

ETHIOPIA AND THE APRM
A PATH TO NOWHERE?

A critical assessment

Tigist Fisseha and Medhane Tadesse

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Acronyms

AEUO	All Ethiopian Unity Organisation
AIMDG	African Institute of Management, Development and Governance
APR	African Peer Review
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
CEO	chief executive officer
CRM	country review mission
CRT	country review team
CSO	civil society organisation
CSAR	country self-assessment report
CSM	country support mission
CUDP	Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party
EHRCO	Ethiopian Human Rights Council
EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
FEACC	Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission
HSGIC	Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee
NEBE	National Electoral Board of Ethiopia
NGC	National Governing Council
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NPoA	national programme of action
OSCI	Objective, Standards, Criteria and Indicators
TPLF	Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front
TRI	technical research institute
UEDF	United Ethiopian Democratic Front

Overview

The Ethiopian APRM process, which has been ongoing since July 2007, took an important turn in January 2011 when the country review team's report and the plan of action were presented at the 14th session of the APR Forum of heads of state and government of participating countries following the completion of the country's self-assessment process. No details of the presentation and eventual discussion were made available to the media in Ethiopia except that the prime minister of Ethiopia responded to the report presented by Mr Akere Muna, the member of the Panel of Eminent Persons responsible for the Ethiopian process. As of the end of February, Ethiopia's review report was not yet made public.

This is a review of the APRM self-assessment process conducted in Ethiopia. The review identifies strengths and weaknesses of the process and examines the level of credibility and public participation. Through this evaluation, the report analyses the level of involvement of the various stakeholders in the implementation of the APRM and the circumstances under which the process was carried out. The report is specifically concerned with the nature, course and outcome of civil society engagement and the political and ideological imperatives behind it.

The review concludes that, while the Ethiopian government has shown support to the process, lent clear operational will, provided funding, and shown commitment and respect to the broader goals of NEPAD and the APRM, the process was not as empowering and as inclusive as it should have been. Above all, the whole APRM process was dominated by the executive, and thus any of the limitations uncovered by the review are likely to be alleviated and the suggestions most likely only endorsed at the will of the government.

The 23-person National Governing Council (NGC) that managed the process included a majority of non-governmental participants, but it was chaired by the Minister for Capacity Building, in whose ministry the NGC Secretariat was housed and whose adviser was the Secretariat CEO. Moreover, the non-governmental participants selected to take part in the NGC were clearly chosen for their likeliness to agree with government and their lack of capacity to challenge government decisions. Only those opposition parties represented in parliament were permitted to be members, with their four representatives creating the only limited independent voices. Stakeholder participation in the APRM process beyond the NGC was also limited, partly because of the strict controls on independent civil society in Ethiopia, and partly because of a failure of those groups that do exist to take the opportunities offered by the self-assessment process and the visits of the continental APRM mechanisms. Access to information about the APRM review in Ethiopia was and remains a huge challenge for those not directly engaged with the process. Finally, the country self-assessment report, which is not formally available, failed to address many of the critical issues facing the country in terms of democratisation.

In the preparation of this review, relevant documents defining the content and procedural aspects of the APRM both in the continental and Ethiopian prospects are analysed. In addition, members of the NGC and different officials who serve in offices with interests in this issue were interviewed in order to explore what the practical aspects of the Ethiopian APRM process looks like. But data collection was very challenging as the majority of those who know about the process were not cooperative, while others were not particularly willing to provide information at all. Many also asked not to be identified.

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This perhaps shows the level of lack of transparency and the magnitude of government monopoly of the process. The government, in order to be practical about the whole objective of the APRM process, has to work to effectively engage stakeholders.

Access to information about the APRM must be improved not only at national but also at continental level. The APRM Secretariat should have its own regularly updated website, with detailed progress reports in order for civil society and interested parties to gather relevant information in a timely manner. National APRM focal points should also provide much wider access to information about the self-assessment reports and the data collected to complete them.

In the official documents, the process sounds deceptively straightforward. However, the five stages include many processes that take an enormous amount of time in practice. They are too prolonged to be efficiently implemented and encourage governments to create excuses for failure and evasion rather than compliance. So far only a few countries have completed their reviews. The extraordinary magnitude of this undertaking, which intends to examine nearly the full range of national government operations, makes it an incredibly lengthy process. Unless the pace increases, the credibility of the entire exercise is likely to suffer. The APRM documents, therefore, have to reconsider revising the schedule allowed for the process and restrict the focus area of the review as well, allowing it to be a manageable process which would effectively evaluate the democratic and good governance endeavours of member states. In addition, the capacity and determination of states finish the process in less time has to increase tremendously.

Recommendations

To the Ethiopian government

- Consult, re-engage and recommit to allowing strong civil society participation in the future. The participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the APRM National Commission should not be restricted to representatives identified by the government only, but should include more independent organisations and think tanks.
- Now that Ethiopia's APRM report and national programme of action (NPoA) has been debated and approved by the APR Forum, the government, in collaboration with civil society, should organise a national awareness and popularisation campaign on NEPAD and the APRM, and galvanise public opinion on the implementation of the NPoA.

- Provide adequate and timely information about the APRM process and implementation of the NPoA. Update the official website to include relevant documents, including the self-assessment reports and the data collected to complete them, APR Forum communiqués and detailed progress reports.

To Ethiopian civil society organisations

- It is critical that CSOs in Ethiopia do not continue to miss the opportunities the APRM process provides to make the government accountable. CSOs should set up structures to monitor the implementation of the NPoA and adherence to the norms and standards of the APRM.
- An APRM focal point within civil society would be useful in this respect. The APRM focal point would coordinate civil society activities involving the APRM and interface with the government, APRM national bodies and continental structures.
- Open debate and request an update on the status of the country report.

The New Partnership For Africa's Development and the APRM

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a strategic framework setting out a 'vision for Africa's renewal'. Five heads of state initiated NEPAD – Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa – and its founding document was formally adopted by the 37th summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Lusaka, Zambia, July 2001. NEPAD is now a programme of the African Union (AU), successor to the OAU, though it has its own secretariat based in South Africa to coordinate and implement its programmes. Following many years of discussion on the need for greater integration of the secretariat and NEPAD programming in general into the AU processes and structures, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government decided in February 2010 to rename the NEPAD Secretariat the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, and provided for some other changes in its governance structures.

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

NEPAD is governed by a Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee (HSGOC; renamed from an 'implementation committee', HSGIC, in February 2010). The HSGOC is a sub-committee of the AU Assembly that provides political leadership and strategic guidance for NEPAD

programming. It comprises three states for each region of the African Union; the first chair was President Obasanjo of Nigeria; from 2007, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia held the role. The HSGOC reports to the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government. There is also a steering committee, comprising 20 AU member states, to oversee projects and programme development. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission exercises supervisory authority over the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency.

In July 2002, the Durban AU summit supplemented NEPAD with a Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. According to the declaration, states participating in NEPAD 'believe in just, honest, transparent, accountable and participatory government and probity in public life'. Accordingly, they 'undertake to work with renewed determination to enforce', among other things, the rule of law; the equality of all citizens before the law; individual and collective freedoms; the right to participate in free, credible and democratic political processes and adherence to the separation of powers, including protection for the independence of the judiciary and the effectiveness of parliaments.

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

In March 2003, the NEPAD HSGIC meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, adopted a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the APRM. This MoU effectively operates as a treaty, so countries

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that do not sign are not subject to review. The MoU entered into effect immediately in Abuja when six states agreed to be subject to its terms. As of the end of 2009, 30 countries had signed.¹ The March 2003 meeting also adopted a set of 'objectives, standards, criteria and indicators' for the APRM. The meeting agreed to the establishment of a secretariat for the APRM, also based in South Africa, and the appointment of a seven-person 'panel of eminent persons' to oversee the conduct of the APRM process and ensure its integrity.

The APRM Secretariat, functioning by late 2003, developed a questionnaire based on a wide range of African and international human rights treaties and standards to guide participating states' self-assessments of their compliance with the principles of NEPAD. Its questions are grouped under four broad thematic headings: democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance and socio-economic development. The questionnaire was formally adopted in February 2004 in Kigali, Rwanda, by the first meeting of the APR Forum (APRF), made up of representatives of the heads of state or government of all states participating in the APRM. At this point, the formal process of peer review was ready to start: the meeting identified the first four countries to undergo review as Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius and Rwanda. Since then, twelve APRM-acceding countries have completed their first reviews (in chronological order): Ghana (review carried out by the APRF in January 2006), Rwanda and Kenya (July 2006), South Africa, Algeria and Benin (January 2008), Uganda (June 2008), Nigeria and Burkina Faso (October 2008), Lesotho, Mali and Mozambique (June 2009).

Each country to be reviewed is assigned to one of the seven eminent persons, who consider and review reports and make recommendations to the APR Forum. The first set of seven eminent persons, with the position of chairperson rotating among them, was made up of the following: Marie Angelique Savané (Senegal), Adebayo Adedeji (Nigeria); Bethuel Kiplagat (Kenya); Graça Machel (Mozambique); Mourad Medelci (Algeria, later replaced by Mohammed Séghir Babès); Dorothy Njeuma (Cameroon) and Chris Stals (South Africa). Some members of the panel stepped down during 2008 and 2009. At the meeting of the APR Forum in Addis Ababa in January 2010, four new members were appointed, and the new panel consisted of: Adebayo Adedeji (Nigeria, chair since 2007), Mohamed Babès (Algeria), Amos Sawyer (Liberia), Julienne Ondziel-Gnelenga (Democratic Republic

1 Algeria, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana and Kenya signed the MoU in March 2003; Cameroon, Gabon and Mali in April and May 2003; Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, Egypt and Benin in March 2004; Malawi, Lesotho, Tanzania, Angola and Sierra Leone in July 2004; Sudan and Zambia in January 2006; São Tomé and Príncipe in January 2007; Djibouti in July 2007; Mauritania in January 2008 (suspended from the APRM from August 2008 to July 2009 during its suspension from the AU following a coup); Togo in July 2008 and Cape Verde in July 2009.

of Congo), Siteke Mwale (Zambia), Akere Muna (Cameroon) and Domitilia Mukantangazwa (Rwanda, appointed in 2009). In July 2010, Professor Adedeji resigned from the panel and was replaced as chair by Mohammed Babès.

In order to implement the APRM's objectives and ensure that the self-assessment process is satisfactorily completed, the 'country guidelines' issued by the APRM Secretariat lay down that several institutions should be established at national level. Although these have varied somewhat in form, they have generally included:

- a **national APRM focal point**, ideally a person at ministerial level or in the office of the presidency, and reporting directly to the head of state;
- a **national commission or governing council**, the members of which should be diverse and representative of a wide range of interest groups, and which should be autonomous (though not all countries have fully respected this rule), responsible for overseeing the national self-assessment process and signing off on the documents produced;
- a **national APRM Secretariat**, to provide administrative and technical support to the national commission or governing council, ideally functioning independent of government and with control of its own budget;
- a number of **technical research institutions** which are given the responsibility to administer the APRM questionnaire and carry out background research.

The APRM documents identify five stages in the review process.

• **Stage One: Self-assessment**

A country support mission from the APRM Secretariat led by the assigned eminent person visits the participating country to ensure a common understanding of the rules, processes and principles of the APRM. The team liaises with the country focal point and organises working sessions and technical workshops with stakeholders. The eminent person signs a MoU with the government on modalities for the country review mission. The country then begins its self-assessment report, based on the APR questionnaire. The country is also expected to formulate a preliminary plan of action based on existing policies, programmes and projects. The self-assessment is supposed to involve the broad participation of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations as well as government ministries and departments.

• **Stage Two: Country review mission**

A country review team – also led by the eminent person and made up of representatives of the APRM Secretariat and of the APRM partner institutions, which include the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the

African Development Bank and other institutions – visits the country to carry out broad consultations, clarify any issues that may require discussion and help to build national consensus on a way forward.

- **Stage Three: Country review report and modification of plan of action**

The country review team drafts a report on the country, based on the information it has gathered during its review mission and on independent issues papers developed by the continental APRM Secretariat, and shares its findings with the government. Based on the self-assessment report and the country review team's report, the country finalises its plan of action outlining policies and practices for implementation.

- **Stage Four: Conduct of peer review**

In the fourth stage, the country review team's report and the plan of action are presented at the APRM Forum by the eminent person and the country's head of state or government for consideration by the other participating heads of state and government.

- **Stage Five: Publication of the report and programme of action**

In the final stage, after the report has been considered by the APR Forum, it is tabled at the AU Summit before being made public.

The time taken in completing all these steps has varied greatly: the shortest period was for South Africa, which took less than two years from national launch to final review. In contrast, Mauritius began its national self-assessment in 2004 and had yet to complete the process by mid-2010. If completed, the process leads to the production of three important documents:

- The '**country self-assessment report**' (CSAR) prepared by the country concerned on the basis of the APRM questionnaire. The final CSAR is only published at the discretion of the state concerned.
- The independent '**country review report**' (CRR), prepared by the APRM Secretariat and its technical partners, under the supervision of the APRM Panel, finalised following comments from the government and presented to the APR Forum by the eminent person assigned responsibility for the country review.
- The **national programme of action** (NPoA) to address the problems identified, initially prepared at country level based on the self-assessment report, and finalised on the basis of agreement between the APRM Panel and the government, and also presented to the APR Forum.

In addition, countries that have completed their reviews are then required to submit to the APRF annual **progress reports** on the implementation of their programmes of action.

Political context

With an estimated population of 82 million, Ethiopia is the second most populous state (after Nigeria) in sub-Saharan Africa, and easily the largest in the Horn of Africa. By African standards, Ethiopia remains a remarkably functional state. However, lack of democratic reform and the unending instability of the country's political life has undoubtedly affected how the country is governed. Most of Ethiopia's political problems derive from its peculiar past. The sole African state to defeat European colonialists and retain its independence through the century scramble for Africa, its people have an understandable pride in their history, but also lost out on the achievements of colonialism in terms of infrastructure, education, political reform and economic development. While most African colonial territories had at least a brief period of democratic politics during the run-up to independence in the 1950s and 1960s, Ethiopia remained under the anachronistic rule of emperor Haile Selassie until 1974. Upheavals in Ethiopia since 1974 swept away the relics of the 'feudal' regime, but further fomented conflicts in their turn. The Derg's answer to Ethiopia's problems was socialist centralisation.

In May 1991, the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) ousted the Derg and formed the government that remains in power twenty years later under the leadership of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The new EPRDF government restructured what was a highly centralised state into a federation whose self-administering constituent units are ethnic groups. This is reflected, among other things, in the distribution of administrative powers to the local level. The 1995 constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) entrenched basic individual and group rights. It devoted a whole chapter (chapter three) to human and democratic rights and hence laid the basis for the respect, protection and promotion of such rights. The

constitution also addresses problems related to ethno-cultural and religious diversity. The move to federalism resulted in the formation of nine states and two city administrations which have their own and residual powers given to them by the constitution (art. 51 and 52). The states have their own legislature, judiciary and executive and are thus responsible for state level governance responsibilities. However, the new-found political autonomy at the local level neither translated into the political stability of the country nor did it seriously advance much-needed governance agendas.

Judged by the record of imperial rule and the military junta, the ability of opposition parties to contest elections under the EPRDF might be regarded as progress. On the other hand, the EPRDF has made it abundantly clear that it is not prepared to accept any equal contest for popular support, and has consistently mobilised the resources of the state to ensure electoral victory for itself. As a result, the EPRDF has retained political dominance since the first election held in 1995. Ethiopia has posted remarkably good economic growth rates in recent years and has embarked upon ambitious investments in infrastructure and public services. The challenge is how this resolute focus on economic growth can be pursued hand in hand with democratic governance. Meanwhile, following the 2005 elections which seemed to promise a democratic opening but ended with the large scale detention of opposition activists, progress towards democracy remains under a cloud.

At the continental level, Prime Minister Meles has played an important role in the debates leading to the establishment of NEPAD and the APRM. As the host of the AU headquarters and many of its summits, as well as one of the most populous African countries, Ethiopia takes a close interest in developments in continental institutions and played a

supportive role in the early steps of establishing NEPAD.² After President Obasanjo of Nigeria stepped down as the chair of the NEPAD HSGOC and the APR Forum in 2007, his place was taken by Prime Minister Meles, who has since then played an important role in the management of the APRM meetings and continental institutions, as well as enjoying a close relationship with outgoing APRM Panel chair, Professor Adebayo Adedeji. In addition Ethiopia, under Prime Minister Meles, has been somewhat of a favourite of the donor community, enjoying a reputation for effective governance despite the democratic deficits that became especially apparent after the 2005 elections. During 2004 and 2005, Meles served as a member of the UK government's 'Commission for Africa' that examined governance and development issues in advance of the G8 meeting held in Gleneagles, Scotland in July 2005. The APRM review of Ethiopia therefore had particularly high expectations of Prime Minister Meles in terms of his personal engagement on the issues and with the institutions overseeing the efforts to improve governance in Africa as a whole.

2 See for example, 'Prime Minister Meles Zenawi Speaks on NEPAD', *The African Economist*, Vol. 4, No. 12 Publication: February 2003.

Implementation of the APRM process

Chronology of the APRM process

Ethiopia formally joined the APRM by signing the MoA that established the process at a continental level in March 2003. It was among the first countries to join the mechanism showing, in theory, the commitment of the country to bring about the culture of good political governance of a participatory kind, and its willingness to open its gates for public dialogue and peer review. The role of Ethiopia in supporting the APRM mechanism also revealed how much the country is eager to see the realisation of the aims of NEPAD in general and of the APRM process in particular.

Yet it took more than four years for the actual process of peer review to begin. This is of course one of the weaknesses of the mechanism in general but shows somehow the reluctance from the side of the Ethiopian government to begin to implement it in practice.

The first steps in implementing the APRM process in Ethiopia were taken around June 2007 with a sensitisation conference prepared by the government to give highlights about the APRM and enlighten stakeholders as to what was expected out of the process. According to the CEO of the national APRM Secretariat, government organs, civil society representatives, the private sector and different individuals were invited.³ Following this conference, the government began the task of organising the appropriate organs, namely the national focal point, the National Governing Council (NGC) and the APRM National Secretariat.

The commencement of the process was made official in January 2008, when the government proclaimed a Regulation to provide for the implementation of the APRM process in Ethiopia.⁴ The objective of the Regulation was 'to launch the African Peer Review Mechanism with a view to enhance and extend the already taken up socio-economic development as well as building good governance in Ethiopia'.⁵

The self-assessment process was completed during 2008 and the country self-assessment report submitted to the APRM Secretariat in Johannesburg in early 2009; the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons led the country review mission to Ethiopia in July 2009. A revised draft of the national programme of action to address the issues in the APRM review report was completed in early 2010. The peer review of Ethiopia was finally held on 29 January 2011 at the 14th session of the APR Forum.

3 Interview with Dr Liku Damtew, Chief Executive Officer of the National APRM Secretariat, 3 July 2010.

4 The Council of Ministers Regulation to Provide for the Implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism in Ethiopia. Regulation no. 142/2008, Negarit Gazeta, 14th Year No. 5, Addis Ababa.

5 Regulation, Art. 3

March 2003	Ethiopia formally acceded to the continental APRM by signing the memorandum of understanding establishing the mechanism.
June 2007	A sensitisation conference was prepared by the government to give highlights about the APRM process to different government organs, civil society representatives, the private sector and individuals.
January 2008	The government proclaimed a regulation to provide for the implementation of the APRM process (Reg. No 142/2008) and hence the process officially began. The Regulation established a focal point, a governing council and a secretariat of the governing council in order to manage and carry out the process.
June 2008	The National Governing Council commissioned the African Institute of Management, Development and Governance (AIMDG) to prepare the country self-assessment report (CSAR).
July (10–14) 2008	The APRM Panel fielded a country support mission to Ethiopia to officially launch the Ethiopian APRM review process. The delegation, which was led by Professor Adebayo Adedeji, chair of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons, comprised representatives from two strategic partner institutions of the APRM, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, as well as officials from the APRM Continental Secretariat.
December 2008	Draft CSAR was submitted to the NGC.
January 2009	Five validation conferences were prepared by the NGC in order to thoroughly discuss and review the CSAR. About 1 500 people were invited from government, civil society, political parties and the private sector. Four forums dwelled on the four thematic areas of the APRM, each for a day, and the fifth was held to summarise the aggregate outcomes of the four meetings.
February 2009	The CSAR was made final and submitted to the APRM Continental Secretariat.
July 2009	A country review mission (CRM) led by Professor Adebayo Adedeji came to make its own assessment of the Ethiopian record on governance. During its stay, the CRM met with the NGC, different government organs, civil societies, the private sector and different individuals.
March 2010	The draft NPoA prepared by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development was submitted to the NGC Secretariat.
April 2010	Revised draft NPoA was submitted to the NGC Secretariat.
August 2010	The NGC and its Secretariat closed their offices and their rights and obligations were transferred to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development by Regulation 188/2010.
January 2011	The government finalised its comments on the CRM's report. The government's comments were then centralised by the focal point and sent back to the panel for inclusion in the review report.
29 January 2011	The review report was considered at the 14th Forum of heads of state and government held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

National APRM coordinating structures

Regulation 142 of 2008 established an APRM focal point, a national governing council and a secretariat in order to manage and carry out the process. These structures were created in line with the recommendations of the continental APRM guidance documents.

The National APRM focal point

The APRM Country Guidelines stipulate that each participating country must have an APRM focal point to act as a liaison between the APRM Continental Secretariat and the national APR structures.⁶ In line with this, the regulation has provided that a focal point shall be assigned by the government to serve as a liaison in its relations between the continental counterparts of the process.⁷

The government in accordance with this assigned the economy advisor of the Prime Minister, Amb Neway Gebre Ab as a focal person and designated the office of the prime minister to serve as a secretariat to support him.

6 APRM Secretariat, 'Guidelines for countries to prepare for and to participate in the African Peer Review Mechanism', November 2003, par. 34–36.

7 Regulation, art. 4.

The APRM National Governing Council

The National Governing Council (NGC) was established by the same 2008 regulation (Regulation No. 142/2008) as the organ established to manage the national self-assessment process. It was given the power and duty to:

- Oversee whether the process of Ethiopian country self-assessment ensures independence, professionalism and credibility;
- Review the self-assessment reports submitted by the technical research institution;
- Arrange and facilitate the visits from assessment and support teams of the Panel of the APRM for assessing and counselling;
- Make all stakeholders aware of the APRM and to effect their full participation;
- Ensure accuracy, participation and coordination in the whole process of the APRM; and
- Identify key areas of concern on the self-assessment report and to prepare and submit the final report and the national plan of action to the government.⁸

The NGC has 23 members and is made up of representatives of the government, civil society, the private sector, opposition parties, women's groups and academia.⁹ Among the 23

8 Regulation, art. 7.

9 Regulation, art. 6(1).

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seats the government was given four seats, opposition political parties represented in parliament four seats and the rest were divided among other identified stakeholders (see Appendix I).¹⁰ The number of members of the NGC and its composition were proposed by the CEO of the NGC Secretariat.¹¹

The NGC chairperson was, in accordance with the Regulation, appointed by the government,¹² which selected Ato Tefera Walwa, Minister of Capacity Building, to fill this role. The chair of the NGC was the person who called most of the meetings to be held by the council, since it did not have a meeting schedule of its own.¹³ He was also charged with the power to appoint the technical research institution (TRI) for the compilation of the country self-assessment report.¹⁴

To conform to Ethiopia's federal form of government, local governing councils were established in each state along the structures of the NGC, to which they were accountable.

APRM Secretariat

The national APRM Secretariat was an organ established by the Regulation with its own juridical personality to carry out the daily functions of the NGC, with a chief executive officer (CEO) accountable to the chairperson of the Council. Dr Liku Damtew, adviser to the Minister of Capacity Building, was appointed as the CEO of the Secretariat, with an office in the Ministry of Capacity Building. This organ prepared plans of action and budgets; coordinated and executed programmes and day-to-day activities for the APRM process in Ethiopia; organised meetings; received visitors; kept documentation and undertook public relations activities on behalf of the NGC. It also carried out awareness creation and promotion activities to enhance public participation in the process of the APRM. In addition, it facilitated and supported the work of the technical research institution.

Technical research institution

In other countries conducting the country self-assessment process for the APRM, the research has been led by several different institutions, usually known as 'technical research institutes', each usually handling one of the four APRM thematic issues. In Ethiopia, the regulation establishing the APRM structures also determined that the country self-assessment report (CSAR) was to be done by an independent technical research institution.¹⁵ In line with this, the Governing Council commissioned the African Institute of Management, Development and Governance (AIMDG) to undertake the CSAR. In this it departed from usual practice by giving the task to one single body rather than several with varying expertise. AIMDG is a private research, consultancy and training institute.¹⁶ It is a networked organisation and has carried out governance assessments for different institutions.

Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

The NGC was dissolved following the completion of the country self-assessment. In fact no meetings were held after the CRM had come and gone. An appreciation letter announcing the cessation of the mission was sent to the members in June 2010, and the office of the NGC Secretariat closed its office and stopped activities in the same month.¹⁷ The regulation establishing the national offices (Regulation No. 142/2008) was formally repealed in August 2010 by Regulation No. 188/2010 of 13 August 2010, which formally dissolved the offices and transferred the rights and obligations of the Secretariat of the National Governing Council to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

Funding the process

The Ethiopian APRM process was wholly funded by the Ethiopian government. A 20 million Birr (US\$ 1.65 million) budget was developed and made available.¹⁸ From a financial point of view no problem of any kind was faced.

The government's funding of the process on its own shows its readiness to make the process simple and rapid. This goes with the initial intentions of the APRM base document which recommends that the APRM process be fully funded by participating countries who then assume full ownership of

10 Opposition political parties (4 seats), religious institutions (4 seats), women's associations (3 seats), Addis Ababa University (1 seat), university students (1 seat), Chamber of Commerce (1 seat), teachers' associations (1 seat), attorneys' associations (1 seat), medical professionals associations (1 seat), developing regions (1 seat) and labour associations (1 seat).

11 Interview with Dr Liku Damtew, CEO NGC Secretariat.

12 Regulation, art. 6(2).

13 Interview with Prof. Beyene Petros, chairman of the United Ethiopian Democratic Front (UEDF) and member of the NGC, 8 August 2010. (The UEDF currently works in coalition with other political parties and is no longer addressed as UEDF). The Regulation sets out that the NGC shall meet as frequently as the conducting of its business so requires (art. 8(1)).

14 Regulation, art. 9(1 & 3).

15 Regulation, art. 11.

16 *African Peer Review Mechanism: Ethiopia Country Self-Assessment Report*, African Institute of Management, Development and Governance, February 2009 (unpublished), p.3 (thereafter referred to as 'CSAR').

17 Dr Liku Damtew.

18 Dr Liku Damtew.

the process which avoids complications that might arise due to donor funding. The action of the Ethiopian government is thus substantial for it helps secure the ownership of the process for itself. When examining the experience of other countries which have gone through the peer review process, it is common to find that the funding was not originated by the governments themselves but through gathered funds from different kinds of international and national partners.¹⁹ The extent to which external funding influences the APRM process is not clear, but the spirit of the APRM and commitment of countries towards it does not back such an arrangement.

Country support mission

The APRM Panel fielded a country support mission to Ethiopia from 10–14 July 2008 to officially launch the Ethiopian APRM review process. The delegation, which was led by Professor Adebayo Adedeji, chairperson of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons and lead panellist for the Ethiopian review process, comprised representatives from two strategic partner institutions of the APRM, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank, as well as officials from the APRM Continental Secretariat.²⁰

By the time the support mission had come, the government had already established the appropriate organs to perform the self-assessment process: the national focal point, the National Governing Council (NGC), the Secretariat and the technical research institute. In the course of the mission, the team interacted with members of the NGC, state and non-state actors and the proposed technical research institution to undertake the self-assessment process. The team also visited Bahar-Dar, the capital of Amhara Regional State, where it met with diverse stakeholders.

In line with APRM procedures, the task of the mission was to assess Ethiopia's readiness to undertake the review and offer technical assistance. If the support mission determined that preparations were in place, Professor Adedeji would sign a MoU with the government of Ethiopia which would commit the government to producing its self-assessment report within the next nine months.

19 This was true for instance in Kenya and Benin. Steve Ouma Akoth, *The APRM process in Kenya: A pathway to a new state?* Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa (OSIEA), Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AfriMAP), March 2007, p.14; Gilles Badet, *Benin and the African Peer Review Mechanism: Consolidating Democratic Achievements*, Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), AfriMAP, July 2008, p.19.

20 The composition of the team was as follows. APRM Panel: Professor Adebayo Adedeji; APRM Secretariat: Dr Afeikhena Jerome and Mrs Eunice Kmwendo-Chintedza; UNECA: Professor Okey Onyejekwe, Dr Kojo Busia, Dr Ateem Eltigani, Dr Said Adejumbi and Ms Emelang Leteane; African Development Bank: Mr Lamin Manneh. See Appendix II.

As per the perception of the CSM, Ethiopia had demonstrated its readiness to commence the self-assessment process by adopting the regulation establishing the framework for the implementation of the APRM in Ethiopia, designating the prime minister's office as the focal point, establishing the NGC and National Secretariat and appointing a technical research institution. The team also affirmed that the government of Ethiopia had made adequate budgetary provisions for the national process. These developments were considered to have fully symbolised the commitment of the country to the process. Accordingly, and in line with the pattern in other countries, a 'Memorandum of Understanding on the Technical Assessment and the country review mission to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia' was signed by H/E Meles Zenawi, prime minister of Ethiopia and Professor Adebayo Adedeji on behalf of the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons. This document would guide the terms on which the APRM would be completed in Ethiopia (see Appendix II).²¹

The delegation also recommended to the Ethiopian authorities the need to examine the feasibility of widening the membership of the NGC to include more women and other stakeholder groups such as the physically challenged.

The self-assessment process

The APRM country self-assessment review was guided by the assessment framework of the APRM self-assessment questionnaire. Its objectives were to: review the state of governance in the country; identify the strength, weaknesses and institutional gaps in the area of governance and develop a preliminary action plan that will address the identified gaps.²² According to the CEO of the national APRM Secretariat, the AIMDG was given only four months to deliver the CSAR as of June 2008 when it was commissioned by the NGC to undertake the country self-assessment review.

The AIMDG developed instruments adapted to the Ethiopian context and, for this purpose, modified and domesticated the official APRM questionnaire to be used in conducting the household and expert opinion surveys. The methods used to generate information for the study included: desk research, interviews with key informants, a household survey, an expert opinion survey, *wereda*²³ consultation forums and focus group

21 NEPAD/APRM, Communiqué issued on the APRM Support Mission to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 10–14 July 2008.

22 CSAR, p.3.

23 *Wereda* is an administrative division of Ethiopia equivalent to a district, managed by a local government. *Weredas* are composed of several *kebeles*, or vicinity associations, which are the smallest unit of local government in Ethiopia. *Weredas* collected characteristically form zones, which in turn form a *killil* (regional administration). Some *weredas* are not part of a zone, and are called special *weredas*, which function as autonomous entities.

discussions.²⁴ Unlike the case in several other countries, there was no general invitation to make submissions.

The desk research collected secondary data from policy documents and other publications related to the core thematic areas. The desk research had the objective of reviewing the findings of studies by government, NGOs, private consulting firms and research institutions on different aspects of governance in the country.

The expert opinion survey was conducted in the capital cities of the nine regional states and in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa city administrations. It involved about 400 individuals representing a cross section of society and persons considered to be well informed on governance issues in the country, including retired diplomats and members of civil society organisations. Certain characteristics such as age; social status; educational level and field of training; interest in the country's affairs; membership of political parties and government; citizenship and residence; balanced ethnic, gender, religious, physical challenges and regional representation were considered in choosing the persons for the survey. An effort was made to organise workshops and invite informants to be briefed about the purpose of the project and how to complete the questionnaires.

The public consultations were carried out in 33 *weredas* selected from all regional states and the two city administrations. In each case they involved public conferences with 50 persons invited from the *wereda*: 60% farmers and 40% residents from the surrounding urban areas. All of the regional states except Afar organised regional governing councils and conferences to inform the public of the work that was taking place and why. The household sample survey employed statistical techniques to select 4 620 households to gather primary data and to provide national estimates. This was designed to capture the perceptions of people at grassroots level.

The draft CSAR was submitted to the NGC in late 2008. The CEO of the APRM Secretariat reported that there were over a hundred workshops and five validation conferences held all over the country in January 2009 to discuss the draft CSAR. He estimated that about 1 500 participants were invited to take part, including government, civil society, political parties and the private sector. NGOs like the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) and the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) that are known to be prominent in human rights advocacy joined some of the conferences. Participants in the validation conferences, for example the 2007 sensitisation conference, were convened upon invitation of the NGC Secretariat and were not open to all who wished

to participate.²⁵ Four of these forums dwelled on the four thematic areas of the APRM, each for a day and the fifth was held to summarise the aggregate outcomes of the four meetings.

The CSAR was said to have been revised incorporating some of the comments rendered during the conferences. Yet it is apparent that no major changes were made. The CSAR was finalised for submission to the continental APRM Secretariat in February 2009. It was unanimously adopted by the NGC with only one vote against it by the representative of the United Ethiopian Democratic Front (UEDF).

Unlike the case in other countries, however, the draft national programme of action was only submitted at a later date, following the visit of the country review mission, and was prepared by the government without the participation of the NGC.

Country review mission

Subsequent to the submission of the CSAR, Professor Adebayo Adedeji, chair of the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons, led the country review mission (CRM) that visited Ethiopia in July 2009 to make its own assessment and conducted its own research on Ethiopian governance.

With the help of the issues paper prepared by the continental APRM Secretariat and its technical partners and the country's own self-assessment report, the team is supposed to assess the integrity of the country self-assessment process. They then conduct further research and interviews on key governance issues as well as the adequacy of the items included in the draft programme of action in addressing gaps in governance. Following the CRM, the review team compiles a draft country review report based on the mission, the self-assessment, draft national program of action and background research. In principle, this report should be sent back to the Ethiopian government for comment and for it to make changes to its programme of action in light of the report's recommendations. The government's comments are appended to the final country review report, but it has no right to amend the text.

According to government officials, the government was working on the document, mainly commenting upon the report of the continental bodies, in the first week of January. The government's comments were then centralised by the focal point and sent back to the panel for inclusion in the review report. The review report was considered at the 14th Forum of heads of state and government held in Addis Ababa on 29 January 2011.²⁶

²⁴ Information on the conduct of the self-assessment research methodology taken from the CSAR, p 6.

²⁵ Dr Liku Damtew.

²⁶ Interviews with officials at the Ministry of Foreign Economic Cooperation, February 2011.

The national programme of action

In Ethiopia, the TRI was only commissioned to work on the self-assessment report and not the NPoA, while the NGC did not propose any other mechanism to work on the NPoA. Instead, the MoFED was assigned to design the action plan. Hence, in the business of designing the NPoA, participation was not even anticipated. Government departments (the ministries and some institutions like the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, the Ombudsman and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission) who do work related to the four thematic areas were told to share their own plans of action for the coming years.²⁷ MoFED then assessed the contents of the action plans and compiled them.

The NPoA was designed just like another strategy that the government makes and pursues. The main emphasis was to ensure conformity with other existing reform programmes, such as the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs). The NPoA was thus not a product of national deliberation, but was seen as just another government programme. Participation of CSOs, political parties and other stakeholders was not sought because it is believed that 'such institutions are not plan makers and implementers: it is the government who is supposed to make its own plans and hence be accountable to it'.²⁸

The draft NPoA was only first submitted to the NGC Secretariat in March 2010 and a revised draft in April 2010. It was subsequently submitted to the continental APRM structures in May 2010. The NPoA was never debated by the NGC.²⁹

27 For instance the Institution of the Ombudsman gave its NPoA for the years 2009-2025. But the NPoA was incomplete in such a way that it didn't indicate its budget estimate or the mechanisms it intends to follow to reach its desired goals.

28 Interviews with Ato Tamiru Terefe, expert at MoFED responsible for the preparation of the NPoA.

29 Prof. Beyene Petros. According to Ato Tamiru Terefe, neither the NGC nor any party other than the government can have a say in the content of the NPoA.

Assessment of the Ethiopian APRM process

The credibility, representativeness and competence of the NGC

According to the guidelines established for the APRM process at continental level, each national governing council (NGC) has the responsibility to watch over the independence and credibility of the process as well as to raise awareness and ensure participation of all stakeholders. It also has the duty to review the self-assessment report. The tasks are broad and require participants to have expertise in the contents of the APRM's documents and the aim and general intent of the mechanism, as well as good administrative capacity.

Unfortunately, the Ethiopian NGC was merely a nominal entity, and its functional activities were controlled by its chair and the Secretariat.³⁰ Also, it was determined beforehand in the Regulation establishing the APRM structures in Ethiopia that the chair of the NGC would be appointed by and come from the government. The NGC was usually engaged in the discussion of budget proposals to be submitted to the government for the completion of the process.³¹ In practice, the chair of the NGC convened its meetings, while the NGC Secretariat, located in the chairperson's office at the Ministry of Capacity Building, carried out the majority of the day-to-day work of the NGC in terms of preparing its budgets and executing the work required. It was thus the NGC chairman and the CEO of the Secretariat that had control, in practice, over the overall activities of the NGC.

The composition of the NGC also raised doubts as to its independence and subsequent credibility. The number of seats in the NGC, their distribution among stakeholders and the decision of who should take part in the process was totally

determined by the government. Although only four of the 23 NGC seats were given to government representatives, the government had given itself the authority to appoint which organisations could send members to the NGC.

Independent non-governmental organisations and other important stakeholders, including representatives of the media, children, people living with HIV/Aids, persons with disabilities and so on were not properly represented in the NGC. Opposition political parties other than those who were represented in parliament were not included in the APRM process and were not given any place at the NGC.³² Moreover, the government obviously had put its heavy hand upon the selection of the 'key stakeholders' that were represented.

For example, women's associations were represented by three seats. Yet, the selections were made from women's associations of the regional states and the two city administrations, which are established by the will of the government. The range of selection should have been wider and inclusive of other representative associations or networks working in the area of gender. Emphasis should have been given more to who could best represent the issues of women, rather than just assigning seats to members. Similarly, some of the professional associations represented, for instance the teachers' and lawyers' associations, are the ones that had been put in place by the government after the annulment of the former associations that were well accepted among their members. Hence, one may say that the government had selected representatives of associations that speak its own language. The APRM country support mission recommended

30 Prof. Beyene Petros.

31 Ibid.

32 Interview with Dr Tadios Bogale, vice chairman of the All Ethiopian Unity Organisation (AEUO). The party has been active since the 1990s in the formulation and perusal of different national, political and democratic agendas, but when it came to the APRM their engagement was non-existent.

during its visit that the authorities should 'examine the feasibility of widening the membership of the Governing Council to include more women and other stakeholders such as the physically challenged'.³³ However, in order to address this point, the government simply substituted one of its members in the NGC with a visually impaired official, rather than inviting a representative of a disability group to participate.

The APRM process is a very big project. It requires an overall understanding of the main thematic areas of the mechanism, namely of democracy and political governance; economic management and governance; corporate governance and socio-economic development, hence covering almost all aspects of governance activities. Yet, the expertise of the NGC in the areas was questionable, and there was a clear knowledge disparity among the members.³⁴ In particular, the representatives of the women's associations drawn from Addis Ababa, Amhara and Benishangul Gumuz, encountered difficulties in effectively participating in discussions on national governance and management issues. They had little understanding of English, which limited them from addressing the issues that they wished to communicate during deliberations with the CRM. While this should not have excluded them from participation in itself, the NGC did not facilitate interpretation at meetings and translation of documents.

For the question: how about stakeholders like NGOs representing or working with children, ethnic minorities, the urban poor, etc? The answer of the CEO of the Secretariat of the NGC was 'these are not stakeholders but are persons with special needs'. He further affirmed that the combination of the NGC members was inclusive of all interested parties. To support his argument, he stated that the interests of children were represented by the women's representatives for their interests go together. He even boldly stated that disabled persons do not have a stake in the process and that the decision to include a physically challenged person was made only to satisfy the CSM. Yet he stated that in the Governing Council of Regional State of Tigray, disabled persons were given a seat for there are numerous veterans residing in the region. The CEO stressed that in particular NGOs were not stakeholders. Any possible stake that could be raised by such organisations was represented.³⁵

Stakeholder participation beyond the NGC

The overarching goal of the APRM is for all participating countries to accelerate their progress towards adopting and implementing the priorities of NEPAD and other AU standards and programmes, achieving the mutually agreed objectives and compliance with best practice in respect to the areas of governance and development. This can only be achieved through the sustained efforts of the country itself, involving all stakeholders. It requires that each country carefully develops a Programme of Action with time-bound objectives linked to national budgets to guide all stakeholders in the actions required by all – government, private sector and civil society – to achieve the country's vision.³⁶

The aim of the NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance is to promote human rights and to facilitate the development of vibrant civil society organisations (CSOs), including strengthening human rights institutions at the national, sub-national and regional levels (par.15). In accordance with this endeavour, the APRM has, from the outset, systematically set aside a role for different kinds of stakeholders including civil society in the process of generating and monitoring governance standards and policies. Thus, the APRM Country Guidelines state that 'organisation of public participation in the APRM process is in itself a central aspect of enhancing the state of governance and socio-economic development in the participating country. Such interactions can build trust, establish and clarify mechanisms for ongoing engagement and empowerment of stakeholders'.³⁷ The APRM has in this way been deliberately designed as a participatory and consultative process, allowing the broadest range of stakeholders to give their perspectives, express their concerns and frustrations and make suggestions for reforms to improve governance in their countries.

The priority in all aspects of the process, including country visits, is to carry out the widest possible consultation. The main purpose of the country review mission is to gather different stakeholder perspectives on governance.³⁸ If it is effectively put into action, the APRM can be far more important than just the review process. It can help change the way governance is practised in Africa. Yet this activity demands a participatory set up, not a restrictive one. Unfortunately, the Ethiopian APRM process was not participatory in this way. CSO representation was inadequate and there was and is poor public awareness about the process. Stakeholders outside the government might well have thought that the

33 Communiqué issued at the end of the APRM Support Mission, 23 June 2008, final paragraph.

34 Prof. Beyene Petros. This view was also shared by Dr Liku Damtew.

35 Dr Liku Damtew.

36 Objectives, Standards, Criteria and Indicators for the APRM, NEPAD/HSGIC-03-2003/APRM/Guideline/OSCI, March 2003, par. 13.

37 APRM Secretariat, 'Guidelines for countries to prepare for and to participate in the African Peer Review Mechanism', November 2003, par. 36.

38 Guidelines, par. 22; APRM base document, par. 19.

government was intent on controlling the whole process. The government will obviously be concerned with the content of assessment reports, since the influence of negative reports might impact on aid and investment, although at the same time it still attempts to make the process seem transparent, fair and free of political manipulation.

Civil society participation in the APRM process in Ethiopia was, overall, both belated and insufficient. This is both technical and political. It has to do with the nature of the political process, the scope of the political space and the health of civil society organisations. Civil society is still weak and it faces enormous weaknesses, blockages and constraints to engage in governance issues. There are few independent organisations dealing with governance and security matters, since most tend to focus much more narrowly on politically less sensitive issues (such as health) to the exclusion of governance and human rights. This narrow focus is a result of a lack of political space, but it is also a manifestation of a bigger problem of definition and conceptualisation.

The Ethiopian government is generally sceptical about the role of civil society in matters of national political life. Despite some genuine attempts at opening up the space for CSO activism in the post-1991 period, the legacies of militarisation and revolutionary war have been difficult to shake off. The government views civil society organisations with a great deal of suspicion, particularly if they are publicly critical, because independent CSOs that receive foreign funding are perceived to be promoting donor agendas. This is compounded by the financial aspect of the problem. The EPRDF-led government tends to perceive autonomous CSOs as a challenge to its sources of foreign funding and political control. This is crucial in terms of understanding the underpinnings of low-level CSO participation in governance issues in general and the APRM process in particular. The necessary political space for civil society engagement is lacking.

The most obvious evidence of the negative attitude of the government to civil society is the 2009 proclamation that provides stringent requirements for registration of independent organisations.³⁹ According to the new law, organisations that receive over 10% of their income from external sources cannot be registered as Ethiopian entities and are therefore denied a legal identity. Hence, the activities of most Ethiopian CSOs that have been making significant contributions to the development and democratisation processes in the country through utilising funds secured from external sources are limited. The proclamation has accorded enormous power to the Charities and Societies Agency that enables it to intrude into the internal affairs of the organisations, putting at risk their organisational independence and their very survival.

39 Proclamation to Provide for the Registration and Regulation of Charities and Societies, No 621/2009.

These local organisations are also limited from having the right of appeal to the courts. The proclamation effectively violates the constitutional right to organise. The law came into effect in February 2010 and its ramifications are yet to be documented and analysed.

The NGO Law is a major challenge for the review and implementation of the APRM process in Ethiopia. Many CSOs have been forced to change their mandates, names, focus and scope. All have been instructed to register themselves as national (rather than international) entities and as such they are not allowed to secure more than 10% of their budget from outside of Ethiopia and at the same time engage on governance issues. As a result, many of them have reduced their scope and gravitated towards less politically sensitive issues such as access to economic benefits, children's rights, HIV/Aids and free legal assistance for poor women on issues related to divorce and inheritance. The few CSOs engaged in less 'safe' governance issues, related to say access to justice,⁴⁰ suffer from a lack of capacity and access to information and are therefore unable to provide analysis or inform the public in broader processes and policy development on governance issues. There is also a lack of coordination and networking among governance-related CSOs.

In general, the self-assessment process was relatively rushed and there was not enough time for CSOs to develop projects and mobilise the kind of financial support they would have needed to campaign on APRM issues. Moreover, although some of the more 'challenging' civil society groups were invited to the validation conferences at which the draft CSAR was discussed, the non-governmental Ethiopian Human Rights Council commented that they were not provided with the draft CSAR in advance or at the meeting and were not informed of the basic agendas, hence they were not able to participate effectively.⁴¹ In the case of the preparation of the NPoA, there was no wider debate outside the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development who prepared the document. Even the NGC was excluded.

What one can deduce from this situation is that the whole APR process was dominated by government even though government was not supposed to be driving a programme in which it is itself being evaluated. The novelty of the APRM is that the African leaders are subject to the scrutiny of their peers – both other heads of state and their own people. The real revolution lies in the fact that the public gets the chance to participate in evaluating governance through engagement in dialogues, and that leaders must consider their feedback. If this is manipulated by governments, the whole essence

40 These include the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) and the Ethiopian Bar Association (EBA).

41 Interview with Dr Tesfaye Assefa, former deputy board manager of the EHRCO.

is undermined. This is what has been done in Ethiopia's case, against the assurance of the Ethiopian government that the APRM process would be credible and free of political manipulation.

The whole process seemed like a government project carried out by the Ministry of Capacity Building – whose minister was chair of the NGC, the minister's adviser the CEO of the Secretariat and in whose buildings the office of the NGC and its Secretariat were located – rather than a participatory public dialogue. On the other hand, it seems that CSOs, NGOs and other stakeholders were also slow in understanding the opportunities offered by the APRM, and their participation remained mostly passive. For instance, the country support mission and country review mission created opportunities to meet with civil society organisations to discuss the concerns, issues and suggestions of these important stakeholders in the preparations for self-assessment. During the mission it was possible for the denied NGOs and other civil society stakeholders to engage directly with the APRM Secretariat and APRM Panel staff who are part of the mission and have their voices heard by these key persons. Of course, the invitation of the CSOs and stakeholders to such meetings had been vetted by the government. However, according to the CEO of the NGC Secretariat, no shadow reports or commentaries of any sort were received from NGOs and the like regarding issues omitted, neglected or that should have had more attention in the CSAR.⁴²

In addition to the poor performance of the NGOs and CSOs, the Ethiopian media did not do a satisfactory job of putting the APRM on the agenda. Much of the coverage did not go further than announcements of commencement of the process and highlights on the CSM and CRM arrival. The coverage, therefore, was of poor quality substantively speaking. The media could have done more to provide informed coverage that highlighted the potential of the APRM process. This would have helped both the public and CSOs to be more engaged. It is clear that the government used its power to silence the voices of CSOs, the media and other stakeholders. Yet they should not have submitted themselves to this. In order for them to be heard they had to make their voices louder.

42 According to Dr Merrara Gudina, Vice Chairman of the UEDF, the party had communicated with the APRM Secretariat (via email) regarding the lack of transparency and insufficient stakeholder participation of the Ethiopian APR Process. The Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party (EPRP) also submitted a complaint on lack of participation in the APRM process of those opposed to the government, see letter to Professor Adedeji, 17 July 2008, available at http://www.abugidainfo.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/eprp_democracy_072208.pdf.

Access to information

Among the challenges faced by Ethiopian civil society, or ordinary citizens, in engaging with the APRM process has been a great lack of information about the self-evaluation and peer review. At the date of publication of this report (and in common with the majority, though not all, of the countries undertaking the APRM process), the Ethiopian country self-assessment report (CSAR) has not been published and is not publicly available. Nothing, except the communiqué issued on the APRM support mission to the country, is displayed on the APRM official website. The writer of this paper obtained the various documents relating to the process including the CSAR through personal contacts. Some officials were not willing to give the CSAR, draft NPoA and other relevant documents because they thought they were confidential. This confidentiality does not fit with the aim of a participatory approach.⁴³

Many people that got involved in the process by commenting on the CSAR and participating in conferences and workshops, did not know anything about the status of the self-assessment or any of its processes when interviewed.⁴⁴ Even members of the NGC do not have information on what is going on and what steps are to be taken subsequently. So technically speaking little is known among the population about the APRM and the Ethiopian APRM process in particular.

There is no easy way to access information and obtain relevant documents on the APRM process. The NGC and its Secretariat have closed their offices. Hence, one has to contact the focal point for any information. However, thinking about the APRM process being successful is almost delusional. The office of the focal point is located at the prime minister's office, and the focal person is very 'busy' making access to ordinary citizens difficult.

This situation is partly the fault of the APRM continental institutions, in particular their failure to provide for institutions to ensure continuing public access to and influence over the APRM records and follow-up activities after the self-assessment is over. The APRM Guidelines leave the form and

43 Only a few government agencies had prepared forums for discussions on some aspects of the APRM. For instance, the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC) had prepared a conference in its office in July 2009 on issues related to its work in the arena of APRM themes. This is of course expected since corruption is one of the issues that is frequently repeated in the whole SAQ and the objectives of the APRM. Higher officials and invited guests attended the conference, but the conference was a closed one, where staff of the FEACC was even denied access. (Interviews with Ato Muluken Teshome, Legal Advisor, FEACC).

44 For instance, officials of the Ethiopian Institution of the Ombudsman and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission had participated in the validation conferences, and have commented on the CSAR. They have also worked on their share of the draft NPoA. Yet even those that have participated at this level seem to have no idea of what is going on in the process.

profile of the focal point to the discretion of the participating countries, but it is recommended that it should be composed of high level officials reporting directly to the head of state or government and with access to all national stakeholders.⁴⁵ The focal person in Ethiopia's case is, surely, a high level official who has close contact with the head of government, but is far from being accessible to all stakeholders. Thus, the mechanism in Ethiopia has to come up with better arrangements, in particular, as in some other countries that have implemented the APRM, it would be useful for the NGC to be recreated, perhaps in a smaller form, and to have ongoing responsibilities to facilitate civil society access to information about the process and input into the dialogue over national governance that is supposed to continue. Fundamentally, of course, greater access to information and openness to engagement by non-governmental stakeholders will depend on a change of attitude by the Ethiopian government.

The methodology used for the CSAR

One of the APRM's problems that is often cited is the complicated and overly technical issues involved in the self-assessment questionnaire. The questionnaire, just like the APRM base document, tries to cover almost all governance issues that one can possibly think of categorised under the four thematic areas of democracy and good political governance; economic governance and management; socio-economic development and corporate governance.

The Regulation envisaged a single technical research institute to prepare the country's self-assessment report. This is somehow a flawed decision since it is really difficult to assume that an institution would have expertise in all four areas specified above. In order to alleviate this problem, countries that have undergone the process have tended to assign different institutions to do the reports in each thematic area. The matter of 'who should undertake the task' was debated among the NGC and it was suggested by some members that the same pattern of approach be followed in the Ethiopian case and hence to assign different institutions.

It is alleged by the CEO of the national APRM Secretariat that the feared problem of lack of expertise was not an issue in the case of the assigned institution that prepared the self-assessment report since it hired experts with different knowledge and skills in the four thematic areas.⁴⁶

Desk research, interviews with key informants, household surveys, expert opinion surveys, *wereda* consultation forums and focus group discussions were among the methods used

by the TRI. The methodology used to gather information for the self-assessment report seem to be of high quality, for it appears that the effort went down to the grassroots level and that different ways of gathering information had been conducted. Yet it is not clear as to how the TRI selected the informants and candidates for participation in public consultations, nor what its criteria for selection were; opposition parties noted that the publicity of the meetings and forums conducted was negligible, while their members or representatives at zone and *wereda* level were never invited to such meetings and heard about the activities conducted in their own districts from others.⁴⁷ While gathering public opinion in particular, it would be important to use a random sampling method, but it is not clear what method was utilised. Similarly, how the selection of the *weredas* was made for the consultation forums lacks clarity.

Engagement of regional states

The Ethiopian Federal Democratic Republic has nine regional states and two city administrations. The role of these states and city administrations in the APRM was not significant as such. The Regulation establishing the APRM structures did not mention anything regarding their engagement. It is in fact stated under article 9(8) that the chairperson coordinates the activities of the APRM process at the regional states level, but the nature of the activities and the structure of implementation are not set.

As mentioned earlier, all of the regional states except Afar organised regional governing councils (RGCs) accountable to the National Governing Council, and prepared conferences to enlighten the public on the work that had been done on their part. However, their engagement was minimal, and did not go further than participating in conferences and meetings held at regional level which were practically organised under regional bureaux of capacity building.⁴⁸ This shows that the APRM process centred itself at the federal level and especially in line with the Ministry of Capacity Building. It is even difficult to get to know how many members these RGCs had, let alone finding out the nature of their composition. Even higher officials at the respective regional capacity building bureaux seem to have little knowledge about the APRM and the Ethiopian APRM process in particular.⁴⁹

47 Professor Beyene stated that the selection of persons to partake in the discussions was far from free and random. This is also shared by Ato Ayele Chamiso, chairman of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party (CUDP) and member of the NGC.

48 Ato Ayele Chamiso. This was also shared by Professor Beyene Petros.

49 Interviews with Ato Yemane Hailu, deputy head of the Tigray National Regional Government Capacity Building Bureau; Ato Binegrew Walie, IT head of the Amhara National Regional Government Capacity Building Bureau; Ato Oujulu Gok, head of the Gambela Regional Government Capacity Building Bureau and Ato Mohamed Oumer, deputy head of the Somali National Regional Government Capacity Building Bureau.

45 Guidelines, Art 34–36.

46 Dr Liku Damtew.

Governments at regional and provincial levels have the same kinds of issues that affect national governments such as separation of powers, inadequate resources, fiscal management, corruption, human rights violations, socio-economic problems and so on. It is often at these levels that the standard of governance is weakest, which even strengthens the arguments for the APRM process to have had a broader base and involvement at these levels.

The CSAR and outcomes of the process

The APRM country self-assessment report, guided by the assessment framework of the APRM questionnaire, focused on the four thematic areas of the APRM. The report is a very comprehensive document, informative of the political, social, cultural and economic situation in Ethiopia. But it more or less relied on references to the well-known legal and other documents, such as the constitution, to show the success of the governance system, rather than focusing on what happens in practice. When it referred to the situation in practice, it more or less restricted itself to stating facts known to all, rather than exploring the reasons explaining their cause. According to one opposition politician, '[i]t would be a disservice to the existing Ethiopian situation, if the APR Forum endorses the document'.⁵⁰

The CSAR also omitted dealing with important national agendas having greater impact on democratisation. Among these is the disabling legislation enacted by the government upon the working of charities and societies. Of course, one can say that there was no vibrant civil society network and promising broader-based 'movement' of human rights and social justice in Ethiopia from the start, but the current legislation has the power of worsening the overall status of CSOs and NGOs. It is very poor of the CSAR not to have addressed this issue on the national agenda which had especially gained momentum while the report was being made. Along the same lines, the CSAR barely touched on the issue of freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and broadcast media, while it is evident that these are among the most poorly respected constitutional rights in the country. The report did not make any comments and suggestions to improvements related to these issues.

Regarding elections, the report recognises that throughout the past three elections (before the 2010 national election), the relationships of the ruling party and opposition parties were tense, characterised by hostility and lack of trust. Complaints over the overall electoral system were extensive and hence few adjustments had been made regarding both

the content of the electoral law and procedures followed. It was suggested in the report that, the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) should work towards gaining trust among the opposition parties through engagement of continuous dialogue with them, and should also work on its capacity constraints.

Implementation and monitoring

A formal means of follow up and monitoring should be established in order for the APRM to be credible and effective. Otherwise, countries will not feel obliged to implement the recommendations gathered through the review, rendering them more or less pointless. The intent of the APRM in fostering good governance and socio-economic development would be realised if the plan of action and programmes are well-implemented. Unfortunately, the mechanism has not set the grounds for enforcement and monitoring. In particular, the guidelines establish no specified role for participation of key stakeholders beyond government in monitoring implementation of the NPoA.

The NGC, which claims to be the collection of key stakeholders is no longer in office. The 2010 Regulation (188/2010), which passed the responsibilities of the NGC Secretariat to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has not stipulated any implementation mechanisms for the NPoA. Moreover, even though the ministry has been given the responsibility to carry out this task, it has taken no action so far in establishing proper offices or in assigning personnel. As of September 2010, officials of the ministry seemed to be unfamiliar with the regulation transferring the rights and duties of the NGC Secretariat.⁵¹ Establishing an independent institutional structure was essential in carrying out an effective monitoring system. The poor participatory nature of the Ethiopian APRM process reached to a bare minimal level and has completely fallen into the hands of the executive.

50 Dr Merrara Gudina, vice chairman of the United Democratic Front (UDF).

51 The ministry officials contacted to give information were not aware of the enactment of the regulation itself, let alone able to provide information about the status of the process.

Conclusion and recommendations

The Ethiopian experience

The APRM constitutes one of the most ambitious and innovative governance exercises undertaken in Africa and provides important opportunities for public dialogue. Its approach is unique in both its scope and extent. It is designed as a socialising instrument, one that would encourage states to learn from and follow each other's good conduct and best practices, and thus cultivate democratic behaviour. In a sense, therefore, the APRM is a major regional instrument for promoting democracy and a novel initiative in inspiring participatory democracy in development. The primary purpose of the APRM is to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration through sharing of experiences and reinforcement of successful and best practice, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity building.⁵²

The Ethiopian APRM process made public dialogues possible and contributed to the endeavour of bringing about public participation and democratic governance. Yet, the process showed great executive dominance and weak engagement on the part of CSOs and other stakeholders.

The government had the upper hand in the selection of members of the NGC and the invitation of participant stakeholders in various meetings. The NGC was merely a nominal entity whose functional activities were controlled by its chairman, who was a government representative, and its Secretariat run from a government ministry. The process was more or less centralised at the federal government level and involvement of regional states was only negligible.

Access to information and relevant documents on the APRM process is also very limited leaving the whole Ethiopian APRM process practically unknown.

The CSAR also failed to touch upon some vital national issues that have a great impact on democratisation, such as freedom of information and the right to assembly and association.

The government through its Ministry of Finance and Economic Development went solo in designing the NPoA: there was no other participation of any kind, not even by the NGC, which rendered the self-assessment process incomplete. The NPoA was also submitted to the continental APRM bodies late.

CSOs, political parties and other stakeholders had the opportunity to participate in the validation forums for the CSAR and should have used this opportunity to raise their concerns. The government of course blocked its invitations to them but they should not have waited for an invitation. They have to develop their own capacity to engage more effectively with efforts by the AU, APRM and other African institutions to monitor compliance with international standards and should develop improved coordination and networking, especially to share information and strategies relating to the APRM. In addition, they have to organise to engage the state and non-state actors on their own initiatives in order to contribute proactively to the definition of the national agenda.

A better-coordinated effort has to be made from the side of these independent institutions, especially related to the follow up of the NPoA. If no follow up to the review is made and if the designed NPoA is not implemented, the whole aim of the APRM process will not have been achieved. Follow up is equally important for sustaining the efforts to improve governance and socio-economic development.

⁵² APRM base document, art. 3.

It is anticipated that the APRM report and the decisions on it will suggest a date by which the progress made by the country will be checked. The continental APRM Secretariat and other APRM partner institutions will support the country with technical assistance and capacity building to ensure effective achievement of the objectives and targets of the Programme of Action. After this base review is concluded, a periodic review should follow every two to four years.

This is not the end of the APRM, only the beginning. The government has to work to effectively engage federal and regional actors as well as stakeholders in this effort and has to be practical about the whole objective of the mechanism. Stakeholders (especially CSOs) have to take lessons from this experience and seize future opportunities that the mechanism offers.

The bigger picture

Given Ethiopia's location as the headquarters of the African Union and the leverage associated with it, as well as the leading role the Ethiopian Prime Minister plays in continental issues, it is imperative to try to document and analyse the broader meaning and import of the Ethiopian experience. Ethiopia, through its leader, represents Africa in international negotiations, most visibly in the global climate change negotiations, as well as being the current chair of NEPAD which influences the fate of NEPAD and APRM review processes. Thus, comprehensive analysis of the role of Ethiopia is crucial in understanding the current status as well as the destiny of the NEPAD mechanism. The whole debate on the APR processes in Africa remains merely decorative because often it is not anchored in a detailed political analysis and this section of the report attempts to do that.

Ethiopia belongs to the globally-unusual form of governance which characterises north-east (and southern) Africa, namely home to left-wing liberation movements that have gained power through armed struggle. Although the history and *modus operandi* of liberation movements is believed to have some positive impact (which includes closely working with the population and organising public debates) major decisions on governance issues are always handled by the 'vanguard party'. The premise is that wisdom lies in the top leadership, as it solely owns the 'correct line'; hence major political decisions and direction is exclusively set by the highest body, usually the political bureau of the movement. In such a situation public consultations have a different meaning from other contexts. The ruling party follows the practices of the organisation when it was a guerrilla movement, when for example widespread argument and discussion was required before any major military move was taken. However, the

discussion is restricted to the members of the movement, and is mainly aimed at garnering support than seeking inputs and ideas.

The policy process, so open internally within the EPRDF, is correspondingly almost completely closed towards outsiders, that is, to the general population. In many instances Ethiopians as a whole have been left in complete ignorance, save for the inevitable leaks and rumours about the issues and political processes on which their country's fate depends. It is the exploration of this overlooked aspect of some left-wing liberation movements that are in power, which makes this enterprise distinctive. The governance style of the former liberation movement now in power is a major area of consideration while assessing the review process of the APRM in Ethiopia. It is symptomatic that during the review process the government made little attempt to seriously engage the public and take the suggestions of different stakeholders, recruit the support or engage the sympathy of other sections of the population over issues that were critical to the governance and to the future direction of a nominally democratic Ethiopian government.

While there is indeed, as already noted, open policy debate within the closed recesses of that party, this practice is no longer tenable. The structure of decision-making within the party core derives not only from the hierarchy and secrecy needed for military operations, but also from a sense, intensely felt within the movements, that only those who proved their commitment on the battlefield during the war of 'liberation' (in this case against the Derg regime) have genuinely earned the right to participate in governance or important discussions. In other words, as far as the present Ethiopian government is concerned the criteria for determining effective (rather than nominal) participation is heavily skewed towards a very tiny layer of the ruling party and a particular section of the population. The top Ethiopian leadership appears to make no provision for serious and meaningful consultation with people beyond its own coterie.

The prevalence of post-liberation regimes (glaringly in the Horn of Africa) thus defines the particular concept and context of public participation in politics. In several countries, including Uganda, Mozambique, Rwanda and Eritrea, as well as Ethiopia, there have been discrete initiatives focused on one element or another of mobilising the public for political ends, initiatives which have been influenced by the years of conducting liberation wars but fall short of a fully-fledged participatory democracy. It is important, however, to stress that even post-liberation regimes are not monolithic.⁵³ Nonetheless, the most common denominator

53 Medhane Tadesse. 'Civil Society and SSR in the Horn of Africa' in *Overcoming Challenges to SSR in the Horn of Africa*, CPRD/ISS Monograph No. 135. May 2007.

in post-liberation regimes is that their revolutionary legacies continue to shape the governance approaches in general and review or assessment processes in particular, despite the waning of the original revolutionary projects.⁵⁴ In this case, public participation in policy development as a whole is weak. Often, the ruling party, the state and the government of the day are the same, while the executive branch of the government continues to wield a disproportionate level of power. Overall, although there are exceptions (notably South Africa), African political parties thus have a weak process and policy-making capacity in relation to governance issues.

Another factor is evident too, namely militarised political culture. Militarism is blended with a strong commitment to political agendas to create ideologies in arms the more so because the current leaders of Ethiopia were proponents of a different variant of Marxism. The Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF), the dominant group within the EPRDF, formulated an ideology and set of policies during the years of guerrilla warfare that emphasised their almost mystical communion with the peasantry, and that drew to a large extent on the deeply felt Marxist-Leninist principles that had led to the idealisation of Enver Hoxha's Albania. In political terms, too, such regimes are sealed off from the rest of the political community. Despite some recognition of the changed global order after the end of the Cold War, and an altogether more cosmetic deference to the need to engage the sympathies of the donor community, these policies have remained basically sacrosanct.

It is not accidental that almost all these ruling parties, particularly their leaders, maintain only a nominal commitment to liberal democracy (namely the values, principles and norms that guide the NEPAD process), which they may plausibly be assumed to have adopted largely in order to appease outside donors, and their own preference is for a very different form of 'democracy', founded on essentially Leninist conceptions of representation, in which a democratic government is one which authentically represents the interests of the broad masses of the population. Thus other actors, mainly rival political parties – which cannot by definition represent those interests – are judged as illegitimate. A case in point is the recently introduced NGO Law, which effectively bans CSOs from engaging in security, justice and governance and rights issues. The law categorically targets security and rights-based CSOs.⁵⁵

Ideologically-oriented security systems are at the very heart of the political processes in these particular types of countries and suspicions are widespread that intellectuals and CSOs are being used as 'other stakeholders' to impose donor agendas. Yet although such governments harbour a deep mistrust towards independent CSOs, they also appear to appreciate the potential of CSOs as credible and legitimate actors and therefore have the propensity to create their own 'civil society' organisations with which they can safely interact. With this mindset there is little plausible prospect that these governments will show the necessary political will for public participation or meaningful outside input and permit themselves to be challenged by strong and independent civic or political institutions. Despite their evident success in adapting to the changed global situation since the end of the Cold War, these precepts continue to inform their behaviour across a range of policies: from their own conception of their right to rule to their attitude to the level of political participation and political dissent; from the claim that they are the sole proponents of the correct line to the otherwise intrinsic suspicion towards the civil society, external criticism and the 'democratic centralist' organisation of their party structures.

Therefore, though common challenges to democratisation in Africa do play an important role in the nature of the review process in Ethiopia, the real problem cannot be separated from the broader historical and structural issues, ideological projects and the legacy of liberation struggle. Indeed, it is among these variables that the deeper roots of the problem can be located.

54 Kees Koonings & Dirk Kruijt (Ed.), *Political Armies: The Military and Nation Building in the Age of Democracy*, Zed Books, 2002.

55 Medhane Tadesse, *The Status of Civil Society in Sudan and Ethiopia*, Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform (GFN-SSR), June 2010.

Appendices

Appendix I: The National Governing Council

The APRM National Governing Council had 23 members drawn from government, the private sector, political parties, academia and associations.

Government (4 seats)

- Ministry of Capacity Building, (H/E Ato Tefera Walwa, Minister)
- Ministry of Youth and Sports, (H/E W/o Aster Mamo, Minister)
- Parliament, (Legal Affairs Standing Committee Secretary H/E Ato Asmelash W/Selassie)
- Economic advisor of the Prime Minister, (H/E Ato Neway Gebre Ab), and Focal Point of APRM

Private Sector (1 seat)

- Chamber of Commerce

Associations (7 seats)

- Women's Association, Amhara
- Women's Association, Addis Ababa
- Women's Association, Benishangul
- Ethiopian Lawyers' Association
- Labour Union Confederation
- Medical Professionals' Association
- Ethiopian Teachers' Association

Political Parties (4 seats)

- United Ethiopian Democratic Front (UEDF) (H/E Beyene Petros (Prof), Chairman)
- Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP), (H/E Ato Lidetu Ayalew, Chairman)
- Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party (CUDP) (H/E Ato Ayele Chamiso, Chairman)
- Oromo Federal Democratic Movement (OFDM) (H/E Ato Bulcha Demeksa, Chairman)

Academia (2 seats)

- Addis Ababa University (Andreas Eshete (Prof), President)
- Representative of University Students (Haromaya University)

Least Developed Regional States (1 seat)

- Benishangul Gumuz Regional State Representative

Religious Groups (4 seats)

- Ethiopian Orthodox Church
- Ethiopian Catholic Church
- Ethiopian Anglican Church
- Ethiopian Islamic Supreme Affairs

Appendix II: Communiqué issued following the APRM Support Mission to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 10–14 July 2008

The APR Panel fielded a Country Support Mission to Ethiopia from 10–14 July 2008 to kickstart and officially launch the Ethiopian APRM Review Process.

The delegation, which was led by Professor Adebayo Adedeji (CFR), Chairperson of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons and Lead Panellist for Ethiopia Review Process comprised representatives from two Strategic Partner Institutions of the APRM, namely the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank as well as officials from the APRM Continental Secretariat.

The composition of the Team is as follows:

APR Panel

- Professor Adebayo Adedeji, Chairperson of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons and Lead Panellist for the Ethiopian Review Process.

APR Secretariat

- Dr Afeikhen Jerome, Country Coordinator, Ethiopia and Coordinator, Economic Governance and Management;
- Mrs. Eunice Kamwendo-Chintedza, Research Analyst, Economic Governance and Management.

Strategic Partners

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

- Professor Okey Onyejekwe, Director, Governance and Public Administration Division (GPAD);
- Dr Kojo Busia, Chief, APRM Support Unit, GPAD;
- Dr Ateem Eltigani, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, NEPAD and National Regional Integration Division (NRID);
- Dr Said Adejumobi, Chief, Public Administration Section, GPAD;
- Ms Emelang Leteane, Economic Affairs Officer, African Centre for Gender and Social Development Division (ECA).

African Development Bank

- Mr Lamin Manneh, Regional Economic Communities Liaison, Partnership and Communications Officer, Office of the Director, NEPAD Regional Integration and Trade Department.

In the course of the Mission, the Team interacted with members of the National Governing Council, state and non-state actors and the proposed technical research body to undertake the self-assessment process. The Team also visited Bahar-Dar, Capital of Amhara Regional State where it met with diverse stakeholders.

During the Mission, the Memorandum of Understanding on the Technical Assessment and the Country Review Mission to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was signed by His Excellency Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia and Professor Adebayo Adedeji on behalf of the APRM.

Ethiopia has demonstrated its readiness to commence the self-assessment process. The Council of Ministers Regulation No. 142/2008 has been put in place to guide the implementation of the APRM in Ethiopia. In addition to designating the Prime Minister's Office as the Focal Point, Ethiopia has established a multi-stakeholder Governing Council of 23 members to drive the national process. A National Secretariat has also been created to support the day-to-day operations while a technical research institution has been identified to undertake the self-assessment exercise. Significantly too, the Government of Ethiopia has made adequate budgetary provisions for the national process. These developments fully epitomise the commitment of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the process.

The delegation recommended to the Ethiopian authorities the need to examine the feasibility of widening the membership of the Governing Council to include more women and other stakeholder groups such as the physically challenged.

Signed on the 13th Day of June 2008

Professor Adebayo Adedeji,

Chairperson of the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons and Lead Panellist for the Ethiopian Review Process

Amb. NewayGebre-ab

The APRM Focal Point in Ethiopia

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B. Interviewees

- Liku Damtew (Dr), CEO of the National APRM Secretariat
- Beyene Petros (Prof.), Chairman of the United Ethiopian Democratic Front (UEDF) and member of the NGC
- Ato Ayele Chamiso, Chairman of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party (CUDP) and member of the NGC
- Merara Gudina (Dr), Vice Chairman of the United Democratic Front (UDF)
- Ato Tamiru Terefe, Senior expert at Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
- Tadios Bogale (Dr), Vice Chairman of the All Ethiopia Unity Organisation Party (AEUO)
- Taye Assefa (Dr), Deputy Board Chairman of the Human Rights Council
- Ato Mohammed Oumer, Somali National Regional Government, Capacity Building Bureau Deputy Head
- Ato Yemane Hailu, Tigray National Regional Government, Capacity Building Bureau Deputy Head
- Ato Binegrew Walie, Amhara National Regional Government Capacity Building Bureau, IT Head

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- Ato Oujulu Gok, Gambela National Regional Government, Capacity Building Bureau Head
- H/E Demwoze Mame, Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, Deputy Chief Commissioner
- W/t Tsega G/kidan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Expert
- Ato Tesfaye Goite, Ethiopian Institution of the Ombudsman, Department Head, Maladministration Prevention, Research and Public Relations
- Ato Yirgu Tola, Ethiopian Institution of the Ombudsman, Plan and International Relations Service Head
- Ato Tamiru Terefe, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Development Planning and Research Department Welfare Monitoring, Unit-coordinator
- Ato Muluken Teshome, Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, Legal Advisor