



Concept Note

EISA's 3rd ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

“The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) & Governance: A Civil Society Dialogue”

Maputo
Mozambique
14 – 16 October 2008

1. Introduction

The 2008 EISA symposium will be the third of its kind organised by EISA. The first symposium, in 2006, examined the challenges of conflict, democracy and development in Africa. The 2007 EISA symposium looked at sustainable democratic governance, asking the question whether democracy works in Africa. In 2008, the symposium focuses on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), drawing on the experiences of policy makers and civil society stakeholders; and interrogates the mechanism's impact on African governance since its inception in 2002. The key question which the 3rd EISA symposium seeks to address is “has the APRM had an impact on the governance landscape in participating states thus far?” In answering this question, the symposium will also seek to draw lessons from the early country experiences and identify areas where the APRM has had a notable impact, and areas where it can be improved.

2. Objective of the Symposium

The primary objective of the symposium is to interrogate the early successes and shortcomings of the APRM process, draw lessons for future participants in the APRM from early country experiences, and provide an opportunity for key stakeholders in the APRM process at many levels to directly engage with and debate these issues. One of the products of the symposium is the production of a collection of the key papers, discussions and debates by some of Africa's leading experts on the topics, published annually by EISA and distributed widely through its network of partner organisations. It is anticipated that the Symposium will contribute significantly to further improvements in the APRM process, and reinvigorate the debate regarding governance and development in Africa.

3. Problem Statement

The goal of the APRM is couched in ostensibly simple terms, seeking the development and improvement of policies and practices in order to achieve higher rates of economic development and the reduction of poverty in participating states i.e. improved governance practices lead to higher economic growth rates & poverty reduction (APRM Core document, 2003). Six years after its launch, seven states (Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Algeria & Uganda) have undergone the first step in the APRM process, namely developing baselines against which to measure future progress in improving governance practices. Where previously there was little information and data to assist a country undergoing peer review, or against which to assess the impact of the APRM on the governance practices and/or economic development in a state, there is now a growing body of such data available with which to suggest what the impact of the APRM has been in participating states. Whilst the lessons learnt from these early country experiences have been interrogated, little has been done to analyse how the APRM is altering or shaping the governance architecture in Africa, particularly in participating states. The 3rd annual EISA symposium therefore seeks to evaluate and interrogate the APRM's impact thus far.

4. Justification & Rationale

If the assumptions behind the APRM are correct (and there is good evidence to suggest that this is the case) and improved governance practices translate into higher economic growth, which in turn alleviates poverty, then assessing whether the APRM is presently having its desired impact on country participants is a crucial and valuable exercise. Six years after its inception, there is now sufficient evidence to at the very least make initial evaluations of the mechanisms impact in participating countries. By evaluating the outputs, outcomes and the impact of the APRM at multiple levels, the 3rd EISA symposium aims at stimulating and engendering debate from multiple stakeholders on what the impact of the mechanism thus far has been, and by implication, where the mechanism has succeeded and where it needs to be strengthened for improvement.

5. Stakeholders

The APRM process draws on inputs from three key groups of stakeholders, namely:

- (1) Government and state institutions;
- (2) The civil society organisations; and
- (3) The Corporate sector.

All three of these groups have an important stake in promoting improved governance practices.

Furthermore, the APRM examines the state of governance in a country under four thematic areas, namely:

- (1) Democracy and Political Governance;
- (2) Economic Management & Governance;
- (3) Corporate Governance; and
- (4) Socio-Economic Development.

Thus, stakeholders from all three groups, as well as country experts with experience in all four thematic areas will be in attendance at the 3rd EISA symposium.

6. Thematic areas

Examination of APRM Processes	Origins of the APRM APRM methodology Stages of APRM Process The National Programme of Action Timeframes in the APRM APRM Structures (focus on the Secretariat)
APRM, elections and continuity	Impact of changes in government to the APRM Impact of elections in the middle of the CSAR Impact of elections after the CSAR
Stakeholder engagement in the APRM	Has the APRM altered the way in which the following stakeholders function/cooperate with government: Civil Society Corporate Sector Labour Parliaments Political Parties Technical Research Institutes
Gender & the APRM	Gender dimensions of the APRM Is the APRM driving gender transformation in institutions? Gender balance throughout APR processes
Governance: Impact & results of the APRM	Impact of CSAR Impact of Report Impact of NPOA Increased Foreign Direct Investment? Strengthening institutions? Consolidation of democracy? Poverty eradication & development?
Role & relationship of donors & APRM	Funding of the APRM Donor inputs into the APRM (through reports & directly) Conditionality of aid

7. Outcomes of Symposium

The 3rd EISA symposium seeks to develop through the engagement of multiple stakeholders a clearer picture regarding the impact which the APRM has had on governance practices in participating states. Where possible, attempts will be made to achieve consensus from all participants on what some of the major impacts of the APRM have been, as well as note some of the contentious suggestions from stakeholders. By providing a platform for a discussion on the APRM's impact on governance practices in various states, the 3rd EISA Symposium seeks to foster further debate, monitoring and where applicable, advocacy regarding the impact of the APRM on governance practices.

8. Outputs of Symposium

There will be three main outputs of the 3rd EISA Symposium, namely:

- (1) A comprehensive conference report;
- (2) Policy briefs on key issues identified during the symposium;
- (3) A book-length publication including papers and resources from the symposium, published by EISA.

Additionally, presenters may wish to submit their papers for consideration in EISA's Journal of African elections, or submit them to other journals and publications.