in Zambia.

The whole monitoring process will help promote democracy and lead to a culture of participatory governance, where we all get involved in shaping Zambia's future.

In addition, these monitoring systems, show that a country is serious and stable providing a good environment for investment and trade.



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*Speak Out!
For Spending
Where It
Matters Most!*

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is a tool for ensuring good governance and has many benefits for Africa and for Zambia. It is about governments and people working together to improve their countries. There are many ways to *participate* in the APRM.

Visit www.aprmzambia.org.zm for more information about the APRM in Zambia.