

AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM

**ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF
BURKINA FASO**

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INTRODUCTION

The Burkina Faso review process started in March 2003 when the President of Faso committed the country to the APRM as he was aware of the added value that an improvement in the national governance system could contribute to the country's performance in the economic, social and political spheres. Consequently, arrangements were made at the highest level of the State to facilitate adoption of the mechanism by stakeholders at national and decentralized levels drawn from public and private entities as well as Civil Society Organisations.

Burkina Faso completed its final review in the framework of the APRM process in 2009. In this context, there is a need at this stage for an introspection not only to assess the process initiated and draw lessons, but also to determine the added value of the said process in terms of strengthening the national governance system in order to improve living conditions of the population and ensure sustainable development.

The analysis of our country's review process highlighted good practices to be shared on the continent, with regard to institutional management, the credibility of the process and adoption of the mechanism.

Long before the Extraordinary Forum of Heads of State and Government examined the Report of the Country Review Mission in October 2008 in Cotonou, Benin, the Government of Burkina Faso had endorsed the findings of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons, in view of their relevance, and taken some initiatives which, if implemented, will ultimately help in meeting some of the challenges identified.

This report is not a statutory report on the implementation of the National Programme of Action (NPoA). It is, however, related to the latter since it describes the implementation of the APRM process in Burkina Faso and takes stock of the activities carried out, as with the Country Review Report was launched in the third quarter of 2009, takes

stock of the activities carried out. Finally, it highlights the prospects offered in the country for the implementation of the NPoA over the 3-year period (2010-2012).

I- ACCESION OF BURKINA FASO TO THE APRM

By voluntarily acceding to the APRM on 9 March 2003, Burkina Faso committed itself to taking all the necessary measures aimed at facilitating the development and implementation of a National Programme of Action to improve its performance in Democracy and Political Governance, Economic Governance and Financial Management, Socio-Economic Development and Corporate Governance.

II- SELF-ASSESSMENT

In order to prepare its first Country Self-Assessment Report in the four thematic areas covered by the APRM, the National Council, right from October 2007, solicited the assistance of the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD), the Advanced Institute of Population Science (ISSP), the Centre for Democratic Governance (CGD) and the Centre for Analysis of Economic and Social Policies (CAPES).

These institutions were mandated to deal respectively with Corporate Governance, Socio-Economic Development, Democracy and Political Governance and Economic Governance and Financial Management. The aim was to clearly identify the stakes and challenges of the four areas of governance with a view to preparing the Country Self-Assessment Report of Burkina Faso, which was critically analysed by an international group of African experts commissioned to review our country in the framework of the APRM.

On 10 and 11 January 2008, the Draft Country Self-Assessment Report, together with a preliminary National Programme of Action, was submitted, for validation in Ouagadougou, to nearly three hundred (300) national and local public as well as private sector stakeholders from the 13 administrative and political regions of the country. Participants in the

workshop were drawn from the central and deconcentrated national administrative structures, modern private or informal sector, as well as modern and traditional civil society organizations.

III- REVIEW

The review mission and a few lessons to be drawn: The review of Burkina Faso was officially launched on Monday, 18 February 2008, by **His Excellency Blaise COMPAORE**, President of Faso, in the presence of all Corporate Entities of the State, Members of the Mission, Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, as well as Representatives of Religious and Traditional Authorities and the Population.

The Mission had meetings with the President of Faso, the Prime Minister and the Heads of State Institutions. It held broad working sessions with structures and bodies entrusted with the management of the national governance system, namely, the public sector, the private sector and Civil Society Organisations represented as much as possible in its diversity. It also had working sessions with the country's technical and financial partners, ambassadors of the G8 member countries and African ambassadors accredited to our country.

After an extensive consultation of structures and bodies at the central level, the Mission went into the field to hold discussions with the grassroots populations on the stakes and challenges identified in the Country Self-Assessment Report. The 13 regions of Burkina Faso were thus visited and forums were held with Civil Society Organisations and also with the traditional, religious, political and administrative authorities. About seven thousand (7,000) people participated in these forums.

During the different consultations, the basic issues identified in the Country Self-Assessment Report were reviewed, and even developed further in some cases. The stakes and challenges raised during the regional forums underscored the lack of dialogue and communication, the need to pursue such consultations at the regional level, the intensification of the fight against corruption in aspects relating to transparency of the procedures and sanctions, the need for the

neighbouring countries of Burkina Faso to effectively apply the regional standards for free movement of people and goods.

At the end of the regional tours, the Mission met with the Government and, subsequently with the Head of State, to take stock of the preliminary results of its broad consultation. The Mission made an inventory of good practices, proposed areas for dialogue and improvement of the developmental achievements noted as well as solutions aimed at addressing the constraints facing the governance system of Burkina Faso.

In early May 2008, the APRM Executive Secretariat submitted to the highest authorities of the country, for comments and observations, the draft Country Self-Assessment Report together with pertinent recommendations and proposals for strengthening the National Programme of Action (NPoA).

One hundred and ninety-seven (197) recommendations were made on the four thematic areas of APRM, namely, Democracy and Political Governance (84), Economic Governance and Financial Management (38), Corporate Governance (32) and Socio-Economic Development (34). Nine (9) recommendations were made on *Cross-cutting Issues*. Most of the recommendations concerned acceleration of the implementation of some measures already initiated at the national level. Having acknowledged the relevance of the recommendations of the Country Review Mission, the Burkina authorities did not wait for the holding of the Forum of Heads of State and Government before implementing them.

IV- IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION

A- Difficulties associated with the implementation of the NPoA

The self-assessment phase started in October 2007 and was completed in January 2008 with the validation of the relevant report. This made it

possible for the Country Review Mission to visit the country from February to March 2008.

The Country Report should have been examined in July 2008 at the Forum of Heads of State and Government participating in the APRM at Sharm El Sheich (Egypt), together with the Reports of Uganda and Nigeria. The Burkina Report could not be reviewed by the Heads of State as a result of time constraints.

Hence, it was not until 25 October 2008 that the Country Review Report of Burkina Faso was reviewed in Cotonou (Benin) during the first Extraordinary Forum of Heads of State and Government participating in the APRM.

Moreover, due to some difficulties linked to the functioning of the Executive Secretariat and the Panel, it was not until 24 June 2009 that the Review Report was officially transmitted to the country, through the President of Faso.

This situation delayed the implementation of the National Programme of Action, which could only start after the presentation of the report and its adoption by all the socio-professional segments of the country.

B- Activities undertaken for the adoption of the Report

The above-mentioned facts notwithstanding, some activities were effectively carried out to ensure the adoption of the report as well as the implementation of some strong recommendations made in the Report.

Thus, after its adoption in Cabinet as the country's reference framework in the area of governance, the Country Review Report was officially launched in September 2009, and the results of the review were validated, during a national workshop, by the national and regional stakeholders of the national governance system. All the 13 regions of the country were, once again, represented.

The adoption of the Country Report as a reference framework in good governance by Cabinet testifies to the country's solemn and firm

commitment to mobilize energies to achieve the assigned objectives. In that regard and, in order to harmonize the projects and programmes, the national stakeholders as well as the technical and financial partners were urged to base their activities on the guidelines of the report and account for them.

Furthermore, in October 2009, the Permanent Secretariat organized a technical workshop with departments in charge of research and planning in the Ministries and Institutions of the Republic. The technical workshop was intended to assist the Ministerial Departments and Institutions to take over the relevant activities of the NPoA and identify measures falling within their competence and responsibility. To that end, they were equipped to integrate the NPoA into their programme-budgets and Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEF).

The Permanent Secretariat organized a series of public conferences on the entire national territory for governance officials in order to broaden the scope of adoption of the Report and the related National Programme of Action.

C-Addressing certain challenges identified during the review

1-The phenomenon of corruption, which, apart from creating a distance between the rulers and the governed, undermines all reform efforts

Since the multiplicity of structures for combating corruption and fraud constituted an impediment to the control of these scourges, the Government created the *Autorité supérieure de contrôle de l'Etat* (ASCE) and appointed its members. After operating for nearly three months and, in accordance with its regulatory provisions, the Authority presented its 2008 General Progress Report to the President of Faso and, as a further development, the report was made public on Friday, 29 May 2009. It may now be consulted to enrich public debates;

In order to ensure efficient management of State vehicles, the Government issued, in October 2009, a decree regulating the use of vehicles belonging to the State and its institutions;

The operationalisation of the National Financial Information Processing Centre (CENTIF) in 2009 helped to consolidate government efforts in the fight against economic crimes and money laundering.

2. The noticeably inadequate involvement of women and the youth as full partners and actors in the development process

On Thursday, 16 April 2009, the National Assembly passed a law fixing quotas for legislative and municipal elections in Burkina Faso. This law obliges political parties to ensure at least 30% female representation among their candidates. It is intended to promote the participation of women in the dialogue on development policies and strategies and reduce their marginalization in the political and institutional affairs. Similarly, the adoption of the national gender policy confirms Burkina Faso's ambition to build a society founded on the ideals of peace and justice, through the involvement of women in national development activities;

The Government has created a ministerial department devoted exclusively to the Youth and Employment. This shows the Government's determination to strengthen and diversify its mechanisms for reducing unemployment, which affects mainly the youth. Loans are granted to promoters by the different funds as part of a new approach to developing youth employability and promoting self-employment.

3. A political and democratic governance that offers the population few dividends in terms of legal and physical security, food security, socio-economic and environmental security

Some political and institutional reforms have been undertaken with a view to addressing these concerns; they include the following actions in particular:

- Amending the Constitution to ensure a better distribution of competencies in handling electoral disputes. Henceforth, the Constitutional Council is solely competent for the organization of legislative elections and referendums, as disputes over local elections are to be settled by the administrative courts;
- Banning floor-crossing; henceforth, Members of Parliament or Local Councillors who leave their parties lose de facto their mandate;
- Instituting voting by Burkina citizens abroad in presidential elections and referendums;
- Extending, to all citizens registered on the electoral role, the right to refer cases to the elections judge;
- Reviewing the Law on the Status of the Opposition, which now defines "Opposition Party" as any legally-constituted party declaring itself as opposed to the party or group of parties participating in government or supporting government action;
- Reviewing the system whereby political parties and groups are financed by the State (cf. Law instituting an annual line of credit in the national budget);

- Issuing a decree permitting the transfer of a number of managerial instruments from civil servants to institutional heads and ministries to ensure efficient management of civil servants;
- Signing three (03) orders on allocation of financial resources to communes along with the transfer of competencies in the primary education, potable water supply and sanitation sectors;
- Passing and implementing the land protection law that will help reduce social tensions around the land issue in the country;
- Adopting, in December 2008, a national strategy for promoting a culture of tolerance and peace with a view to fostering social peace and stability;
- Reinforcing the effective exercise of human rights, with the opening of the Monitoring and Orientation Centre in Bobo-Dioulasso on 19 June 2009 as well as the development and distribution of a guide to the rights of the child;
- Signing and implementing the collective bargaining agreement for the private media and adopting the status of journalists with the institution of the professional press card, which will obviously enhance the freedom and vitality of the press;
- Reviewing the law on child trafficking - taking into account the repression of the exploitation of begging by others with a view to combating juvenile begging – which will offer vulnerable children better guarantees for protection. A law on child protection is yet to be passed by the National Assembly.

On 16 December 2009, a delegation from the Ministry of Defence, led by the head of department, Yéro Boly, was received by the Prime Minister. The delegation presented to the Head of Government a report on the National Defence Prospective Study, which started in February 2009. This study defines the possible and desirable scenarios, as well as the

future vision of the defence machinery which will eventually entail the formulation of strategies for its development;

A workshop for validation of the national public security strategy was held on 15 December 2009. For three days, a group of national experts, which mainly comprised officers of the Defence and Security Forces, discussed a road map for enhancing the efficiency of the policy on protection of life and property in Burkina. The objective of the security strategy adopted by Burkina is to propose appropriate solutions to the serious challenges and threats facing the country over the past few years, namely, armed attacks, murder, drug trafficking and violent robbery . Community participation is accorded prime importance; in their capacity as operators of economic development, companies should be involved in the management of their security, especially in its prevention component, because a) they are the primary beneficiaries, b) security is a major issue and c) companies have managed to protect themselves at all times; they only need to be given a sense of responsibility;

An Inter-ministerial Committee on Determination of Prices of Hydrocarbons (CIDPH) set up by the Cabinet on 24 June 2009. The aim of the Committee is to reduce the country's vulnerability to the volatility of prices of hydrocarbons, which constitute a decisive factor of the cost of living in the country.

At the Cabinet Meeting of 1st October 2008, the Government declared 2009 as the year for universal registration and free issue of birth certificates. Operations for the large-scale issue of birth certificates and particularly national identity cards were therefore conducted throughout the year 2009 and will be continued during the 1st quarter of 2010;

As part of the efforts to improve the population's access to basic social services, especially in the HIV/AIDS pandemic control component, free antiretroviral treatment is now a reality in Burkina Faso.

4. The need for broad consensus around the vision of establishing an emergent economy by 2025

The establishment of an Ad hoc Committee on the Preparation of the Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (SCADD), based on the Vision of Burkina's 2025 Prospective Study that should be

enshrined in a human development strategy, indicates the new approach adopted by the country as part of its development ambitions.

V- PROSPECTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NPoA

The APRM Permanent Secretariat prepared and transmitted to the highest authorities of the country, for approval and adoption, a monitoring and evaluation system comprising a supervisory body of 9 eminent persons and regional monitoring and evaluation bodies. The terms of reference for the stakeholders are developed and the draft decrees on the establishment and appointments have also been transmitted. The objectives of these independent and representative authorities entrusted with the monitoring and evaluation of the NPoA are to facilitate national participation in the implementation of the National Programme of Action and the obligation to give account of the results achieved in terms of improving the people's living conditions.

Besides, the component on popular participation in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NPoA will be addressed through the popularization of the base documents; in this regard, the national authorities will be organising regional forums to validate the results of the review and establish regional monitoring and evaluation structures. The regional forums will be provided with popular versions of the Country Review Report in French and in the three principal national languages (*Mooré, Fulfuldé* and *Dioula*). Like the technical workshop organised with the Research and Planning Directors of the ministries and institutions, technical workshops will be organised in the first quarter of 2010 with stakeholders from the Private Sector and Civil Society Organisations.

CONCLUSION

The finalization of the Burkina Faso review process, in the framework of the APRM, was fraught with formidable challenges that had to be addressed. After the accession of the country in March 2003, it embarked on the observance of its constitutional stages, namely, the organisation of legislative and presidential elections. This decisive phase of the democratic process could not be linked up with the implementation of the stages of the APRM process, given the risk of compromising its credibility, notably its utilisation in politicking. That is why the implementation of the APRM process was suspended for two years.

The Report finalized and officially handed over to the President of Faso on 24 June 2009 was officially launched in September 2009. The launching marked the official commencement of the implementation of the NPoA for the 2010-2012 period. It will consist in harmonizing the NPoA with the other national and sectoral programmes and strategies, ensuring the adoption of the report by the identified stakeholders and establishing the system for monitoring and evaluating the necessary actions identified in the National Programme of Action.