

Remarks by Prof. Eddy Maloka

19th Session of Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)

Effective governance for sustainable development: putting principles into practice and reviewing outcomes [item 6]

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Good afternoon Excellencies and colleagues,

Allow me to express my sincere appreciation to the Chair of CEPA, Dr. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, and CEPA members for inviting the APRM to share our thoughts on African governance under the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 is a daunting crisis, although our continent has had a long history fighting pandemic disease including the recent Ebola outbreaks in Congo in 2019 and the Mano River Union countries in 2014. We also have had to deal with the rampages of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Malaria.

COVID-19 has revealed several vulnerabilities in African States. First, my own organization the APRM, although hailed as an early warning tool for the AU, was not able to adequately warn our Member States about their vulnerabilities to a shock such as the COVID pandemic. Second, the pandemic has exposed the fragilities and weak institutional capacities in many States, and this has affected the ability to react resolutely and safeguard lives and livelihoods.

The implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as Agenda 2063's goal 3 on Health and Wellbeing lies at the core of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Implementation will be tremendously affected by the unprecedented consequences of COVID-19 which will also affect other SDGs such as those on poverty, employment and economic performance in Africa. It is also becoming increasingly obvious that the responsiveness and preparedness of each country bears on its policy coherence, legislation, institutional strength, and adaptive capacities to mitigate disasters, investment in digitalization and the level of awareness of local citizens and governments to show resilience despite socioeconomic burdens, as well as the ability to collaborate and partner with non-state actors from civil society and the private sector.

Indeed, effective and inclusive institutions, SDG16, stand at the forefront of Africa's response to the pandemic, and this is of paramount importance for the implementation of the SDGs & Agenda 2063.

We have also had some positive responses from Member States on our Continent. In a paper due to be published in the next few days by the APRM Secretariat, we report that

national responses from countries like Djibouti, South Africa, Rwanda, Kenya, Ghana, Senegal and Morocco show good leadership and institutional preparedness for the crisis. We also examine commendable practices from RECS such as ECOWAS that area leading the way in terms of sub-regional responses.

In light of the crisis, putting CEPA principles into implementation and practice becomes more urgent than ever before, particularly with the current fatigue in remote data collection, follow-up and monitoring on health statistics, adoption of inclusive and coherent healthcare policies in many countries to monitor the pandemic's proliferation and its impact on citizens' lives. Indeed, the crisis underlines certain CEPA principles such as sound policymaking, collaboration, transparency, and participation as enablers for comprehensive national healthcare strategies.

As Africa's self- governance assessment tool, the APRM is currently developing a new matrix to assess member states' awareness and implementation of the institutional aspects of SDG 16/CEPA Principles, as produced by this Committee in 2018. Following the successful organization of the APRM-UNDESA Workshop on CEPA principles last October 2019 in Pretoria, the APRM has, based on several recommendations, developed a baseline study that sheds light on these principles (effectiveness, accountability, and inclusiveness) and its operationalization in Africa.

Given COVID-19, the study has included a special section in the developed survey to examine the implications of COVID-19 on CEPA principles and what opportunities the crisis offers to invest further in strengthening CEPA principles at national levels through APRM Governance structures. Accordingly, the study also responds to the Africa joint continental strategy for COVID-19 Outbreak through promoting evidence-based public health practices for surveillance, prevention, and control of COVID-19 through a whole of Government approach.

Dear Colleagues, Excellencies,

Regional mechanisms and Economic Communities are key drivers of Africa's progress in combating the pandemic. Some African RECs are providing necessary guidance to member states on the best practices, policies, and capacity building to mitigate the effects of COVID-19. RECs also play an essential role in assisting Member states in developing their strategies for the implementation of SDGs. Over the last two months, we have experienced different lockdown strategies and national policies across the globe, and it is safe to state that the one-size-fits-all model of quarantine/lockdown cannot work to curb the epidemic.

Many developed countries were not able to flatten the curve or prevent the virus from community spread or indeed a second wave after an initial loosening of the lockdowns. Lesson learnt underline the importance of national and regional public institutions that have performed with a sense of effectiveness, transparency of expenditure and sharing information while remaining accountable to their States and Africa as a whole.

In responding to COVID-19, *the APRM has established a taskforce with representatives from member states to regularly report on governance and share experiences and awareness on their responses. The preliminary report from this taskforce is due in the next few days.*

We have also launched Virtual platforms for dialogue with AU member-states and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) for follow up by AU Member State on their Voluntary National Reviews for HLPF 2020. The APRM also encourages member states to share their expertise on COVID-19 while preparing for VNRs. The virtual dialogues include voices from different segments of African societies including youth and civil society and allow these important sectors to engage with APRM to further a resilient social contract between African citizens and AU organs.

APRM is also updating the APRM questionnaire for conducting countries governance reviews to be fully aligned with the SDGs/Agenda 2063 indicators and to include a new section assisting Member States to measure "resilience".

We are also developing a Knowledge Hub on Governance to report on and Agenda 2063 and continental actions taken in this regard.

The APRM appreciates the input provided by the CEPA Secretariat in highlighting the role of APRM and its monitoring tools for governance performance in Africa, including the Africa Governance Report. We have also recently launched a report on "*Governance mechanisms for the implementation of agenda 2063 and SDGs,*" which utilized a specially designed questionnaire to assess the level of awareness, domestication, partnerships, and coordination at national levels for the attainment of both agendas. I welcome my dear colleague from the OECD, Ms. Tatyana, who as a speaker, took part at the launch event in Victoria Falls.

The APRM-OECD partnership is dynamic and we value the OECD's partnership including the sharing of experiences and best practices on tackling the pandemic, such as resilient healthcare, employment and skills, education, investment, and economic policies and environmental issues too. We believe that development cooperation must not only be translated through financial flows, but also technology and knowledge transfer. We hope to take our partnership forward with the OECD, primarily through the Global Hub for SDGs. The APRM is currently studying a proposal to replicate the OECD-MENA governance program in other African regions and countries so as to build and enhance capacities in defined priorities, including strengthening national statistical capacities, gender, corporate governance, budgeting, and policy coherence for SDGs.

Lastly but not least, I shall emphasize that COVID-19, despite its hardships, remains an opportunity for many countries to reallocate resources and capacities to implement the SDGs goals while also enhancing institutions' accountability and efficiency, which speaks to SDG 16. Equally, African leaders and the African Union shall strategize partnerships and

multilateral cooperation (SDG 17) to promote the healthcare system and recovery of Africa citizens and economies in the long term.

I thank you.