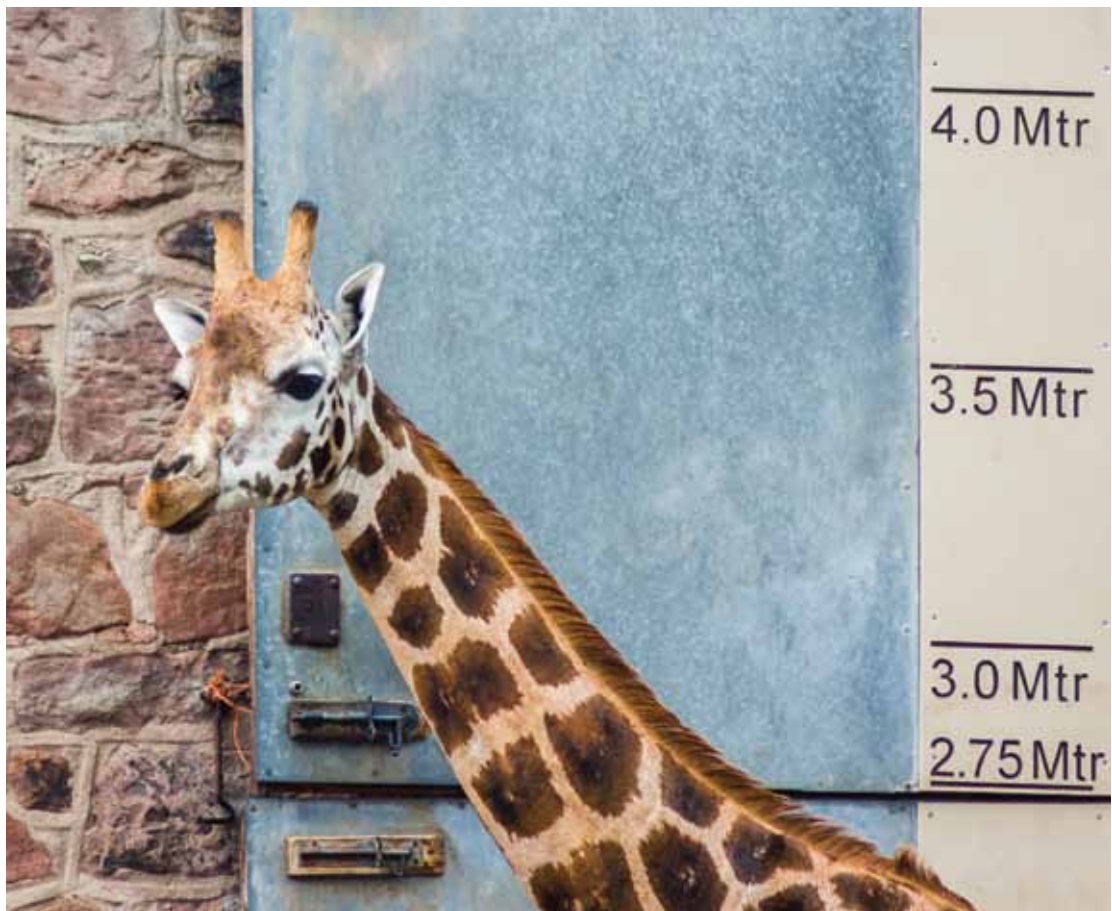


THE STATE OF GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: WHAT INDICES TELL US

YARIK TURIANSKYI



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*African perspectives.
Global insights.*

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PROGRAMME HEAD Steven Gruzd, steven.gruzd@wits.ac.za

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ABSTRACT

Governance is notoriously difficult to measure – yet numerous global indices attempt to do so. This paper tracks the governance progress of 52 African countries through various indices. A total of 17 of these states have undergone a holistic governance review by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Another 17 have joined the APRM, but have not yet been reviewed. The remaining 18 are not members and thus are used as independent variables to determine whether the APRM makes a difference.

Since the APRM does not provide ratings or rankings in its reports, this paper uses data from the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance to track progress (or lack thereof) between 2003 (when the APRM was established) and 2015 (the most recent set of data available at the time of writing). Supporting data from Freedom House's Freedom in the World Index, *The Economist* Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, the Heritage Foundation's Economic Freedom Index and the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index is used where necessary.

Arguably, by voluntarily acceding to and undergoing the review, APRM member states have demonstrated the necessary political will to reform. How have they fared since the year of inception of the APRM? The paper concludes that overall, APRM members have performed better than non-members. But whether a state has actually undergone the APRM review or merely joined the mechanism does not seem to make much of a difference. Progress has also often been mixed, and economic achievements have sometimes come at the expense of political freedoms.

(This paper is partially based on an article by Turianskyi Y & S Gruzd, 'Do African Union Governance Reviews Work?' *AllAfrica.com*, 15 October 2014, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201410150758.html>.)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yarik Turianskyi is the Programme Manager for the Governance and APRM Programme of the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). He has been studying and working on the APRM since 2006. He holds an MA in Political Science from the University of Pretoria and is the co-editor of *African Accountability: What Works and What Doesn't*, SAIIA, 2016.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSO	civil society organisation
CRR	Country Review Report
NPoA	National Programme of Action
IIAG	Ibrahim Index of African Governance

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines improvements in African governance through the prism of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The APRM is a voluntary African-owned governance monitoring and self-improvement tool, established in 2003. So far 35¹ AU states have joined, and 17² of these have completed their first reviews. Arguably, by undergoing review these 17 states have already shown their commitment to reform. APRM reviews entail member states' developing a Country Self-Assessment Report, which is followed by a separate assessment conducted by an external Country Review Mission. The two reviews are then combined into a single Country Review Report (CRR) that includes a National Programme of Action (NPOA). Opening themselves up to scrutiny by their peers and committing to eradicate identified challenges signal member states' political will to improve governance practices.

But does the APRM make a difference? While the APRM assessments (through publicly available CRRs) provide a holistic picture of governance in a country at a particular moment in time, the reports are narrative and do not rate or rank members against each other. This is done deliberately, with the APRM recognising that each state has its own particular context, history and developmental trajectory. However, due to a lack of standardised, official reporting procedures and monitoring and evaluation guidelines at the continental level, as well as sporadic and inconsistent reports on the implementation of the NPOAs, it has often been difficult to measure progress achieved. Many NPOA implementation reports have not been made public, which further undermines both transparency and research.

In order to attempt to determine the added value in improved governance provided by the APRM, this paper turns to other sources. The main one is the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), which, like the APRM, focuses on four broad thematic areas. Although these are not perfectly aligned, there are enough similarities between the APRM and the IIAG to holistically measure governance. While the former looks at democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance and socio-economic development, the latter examines safety and the rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity and human development. To further complement the IIAG data, other indices are at times referred to in order to provide further context and additional information. These are the Freedom House Freedom in the World Index; *The Economist* Intelligence Unit Democracy Index;

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- 1 The 35 member states of the APRM (African Peer Review Mechanism) are (in alphabetical order): Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tomé & Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia.
 - 2 The 17 APRM states that have undergone their first peer review are (in the order of review): Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Algeria, Benin, Uganda, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique, Lesotho, Mauritius, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia.

the Heritage Foundation Economic Freedom Index; and the World Bank Ease of Doing Business Index. Most of these are highly correlated with the IIAG.

METHODOLOGY

To answer the research question – does the APRM make a difference? – this paper has divided African states into three categories: those that have signed up to the APRM and completed the review; those that are APRM members but have not yet undergone the process; and non-APRM states. This allows for comparison to determine the value added (if any) by the APRM.

A brief analysis is then conducted to determine which states are the best and worst performers in Africa. The paper concludes with recommendations on how to make the APRM system stronger and improve governance among its members.

It must be noted that governance is hard to measure. Governance indices are compiled through the use of perception surveys and other subjective research methodologies. The APRM is also unlikely to be the only source affecting governance within any state, given the myriad of other programmes and projects that occur simultaneously, and this paper is not attempting to attribute direct causality to the APRM for improved governance. However, the IIAG, complemented by other indices, should provide at least an indication of whether a state's governance trajectory has improved, declined or remained stagnant since its APRM review, as well as how it compares to other states.

IBRAHIM INDEX OF AFRICAN GOVERNANCE

Established in 2007, the IIAG is a comprehensive collection of over 100 variables from more than 30 independent African and global sources that measures governance progress (or lack thereof) across the four areas listed earlier. It provides governance data for African countries from 2000. The Mo Ibrahim Foundation defines governance as 'the provision of the political, social and economic goods that a citizen has the right to expect from his or her state, and that a state has the responsibility to deliver to its citizens'.³ The index aims to be 'a framework for citizens, governments, institutions and the private sector to accurately assess the delivery of public goods and services, and policy outcomes, across the continent' and 'a tool to help determine and debate government performance and a decision-making instrument with which to govern'.⁴

Table 1 shows the IIAG scores in 2003, when the APRM was established, and in 2015 (the latest available at the time of writing). The change in the score between 2003 and 2015 is included to indicate the extent to which their IIAG performance has improved or regressed since 2003. As mentioned above, states are divided into three categories: APRM

3 Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Ibrahim Index of African Governance, <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/iiaag/>.

4 *Ibid.*

member states that have undergone the review since joining; APRM members that have signed up but have not yet completed their review; and non-APRM countries. Sudan and South Sudan are not included in the comparison, since IIAG data is only available from 2011 for these countries.

APRM countries (reviewed, date of CRR publication included in brackets)	Total 2003 score	Total 2015 score	Change
Ghana (2005)	63.8	67.3	3.5
Rwanda (2005)	51.4	60.7	9.3
Kenya (2006)	53.7	58.8	5.1
South Africa (2007)	72.8	73.0	0.2
Algeria (2007)	51.0	52.9	1.9
Benin (2008)	57.1	58.8	1.7
Burkina Faso (2008)	51.5	52.2	0.7
Nigeria (2009)	42.7	44.9	2.2
Uganda (2009)	51.6	54.6	3.0
Mali (2009)	52.9	48.7	-4.2
Mozambique (2009)	53.5	52.3	-1.2
Lesotho (2010)	56.3	61.1	4.8
Mauritius (2010)	77.7	79.9	2.2
Ethiopia (2011)	41.3	48.6	7.3
Sierra Leone (2012)	40.6	51.0	10.4
Tanzania (2013)	56.3	56.7	0.4
Zambia (2013)	54.1	59.5	5.4
Averages	54.6	57.7	3.1

APRM countries (not reviewed)	Total 2003 score	Total 2014 score	Change
Angola	30.6	40.8	10.2
Cameroon	44.9	45.9	1.9
Chad	31.8	32.8	1.0
Congo-Brazzaville	37.3	42.8	5.5
Côte d'Ivoire	40.1	48.3	8.2
Djibouti*	45.2	45.9	0.7

* A preliminary review of Djibouti took place at the APRM Forum in January 2016, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was also announced that the full review of the country would take place at the mid-year forum in 2016. However, at the time of publication of the 2015 Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Djibouti was not reviewed as yet and its CRR was not published.

APRM countries (not reviewed)	Total 2003 score	Total 2014 score	Change
Egypt	52.2	51.3	-0.9
Equatorial Guinea	33.1	35.5	2.4
Gabon	46.9	52.2	5.6
Liberia	30.3	50.7	20.4
Malawi	53.0	56.7	3.7
Mauritania	44.9	43.0	-1.9
Niger	41.7	48.4	6.7
São Tomé et Príncipe	55.4	59.1	3.7
Senegal	57.0	62.4	5.4
Togo	37.3	48.4	11.1
Tunisia	64.2	66.9	2.7
Averages	43.9	48.9	5.0

Non-APRM countries	Total 2003 score	Total 2014 score	Change
Botswana	72.4	74.2	1.8
Burundi	37.9	45.8	7.9
Cape Verde	74.0	74.5	0.5
Central African Republic	25.8	24.9	-0.9
Comoros	42.2	48.5	6.3
Democratic Republic of the Congo	29.0	33.9	4.9
Eritrea	35.7	29.9	-5.8
The Gambia	53.4	50.5	-2.9
Guinea	41.0	43.7	2.7
Guinea-Bissau	33.0	35.7	2.7
Libya	44.6	35.5	-9.1
Madagascar	56.4	49.1	-7.3
Morocco	53.0	57.6	4.6
Namibia	65.8	70.4	4.6
Seychelles	68.8	70.3	1.5
Somalia	9.9	8.5	-1.4
Swaziland	47.2	49.6	2.4
Zimbabwe	36.7	40.4	3.7
Averages	45.9	46.8	0.9

Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Ibrahim Index of African Governance 2003–2015, <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/iiaag/>, accessed 14 January 2015

Note: This table only includes the overall governance scores, whereas the narrative below also includes a discussion of selected scores across the four thematic areas.

The full set of data is available from the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 'IIAD 2015 – downloads', <http://mo.ibrahim.foundation/iag/downloads/>, accessed 20 January 2016

According to the data:

- The first category (reviewed APRM states) shows an average improvement of (3.1).⁵
- The second category (non-reviewed APRM states) shows a higher average improvement of (5.0).⁶
- The third category (non-APRM states) shows an average improvement of only (0.9).⁷
- The most improved states in the first category are Sierra Leone (10.4) and Rwanda (9.3).

Sierra Leone's governance progress can, in part, be explained by its low base score in 2003. In fact, its score of 40.6 was the lowest among the first category of states. While its improvement over the past 12 years is significant, it is still the second lowest-ranking member of the first category, only edging past Ethiopia. Given the country's decade-long civil war, which lasted until 2001, it is notable that security and the rule of law is the thematic area in which Sierra Leone achieved the biggest improvement (16.3). The end of the conflict also allowed the country to start developing, exemplified by the second-biggest improvement (12) under socio-economic opportunity. Sierra Leone has experienced substantial economic growth since the end of the civil war.⁸ However, the ruinous effects of the conflict continue to be felt.

Rwanda's rise in the index provides an even more interesting case study. The rule of Rwandan President Paul Kagame is often described as increasingly authoritarian, especially following the constitutional change that enables him to run for a third seven-year term. But the country has been on a massive reform drive in the realms of economic and corporate governance. It is therefore of little surprise that Rwanda's progress was achieved mostly due to improved human development (16.9). Yet, somewhat surprisingly, the country's IIAG score has also improved under participation and human rights (by 6.0), in spite of continued reports of rising political intolerance. Examining sub-categories provided an insight as to why. The increased score was accomplished through achievements in attaining gender parity (20.2) and actually decreased in terms of both participation (-1.4) and rights (-0.7) since 2003. Rwanda boasts more female parliamentarians than any other country in the world (64%).⁹

Given the country's decade-long civil war, which lasted until 2001, it is notable that security and the rule of law is the thematic area in which Sierra Leone achieved the biggest improvement

5 Error margin has been calculated at 3.1 plus or minus about 1.6.

6 Error margin is 5.0 plus or minus about 2.3.

7 Error margin is 0.9 plus or minus about 1.9.

8 BBC, 'Sierra Leone country profile', <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094194>.

9 Inter-Parliamentary Union, 'Women in national parliaments', <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

Rwanda's economic progress is backed up by data from the Index of Economic Freedom, published by the Heritage Foundation and *The Wall Street Journal*. It defines economic freedom as¹⁰

the fundamental right of every human to control his or her own labour and property. In an economically free society, individuals are free to work, produce, consume, and invest in any way they please. In economically free societies, governments allow labour, capital and goods to move freely, and refrain from coercion or constraint of liberty beyond the extent necessary to protect and maintain liberty itself.

The progress achieved by Rwanda since its review is quite high at (11) points. The index mentions that in the recent past, freedom from corruption and investment freedom improved significantly, but were somewhat offset by a decline in business freedom. Furthermore, efforts to reform the economy have improved growth and reduced poverty. Yet in spite of the progress, institutions and structures previously undermined by the civil war have not yet been fully restored. For instance, the judiciary has been unable to secure full independence from the executive.¹¹

The country's achievements in the corporate sphere are further illustrated by data from the World Bank Ease of Doing Business Index.¹² A high rank in the index means the regulatory environment is more conducive to starting and operating a local firm. Rwanda is an unprecedented case in how much it has managed to improve since its APRM review. In 10 years it moved up 77 places and is now ranked 62nd in the world.

At the other end of the spectrum, Mali has shown the most regression since the establishment of the APRM, with its IIAG score declining

At the other end of the spectrum, Mali has shown the most regression since the establishment of the APRM, with its IIAG score declining (-4.2). Although the country's governance was given a favourable assessment in its APRM CRR in 2009, the 2012 coup and the resulting instability are to blame for the deterioration. Mali was destabilised and the military maintained de facto authority until a new president was elected in September 2013. Safety and the rule of law and participation and human rights have deteriorated, by (-12.5) and (-15.8) respectively. The country has also dropped into the 'partly free' category¹³ in the Freedom in the World Index. The 2012 coup and armed conflict have negatively affected the country's status. Since its APRM review, Mali also has also fallen

10 2016 Index of Economic Freedom, 'About the index', <http://www.heritage.org/index/about>.

11 *Ibid.*

12 Doing Business, 'Economy rankings', <http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings>.

13 The average of a country's or territory's political rights and civil liberties ratings is called the Freedom Rating, and it is this figure that determines the status of 'free' (1.0 to 2.5), 'partly free' (3.0 to 5.0) or 'not free' (5.5 to 7.0). See Freedom House, 'Methodology', <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2015/methodology>.

from 'flawed democracy' to 'hybrid regime'¹⁴ in *The Economist* Intelligence Unit Democracy Index.

Mozambique has also demonstrated a regression in the safety and rule of law category (-11.5). The resurgent violence between the ruling Frelimo (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique) and its perennial rival Renamo (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana) in 2013 and 2014 was undoubtedly a major contributing factor. The threat to peace in Mozambique was actually identified in its APRM CRR in 2009, linked to the way the electoral process is conducted, as well as the lack of disarmament and demobilisation of former combatants.¹⁵

IS THE APRM MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

It is important to note that it is not the intention of this paper to conduct a full statistical analysis. Rather, the aim is to see whether data from the IIAG can show general trends as to whether the APRM is making a difference for its member states. The mean variation in the scores between APRM members (both reviewed and non-reviewed) and countries outside the mechanism provides interesting data. APRM members have on average improved their scores by (4.1) while other countries only managed an average increase of (0.9).¹⁶ The difference in governance scores between categories is large enough that they are unlikely to be the result of factors unrelated to APRM status.

Yet merely joining the APRM and actually undergoing a review does not seem to make much of a difference in improving a country's governance score. Countries that have joined but have – for various reasons – not started the review process have shown a slightly higher average improvement in their scores. The difference in means is (-1.9),¹⁷ meaning that they do not differ significantly. The difference between APRM-reviewed states and all other countries (non-reviewed members and non-members) is not significant either.

Merely joining the APRM and actually undergoing a review does not seem to make much of a difference in improving a country's governance score

14 The Democracy Index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. Based on its scores on a range of indicators within these categories, each country is then itself categorised as one of four types of regime: 'full democracy' (8.0 to 10.0), 'flawed democracy' (6.0 to 7.99), 'hybrid regime' (4.0 to 5.99) or 'authoritarian' (0.0 to 3.99). See *The Economist* Intelligence Unit, 'Democracy Index 2015: Democracy in an Age of Anxiety', <http://www.yabiladi.com/img/content/EIU-Democracy-Index-2015.pdf>.

15 APRM Secretariat, 'Country Review Report: Republic of Mozambique', June 2009, http://www.aprmtoolkit.saiia.org.za/component/docman/doc_download/78-atkt-mozambique-country-report-2009-en.

16 In statistics it is useful to calculate 90% confidence intervals for each mean. Also known as 'error margins', they provide a sense of uncertainty attached to the means for each group due to the limited sample size. The difference in the means between APRM members and non-members is about (3.2), with a 90% confidence interval running from (0.9) to (5.5). Because the entire interval is positive, the null hypothesis that they could be due to random variation can be rejected (with 90% confidence). This means that the IIAG scores of APRM members and non-members differ significantly.

17 The 90% confidence interval is running from (-4.6) to (0.8).

It stands at (0.2).¹⁸ It is noteworthy that whether a country has been reviewed by the APRM or not does not make a significant difference to its governance score. If having an APRM review improved governance through reforms, IIAG scores should have improved. Yet the data shows that countries that have undergone the review do not necessarily perform better than ones that have not, whether they are APRM members or not.

The data supports a case of self-selection of states more inclined to improving their governance and thus joining the APRM, rather than a causal link to improving their governance through the APRM

Overall, APRM member states have shown a significantly more favourable trend in IIAG scores between 2003 and 2015. This insight provided by the data is consistent with SAIIA's qualitative research. APRM member states often have a 'reformer' image.¹⁹ The rationale behind this is that by voluntarily acceding to the mechanism, they have demonstrated the will to improve governance. Therefore, the data supports a case of self-selection of states more inclined to improving their governance and thus joining the APRM, rather than a causal link to improving their governance through the APRM. Yet due to the dangers of generalising, it is important to note that reasons for joining the APRM may differ and not always be altruistic in nature. They could include genuinely trying to improve governance, using it as a foreign policy exercise, attracting donor funding or merely using it as a façade to cover up undemocratic practices.

As pointed out above, a number of countries that have already undergone the review display authoritarian tendencies. Data from Freedom House's Freedom in the World Index²⁰ certainly does not support the image of all APRM states as 'reformers'. This index measures the extent of political liberties and civil rights, assigning an overall 'freedom rating' and declaring a state as 'not free', 'partly free' or 'free'. Freedom is one of the most important aspects of a democratic state. It can manifest in different forms – personal liberties, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and others. Freedom House indicates that only four out of the 17 – less than one-third of the reviewed APRM states – are currently classified as 'free' (Benin, Ghana, Mauritius and South Africa). The majority fall under the 'partly free' category, while four states (Algeria, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda) are deemed 'not free'.

The outlook is not much better in *The Economist* Intelligence Unit Democracy Index,²¹ which measures the state of democracy across five different categories: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation and political culture. In addition to a numerical score, the index also classifies states across four regime types: full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid regimes and authoritarian regimes. Currently only one APRM-reviewed state – Mauritius – is classified as a 'full democracy', while four more (Ghana, Lesotho, South Africa and Zambia) fall into the 'flawed democracy' category. Nine states are considered to be 'hybrid regimes', while three (Algeria, Ethiopia and Rwanda) are seen as 'authoritarian'.²²

18 The 90% confidence interval is running from (-1.9) to (2.3).

19 Herbert R & S Gruzd, *The African Peer Review Mechanism: Lessons from the Pioneers*. Johannesburg: SAIIA (South African Institute of International Affairs), 2008.

20 Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org>.

21 *The Economist* Intelligence Unit, <http://www.eiu.com>.

22 *Ibid.*

Governance, in this context, should therefore not be seen as merely the promotion of democracy, personal freedoms and liberties. Rather it is an encompassing framework of governing, providing access to and distributing all varieties of goods in the country – from political to economic to social. This is supported by the high scores achieved by APRM-reviewed states in socio-economic opportunity and human development categories, rather than in categories dealing with safety and the rule of law, and participation and human rights.

It is also important to note that non-reviewed APRM members collectively started from a much lower base score (43.9) than the group that was reviewed (54.6). The initial difference between the two groups was (10.7), in 2003. Arguably it is easier to improve lower scores than higher ones. Liberia is a case in point here. Similarly to Sierra Leone, which was the most improved in the first group, it is also a post-conflict state. Liberia went from an overall score of (30.3) in 2003 to (50.7) in 2014, showing an improvement of (20.4), which is almost twice as much as Sierra Leone did in the same period (10.4). Undoubtedly this also influenced the overall score of the non-reviewed states. This suggestion is made to analyse possible statistical bias and reasons for the differences in scores, and not to diminish the accomplishments of the non-reviewed states, achieved without any help from the APRM.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is value in posing the counterfactual ‘What if?’ question. What might the outcome have been if these countries had not started the intensive and inclusive societal dialogues on governance that the APRM review demands of states that sign up to the process? Unfortunately there is not an obvious and direct positive correlation between the governance indices scores and the countries that have undergone APRM review. While some countries have shown improvement, others have regressed. It seems that the intent to democratise and improve governance is not always sufficient, and needs to be backed up by strong political will in terms of implementing reforms. Does this suggest that the APRM is not taken seriously? While this would be an overstatement, it is certain that the APRM reports make numerous recommendations, most of which are not followed through on in the process of NPoA implementation. Yet the APRM is there for member states to utilise. The APRM then is a mechanism that is used to its fullest where there is sufficient political will on the part of a member state.

The voluntary nature and principles of the APRM would need to be changed in order to ensure that all member states implement recommendations. Official APRM rules and processes do have provisions for non-compliance with recommendations. The mechanism’s highest decision-making body – the Committee of Participating Heads of State and Government (APR Forum) – may put governments on notice of its intention to proceed with appropriate measures in the case of non-compliance. Yet such measures have never been invoked and this inaction had dire consequences; in the form of post-electoral violence in Kenya and incidences of xenophobia-related violence in South Africa. The respective APRM reports had warned of possible violence in both cases. However, the question of sovereignty is an important one in these matters. Would states be willing

The voluntary nature and principles of the APRM would need to be changed in order to ensure that all member states implement recommendations

to cede their sovereignty and allow their peers to dictate domestic governance policies? This seems an unlikely scenario in the current environment, especially without strong incentives to do so. Yet without a way to influence member states, the APRM is open to criticism of being a 'paper tiger'. On the other hand, there is an argument that the voluntary commitment to undergo review imbues the process with credibility, and its successes will serve to attract more members.

Even so, theoretical speculation is not sufficient. Given the fact that the mechanism has entered its 13th year, it needs to do more to justify its existence and show the value addition to sceptics, members and non-members alike.

An Extraordinary Summit on the APRM was due to take place from 10–11 September 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya as one of the steps to revitalise and strengthen the mechanism. A last-minute postponement took everyone by surprise and was disappointing for the civil society organisations (CSOs) that had travelled to the country to support the resuscitation of the APRM. These CSOs nevertheless convened and issued a strong statement to express their disappointment and call for much-needed reforms of the APRM. The demands were as follows:²³

- urgently fill the vacant leadership positions within the APRM structures, in particular the chief executive officer (CEO) of the APRM Secretariat and other senior staff;
- review the current funding mechanism to support a financially healthy, reliable and sustainable APRM, and urge all members to pay their annual contributions and all arrears owing;
- develop an induction programme for new heads of state and government to ensure that they are fully familiar with the APRM, its operations and objectives;
- review the status of member states that have acceded to the APRM but have made little progress towards their self-assessment or CRRs and determine the conditions under which membership can temporarily be suspended until such time as a member state is ready to fulfil its voluntary obligations;
- make public all APRM NPoA Implementation Reports, and encourage more visible implementation of the NPoA recommendations;
- create space for civil society to engage the APRM at all levels to enhance the work of the mechanism, including participation in all APRM meetings; and
- demonstrate the value of the APRM reports by encouraging debate at the highest levels of government, both continentally and nationally, regarding the findings of and lessons learned from the APRM reports.

The extraordinary summit ultimately took place on 29 January 2016 in Addis Ababa. South African Prof. Eddy Maloka was appointed as the permanent CEO, which meant that the first demand, at least, was partially met. Yet the rest remain unfulfilled. Support

23 See SAIIA, 'Statement by African civil society on the postponement of the 2nd Extraordinary Summit of the African Peer Review Mechanism Heads of State and Government Forum, Nairobi, September 2015', http://www.saiia.org.za/doc_download/874-civil-society-organisations-csos-statement.

to civil society to engage on an ongoing basis with governments and other stakeholders on the outcomes of the APRM reviews is particularly important in this regard. In the past few years, while many have written off the APRM as a failing initiative, CSOs working on the mechanism have kept its public profile alive and actively advocated for its revival.

Innovative financing mechanisms to support ongoing civil society engagement with the APRM are a challenge, not only for African governments and the mechanism itself but also for external development partners that are interested in good governance outcomes in the region. The APRM is also experiencing difficulties in collecting dues from member states, coupled with a drop-off in contributions from development partners, which puts the entire system at risk. It is worth exploring with all the stakeholders involved – particularly in the region – how best to facilitate and enable this last objective, especially in view of the continent and its citizens' quest for improved governance, peace and stability and socio-economic development.

Bad governance – political, economic, corporate and social – remains a challenge for many countries, and is a blockage to development. But certain African states are making major strides forward. Sometimes this progress is unbalanced and economy is prioritised over transparency and human rights. In other cases creating the right laws and policies does not always translate into the improved lives of citizens. Yet more countries are demonstrating the will to change. Whether the APRM can be credited with this progress is, however, a different question. The APRM review can only achieve so much in a country – namely identify governance challenges and point to solutions. The rest depends on the national government's political will to reform.

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Jan Smuts House, East Campus, University of the Witwatersrand
PO Box 31596, Braamfontein 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)11 339-2021 • Fax +27 (0)11 339-2154
www.saiia.org.za • info@saiia.org.za