

APRM Remarks in the 22nd CEPA annual session – United Nations

Theme: Urgently transforming institutions for a greener, more inclusive, and more resilient world at a time of multiple crises

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Application of the UN principles of effective governance for sustainable development for the achievement of the Sustainable (Item 6) - *Principle of participation and governance indicators*

Thank you, dear colleagues, for inviting the APRM to the annual CEPA session as an observer. We are delighted to be here and to sustain our collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) to build capacities of African institutions and government to achieve Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. My input will focus on the APRM efforts to nurture the principle of participation through our national and continental programs for good governance promotion and Agenda 2063 evaluation while providing quick reflections on the well-presented paper regarding the application of principle of participation.

Public participation indicators

1. Let me start by arguing that the APRM has been engaged with different organs to adopt a better engagement approach with member states and national stakeholders to ensure that **governance assessment reviews are taking place through an inclusive and participatory approach** with the engagement of different state and non-state actors. Our belief that **public participation is a human right stands in full agreement** with the discussion paper which referred to the international agreements endorsing the principle of participation and reasons for promoting such a principle. Likewise, it is aligned with AU standards and codes especially the African charter on democracy and good governance (ACADEG).

2. APRM tools including the comprehensive governance assessment questionnaire, governance gap analysis and the designated questionnaire of governance mechanisms for the implementation of both Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 equally evaluate aspects of public participation. The APRM thematic governance area of **socio-economic development** has a special section on **Encourage broad-based participation in the development** and its impact on decision making.

Under this section, we assess many qualitative indicators which are relevant to the strategies of public participation reflected on the paper. these indicators cover i) *the legal aspects of public participation* which evaluates the extend of political will to support public participation ,ii) **opportunities for ensuring effective participation of all stakeholders in the development of policies, mechanisms and monitoring-evaluation**, especially regarding fixing the national agenda, formulation and implementation of development policies, monitoring and evaluation of policies and feedback mechanisms; iii) **Participatory budgeting** for progressive programing approach to reach local communities; iv) **financial resources** allocated for promoting and ensuring broad-based participation of all stakeholders and lastly women and youth equal access to opportunities.

3. We equally adjusted our governance assessment's questionnaire to include **Resilience and disaster management** as fifth thematic area of APRM governance analysis to support resilient and efficient institutions in Africa to mitigate multiple crises. It has been brought to our attention the lack of preparedness and institutional capacities in various countries to mitigate COVID crisis, guided by our evidence-informed research across the continent. Likewise, we are initiating the **new Africa Governance Index** which addresses aspects of Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and pertinent indicators such as the enabling environment, national disaster risk reduction

framework, management and capacity development, investment in disaster Risk reduction (DRR), and lastly preparedness and responsiveness of institutions.

4. Observations from continental consultations with member states:

Thanks to our fruitful cooperation with UN DESA, we have sustained our annual continental workshop on the application of CEPA principles in Africa. In this regard, we have three following observations from our consultation with member states:

- ⇒ **First**, a broader participatory approach has been established with the citizens at local levels thanks to the national efforts put in place to accelerate Agenda 2030 and agenda 2063. However, *the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for strong Governments that are responsive, in charge of social policies, actualize their constitutions as part of their inherent design, commit to a “citizens’ government, and involve civil society through national-level councils with Ministers as focal points.*
- ⇒ **Second**, Throughout the APRM continental platform on VNRs and Agenda 2063 domestication, we noticed a common lesson learnt which spells to the *significant impact of Voluntary national and local reviews on engaging civil society, youth, and women in the VNR exercise. Yet, sustainability of these platforms is usually costly and lack predictability and funding. In addition, we need to ask ourselves, how do policy makers understand public participation? how far can the stakeholders be fully involved in implementation of initiatives, not only sharing opinions on national issues?*
- ⇒ **Third**, our forthcoming report on governance mechanisms for Agenda 2063 and 2030 noted that multi-stakeholder participation has improved over the past five years to develop responsive solutions across the continent especially after covid-19 crisis. Nevertheless, specificities of context in each African country endorse that one size-fits all approach is unrealistic, especially for the politically

transformed or post conflict countries. countries like Cameron, the Gambia, Mali, Comoros, and Sierra Leone are still pushing to create this pace for broad-based participation.

- in addition to that, I would like to give few reflections on the **strategies of public participation** as discussed on the paper:

First, on Free and fair elections, it is worth mentioning that this aspect is assessed thoroughly under the political governance aspect of APRM reviews and continental assessment of Agenda 2063- Aspiration three. Of course, the extent of which free elections are organised in Africa varies widely according to the national context and other factors. So far, **we witness an upward trend in Africa of free elections**. The role of regional economic communities and African union is applauded in encouraging ‘observatory’ missions during the elections period and most recently Kenya set the best practice. However, **free access to election is not equal to fairness. The question of fairness is quite relevant**.

⇒ connecting to this point, the third edition of our flagship Africa governance report focuses on unconstitutional change of governments in Africa of which six countries were open to APRM Assessment including Kingdom of Lesotho, Republic Sierra Leone, Republic of Burkina Faso, Republic of Chad, Republic of Comoros, and Republic of Guinea. This has been an interesting exercise which indicates readiness of countries to assess their political challenges and how to enhance participation and mind-set of policy makers towards good governance.

Second, leaving no one behind policies are co-related to effective participation. As our member states also reflected in CEPA workshop last year: *“The provision of universal social protection should be done in the context of empowering people, not making them more dependent on the State. More could be done to strengthen the*

science-policy interface as an element of sound public policymaking". Without lifting access to human basic needs and social equality, participation would remain a mediocre term.

*⇒ Therefore, the APRM took the initiative with various African experts and organs – led by Mme. Moleketi- to develop practical oriented toolkits on leaving no one behind principle's strategies, especially social equity, and inclusive financial policies. Further, we started **coordination with some government schools in Africa** like Kenya and South Africa schools of Government to support APRM in providing oriented capacity building training on CEPA principles for public civil servants. we believe that more scholarships for public civil servants in Africa are needed to capacitate them on agile institutional preparedness and responsiveness.*

I thank you,

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