CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Since African states first began to obtain their political independence in the 1960s, the leadership has tried to build governance systems that would work for the people and bring development. Successive administrative reforms and development strategies were initiated to achieve this purpose. Today, however, Africa is still grappling with autocratic rule, bad governance and the plight of underdevelopment. The African Union, reformed from the old OAU, inaugurated in 2002 a new plan for economic growth and poverty reduction in Africa, the "New Partnership for Africa's Development" (NEPAD). Philosophically, NEPAD takes its roots in the thinking that Africans should own and drive their countries to recovery. At the core of the NEPAD is the recognition that bad leadership and governance on the continent are the fundamental factors for Africa's predicament, and therefore addressing them is a *sine qua none* condition to achieve sustainable development. Subsequently, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was established in 2003 as a cooperation effort between African states and an indication of African leaders' commitment to tackle bad governance. The APRM is a mechanism to assess government performance and encourage the implementation of policies and practices of good political, economic and corporate governance in Africa, which would lead to political stability and socio-economic development.

This research has sought to answer the following question: to what extent can the African Peer Review Mechanism address the critical issues of political governance in Africa? In the area of political governance, the APRM seeks to consolidate a constitutional political order in which democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law, the separation of powers, and effective, responsive public service are realized to ensure sustainable development and

a peaceful and stable society. Specifically, the key objectives to be achieved are:

- prevent and reduce intra- and inter-country conflicts;

- constitutional democracy, including periodic political competition and opportunity for choice, the rule of law, a Bill of Rights and the supremacy of the Constitution are firmly established in the constitution;

- promotion and protection of economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights as enshrined in all African and international human rights instruments;

- upholding the separation of powers, including the protection of the independence of the judiciary and of an effective Parliament;

- ensure accountable, efficient and effective public office holders and civil servants;

- fighting corruption in the political sphere;

- promotion and protection of the rights of women;

- promotion and protection of the rights of the child and young persons; and

- promotion and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, including internally displaced persons and refugees.

To respond to the research question, the study has examined the state of political governance in Africa by focusing on areas considered most contentious and challenging among those that the APRM seeks to address. These are:

- constitutional democracy, which entails among other things, periodic political competition and opportunity for choice;

- separation of powers between the executive, legislature and the

judiciary;

- accountable and effective public service; and

- fighting corruption.

To determine the ability of the APRM to address these problems of political governance, the study also analysed the protocols of engagement, that is, the rules and procedures of the APRM, which are likely to facilitate or impede the attainment of the APRM objectives. Before outlining the main conclusions, a summary of the chapters that constitute this thesis is provided.

SUMMARY

Chapter One introduces and provides the background of the study. Specifically, the chapter narrates the history of Africa's development policies since independence time in the 1960s up to date. It highlights the main policies adopted by African leaders to lever Africa out of the plight of poverty and underdevelopment and why these policies have failed to achieve these objectives. The chapter pays specific attention to three main development policies. The first is the Lagos Plan of Action adopted in 1980 by African leaders. It is the first indigenous plan to be put forward by Africans themselves in an attempt to solve development problems and challenges of the continent. The second is the African-Alternative to Structural Adjustment Programme adopted in 1989 as an African response to the hardships of IMF and World Bank' structural adjustement policies imposed on poor countries of Latin America and Africa in the beginning of 1980s. Finally, the chapter elaborates on the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which is the latest in a series of Africa's development plans (adopted in 2002). The chapter highlights the NEPAD's objectives, its governing structures, and the strategies for achieving its goals. The chapter also introduces the African Peer Review Mechanism, the mandate of which is to monitor the political and economic governance of African states in order to achieve the ultimate goals of NEPAD. Finally, Chapter One delineates the research problem, determines the objectives, significance and the limitations of the study.

Chapter Two outlines the research methodology used in collecting, analysing and interpreting data for the study. It explains the rationale of choosing the qualitative case study method as opposed to other research strategies. The depth and multiperspective approach of the case study lends itself well to the analysis of the new and unique African Peer Review Mechanism. Here, the case study approach was used to obtain a holistic examination of the APRM, rather than the generalisation of the findings. The chapter also indicates the sources used to gather information on the APRM. These are documentation, archival records and interviews. It details techniques used for data analysis and interpretation. Finally, the chapter discusses the issues of ethics, validity and reliability and how they were addressed to ensure that the study is ethical, valid and reliable.

Chapter Three provides the theoretical framework of the study. The first section of this chapter starts by providing an overview of the main theories that have influenced the study and practice of public administration, from the managerial approach to the current governance approach. The second section reviews the literature on the NEPAD and the APRM. Since the NEPAD and the APRM are about good governance and regional economic integration, the concepts of governance, peer review, regionalism and globalisation are examined in some detail. The section critically analyses the elements identified in the literature for good governance and the relationships between these elements and development. The chapter concludes by proposing a definitional framework within which to understand governance as used in this study. Governance in this research is used to mean the exercise of state authority and provision of leadership in the process of achieving common societal objectives and interests. Good governance, which is a subset of governance, requires effective leadership, appropriate regulatory frameworks, competent and professional public service, and public participation in decision-making.

Chapter Four is a comprehensive analysis of leadership and governance systems in Africa. Although, the focus is on the post-independence era, the chapter describes governance and leadership models that have been used in

pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Africa. The chapter elaborates on factors that have influenced bad governance in Africa. These include colonialism, foreign policies, ethnicity and corrupt leadership. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the experiences of the democratisation process in different African countries. At the centre of this review stands the role and state of institutions, such as the judiciary, parliament, political parties, and civil society in the sustenance of democratic governance. This chapter also reviews the key instrument of policy implementation, namely, the bureaucracy. It looks at administrative reforms and the extent to which they have performed. Finally, the chapter reviews regionalism in Africa. The emphasis is on regional political, economic, and administrative cooperative initiatives, which have been taken since independence for the peace and stability of African states and economic development. The challenges in this regard are also highlighted.

Chapter Five is the case analysis of the African Peer Review Mechanism. This chapter critically analyses the APRM in relation to its purpose, its institutional design and operations. The merits and potentials of the mechanism are determined, and its challenges and obstacles are exposed and analysed.

Chapter Six finally puts together the findings of the research, and proposes recommendations to problems and challenges identified. It starts by providing a brief but concise description of the APRM: the purpose, the areas for review, the structures of governance, and the process of peer review in the APRM. This is followed by an outline of the findings of this research. The study does not pretend to be exhaustive; therefore, suggestions for further research on the APRM are also provided.

CONCLUSIONS

THE APRM IN A NUTSHELL

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is an instrument established in 2003 by African leaders to monitor and evaluate the political, economic and corporate governance of African states. Its main purpose is to foster the

adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated continental economic integration.

The idea of establishing an African monitoring mechanism came as a response to governance challenges and problems that the continent has experienced since independence and the consequent political instability and poor economic performance. It is hoped that the peer review exercise will enable African states to objectively assess their performance and adopt effective policies and practices that will lead to political stability, high economic growth and sustainable development. The process of peer review also provides participating countries a framework to exchange ideas and strategies on how to deal with effects of globalisation.

Participation in the APRM is voluntary and open to all member states of the African Union. Furthermore, the mechanism of peer review is non-adversarial, which means it does not imply sanctions to poor or non-performers. The success for compliance with the APRM principles and objectives rests on the mutual understanding and commitment to the values, and acceptance of standards and criteria set to assess government performance.

The African peer review process is led and managed by four institutional structures. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government participating in the APRM is the ultimate decision-making body on the APRM operations and decisions. It is aided by the APR Panel composed of seven Eminent Africans, who have distinguished themselves in the areas related to the APRM work, their high moral stature and commitment to the ideals of Pan Africanism. Under the supervision of the APR Panel, the APR Secretariat carries out peer reviews. It provides the technical and managerial support services for the APRM. A number of partner institutions have been designated by the Forum of African Heads of State and Government participating in the APRM to assist the APRM Secretariat conducting technical reviews. These are the appropriate organs or units of the African Union, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the United

Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Africa. A pool of experts, mostly from Africa, is occasionally used to conduct technical assessments.

Every country undergoing the peer review is requested to establish the APR Focal Point and the APR National Coordinating Mechanism. The APR Focal Point acts as the coordinator of APRM activities at the national level, and the liaison office between the government and the APRM Secretariat in South Africa. The APR National Coordinating Mechanism oversees the peer review process at the national level. It is broad-based and inclusive of all stakeholders: government, business and civil society, to ensure objective and credible peer review.

The process of the African peer review is carried in five stages. The first phase consists of background analysis by the APRM Secretariat and a self-evaluation by the country under peer review. The APR Secretariat documents the political, economic and corporate governance and development environment in the country to be reviewed from various sources, national, regional as well as international bodies. At the same time, the country conducts a self-assessment based on the APRM standard questionnaire, and then develops a preliminary "Programme of Action" to respond to identified shortcomings. On the basis of the background document and the preliminary Programme of Action developed by the country under review, the APR Secretariat develops an "Issues Paper", which highlights identified challenges in the areas of the APRM.

The second phase involves the country visit by a team of examiners of the APRM, which carries wide interviews with all stakeholders to get hands on information and perspectives of various stakeholders on the level of political and economic governance and development of the country. This phase involves also the discussion with governments and other stakeholders of the two documents, the preliminary Programme of Action and the Issues Paper.

The third phase entails the preparation of the APR Team report, which is based on the findings from the country review visit and the desktop research

undertaken by the APR Secretariat before the visit. The draft report is first discussed with the Government of the concerned country to ensure the accuracy of the information and to provide the Government with an opportunity both to react to the substance of the draft report.

At the fourth stage, the APR Secretariat submits the country review report to the APR Panel, which reviews the report, makes recommendations on the report, and submits it to the APR Forum. The Assembly of Participating Heads of State (APR Forum) considers the report and accompanying recommendations and submits its decisions to the Head of State or Government of the reviewed country.

The last phase entails making public the final APRM report of the assessed country in key regional and continental structures, such as the Summit of the AU, the PAP, PSC and ECOSOCC.

MERITS AND POTENTIALS OF THE APRM

The APRM is a decisive instrument in promoting good political and economic governance in Africa. First, the African peer review allows participating countries to objectively self-assess their governance and policies in relation to regional and international standards and best practices. In this context, the APRM is a learning tool, through which participating countries can discuss, negotiate and strategise with their peers about governance and policy orientations.

Secondly, the peer review process gives the African civil society, the business as well as non-profit civic organisations, the opportunity to evaluate the performance of their governments but also to be part of the policy-making process, through the development of a Programme of Action. In all countries undergoing the peer review, the APRM has set off a process of dialogue between government institutions and civil society and business actors over governance and development issues and how these can be addressed. This is essential for the consolidation of democratic governance in Africa.

Thirdly, the APRM can contribute towards the achievement of regional goals. The APRM has the potential to reduce several impeding factors to regionalisation, thus pave the way for a successful regional cooperation and integration. Progress in the area of peace and conflicts resolution, would consequently lead to a peaceful and stable continent. Peace and political stability are essential to boost intra-regional trade, improve domestic savings as locals have more confidence in the stability of their countries and region, and attract foreign investments. Controlling corruption, establishing effective legal frameworks and harmonising economic and trade policies not only boost investors' confidence but also improve the macroeconomic environment, all of which have a positive impact on economic growth, intra-regional trade and economic integration.

Finally, the APRM provides a regional framework for policy cooperation and development between African governments and their development partners. Donors and other multilateral development agencies through various initiatives, such as, the G8-Africa Action Plan made commitments for "enhanced partnerships" for countries that would adhere to the principles of the APRM. Technically, participating in the African peer review is expected to increase financial flows, through increased development assistance (ODA flows) and private capital flows, to countries that open up their governance to scrutiny.

The main objective of the study has been to determine the capacity of the APRM to address critical issues of political governance in Africa. The driving research question has been "To what extent can the APRM address issues of political governance in Africa?" The study found that the African peer review is, indeed, taken seriously in Africa. Since its inception in 2003 until the time of writing (December 2005), twenty-three African states have signed the MOU on the APRM, thus voluntarily submitting to the peer review process. These are: Angola, Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa,

Tanzania and Uganda.

The process of peer review started with four countries, namely Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, and Mauritius that volunteered to begin the process. Rwanda and Ghana have reached the completion stage, and their final reports submitted to the highest authority on the African peer review process, the APR Forum, for consideration and adoption. In addition to these countries, a number of others have started their self-assessment process. These include South Africa, Uganda, Nigeria and Algeria. The fact that these countries have voluntarily accepted to be peer reviewed is an indication of their commitment to the principles of the APRM.

The study has found that the APRM is an important tool of cooperation, learning, and improving governance among involved African countries. The peer review process assists reviewed countries to be aware of weaknesses in their governances systems and practices. These countries also receive recommendations on best practices and standards of good political, economic and corporate governance. Most importantly however, the process of peer review sets off a process of dialogue between government and other societal actors, such as civil society organisations and the business sector on governance and policy issues. It is this dialogue that will lead to good political and economic governance. The peer review also facilitates negotiations and partnerships between involved governments and development partners as it increases confidence in the reviewed government. As such, the APRM is a powerful catalyst for good governance and development.

However, while the APRM is a decisive instrument to promote good political governance, it has no powers of enforcing its principles and values. The responsibility is upon individual governments to introduce and implement policy changes that are in line with good governance and development objectives. As evidenced in recent elections such as the 2005 presidential elections in Uganda, constitutional provisions have been changed to allow the President to run a third term. While fixed-term of office for leaders is one of the objectives for good political governance endorsed in the Declaration on

Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance, there is nothing the APRM can do to change this course of action. Similarly, if a government fails to curb corruption among its ranks, the APRM has no mechanisms to address that issue other than the mere exposure of issues and proposal of recommendations. However, it is hoped that the peer review will educate the public about their rights, broaden their understanding of governance, and exert pressure on public administrations and politicians to adopt policies and practices of good governance. Political and economic transformation, the ultimate purpose of the APRM is a long-term process. However, under certain circumstances, which are elaborated in the recommendations, the APRM can indeed achieve its goal.

Despite the benefits that the APRM promises to deliver, there are obstacles and challenges that may thwart its operations and effectiveness. The following are the most prominent challenges that the study has identified, and which need to be addressed for the peer review to be effective and sustainable.

OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES OF THE APRM

The APRM faces numerous obstacles and challenges. Some are of institutional nature, others are operational and technical. Institutional obstacles concern the voluntary nature of the APRM, lack of enforcement mechanisms, and leadership in Africa.

Voluntary participation

The APRM is a voluntary process. Making the APRM voluntary comes from the principle of respect of nation-state sovereignty, which is enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the AU. Participation in the APRM cannot be forced upon sovereign countries. Indeed, voluntary participation is the best way, which gives assurance that those countries that have freely agreed to enter into peer review agreements, are aware of the requirements and constraints brought by the APRM and would do what it takes to abide by the commitments they have made. However, voluntary participation to the APRM raises the question of the commitment of African leaders to the principles of good governance as

outlined in the NEPAD. It is absurd that African leaders make a collective commitment and pledge to good political and economic governance to promote the socio-economic development, yet oppose the instrument, which is supposed to help them improve governance. Voluntary participation undermines collective efforts to improve governance. It further undermines the authority and credibility of the APRM activities and objectives in Africa. Voluntary participation means that countries, which are willing and committed to good governance, may still be pulled back by neighbouring countries that are not reforming. For instance, political instability in one country may destabilise the whole bordering region politically as well as economically. Therefore, voluntary participation constitutes a serious impediment to the objectives of political stability, economic growth and regional integration that African leaders seek to achieve through the NEPAD and the APRM.

Absence of enforcement measures

Lack of enforcement measures is another impediment to the work of the APRM. The APRM assumes that participating countries will act in good faith, and that problems of non-compliance that may arise are to be found in financial constraints or political difficulties, which need to be solved through dialogue and capacity enhancing and not sanctions. Indeed, taking some measures against failing states may be a source of international discord and contention, which may jeopardize all cooperative undertakings in Africa. However, it is also naïve to assume that countries will act in good faith and implement policies, which are in line with APR reviews and recommendations. Various imperatives, internal as well as external have a bearing on decisions governments make. Governments may not comply simply because of lack of political will and support to the reforms. Some powerful interest groups may oppose, jettison the reforms. Thus, incentives that will lead countries to comply with the APRM are necessary to be built in the mechanism. Studies on incentives are very enlightening on how incentive schemes can lead members to behave in either compliant or non-compliant ways. Enforcement measures are those incentives that compel countries to comply with the commitments they made. They are essential in ensuring that the rules and objectives, to

which all countries commonly agreed are observed and achieved.

African leadership

African leadership has largely failed to provide strategic vision and effective governance needed for political stability and socio-economic development. Instead, African leaders have exercised public authority and used public resources for their own personal ends. The practice has led to the development of behavioural leadership that undermines state capacity to deliver its basic functions, such as security, food, shelter, and health care to the people. As a result, Africans suffer from all sorts of ills, including hunger, wars, diseases, and pervasive poverty despite the continent's wealth in natural resources.

Continental institutions and mechanisms, such as the old OAU, have done very little to change this situation. The OAU was more a club of solidarity and protection of autocratic and corrupt African leadership than a forum for collective and constructive responses to the socio-political and economic challenges the continent and African peoples have faced since independence. The nature of political leadership in Africa suggests that the mere institutionalisation of the APRM is not a guarantee of adherence to the principles of good governance as outlined in the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate governance. Despite the general acceptance of the principles and values of good governance contained in the Declaration, many African leaders continue to manipulate their constitutions and political processes in manners that undermine good governance, peace and economic development. They show little commitment to institutions of governance they have created, including the APRM. The fact that less than half of member states of the AU have so far agreed to be peer reviewed is a testimony to this behaviour.

Indeed, the longstanding culture of non-interference in domestic affairs is the big challenge to the APRM and the peer pressure, which is expected to be exercised between peers. Breaking with this past is the ultimate test put before African leaders in order to drive their countries to political and

economic revival. Thus, political commitment and leadership are vital for effective peer reviews and good governance. Without it, any statements and public policy documents on good governance initiatives remain merely rhetorical.

Financial problems

The African Peer Review Mechanism faces the challenges of financial constraints. The APRM is supposed to be funded by contributions from participating countries. Financial support from donors while sought is not considered the main source of funding. Each participating country is required to avail a minimum of US $100, 000 for the operationalisation of the APRM. This amount however does not include funding the APR processes at the country level. This means that at the national level the concerned country must fund the peer review activities and processes.

While funding the process from African coffers would ensure African ownership and leadership of the APRM, many African countries have failed to pay their contributions. Counting on foreign financial support also is not sustainable, and it may jeopardise the independence and credibility of the APRM as donors may attempt to influence the process. Funding limitations may explain the reluctance of some African countries, especially those that are well off, as they consider their participation a waste of resources and an unnecessary burden. African leaders should, therefore, develop some objective formula, which would look at how every participating country can contribute according to its financial capacity. The formula needs to be in line with AU provisions, in particular, the principle of sovereign equality, to avoid problems that might arise from "big brother" attitude. It is imperative to have a stable source of funding. Ignoring this would be signing a death warrant of the APRM.

Operational and administrative obstacles

These include various problems resulting from technical aspects of the APRM and implementation challenges. First, the evaluation content developed for the

APRM is too broad and too detailed to be professionally handled given the limited human and financial resources both at the APRM Secretariat and country level. The APRM is a comprehensive assessment of four areas of governance, the democracy and political governance, economic, corporate and socio-economic development. It defines 24 major objectives to be achieved, some 78 criteria and 93 examples of indicators that must be evaluated. The APR Secretariat has few experts in the political, corporate and socio-economic governance, who provide research and analysis, coordinate the work and compile the reports. Although the Secretariat is assisted by partner institutions (UNDP Bureau for Africa, UNECA, ADB, and some units of the AU) and consultants in conducting the technical assessments, these are not full-time dedicated to the work of the APRM. In comparison with 2000 permanent staff of the OECD Secretariat, the APRM Secretariat is indeed understaffed. It is suggested that the Secretariat be strengthened and the content of the APRM questionnaire be revised to make it more focused by narrowing it to those priority areas, which are essential and sine qua none to attain the socio-economic development objectives as outlined in NEPAD.

The other problem is that the APRM Secretariat has no financial management authority, which hinders its operations and affects its ability to effectively perform its responsibilities. Currently, funds for the operations of the APRM are managed by the UNDP (Trust Fund) and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA). This means lengthy administrative processing of financial demands of the APRM, which obviously delays its activities. This arrangement requires excellent coordination and communication between these three institutions, which is problematic in most bureaucratic settings because of the red tape.

Secondly, the credibility and effectiveness of the APRM does not only depend on the political will of African leaders to open up their governments to scrutiny, but also on the competence and administrative capacity of national institutions to carry out the peer review process. These include the public service, the legislature, the judiciary, political parties, human rights institutions, and civil society, which in their various capacities act as policy makers, implementers

or "oversight" bodies in the exercise of the peer review. Independence and competence of the legislature, judiciary, civil society, and the bureaucracy, are critical to conduct objective self-assessments. The challenge for the APRM is that these institutions in many African countries are weak or at best reasserting their roles. Addressing all the above-identified obstacles and challenges holds the key for successful and effective APRM.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the APRM faces many institutional and implementation hurdles, these can be overcome and allow willing states to improve their governance capabilities. Below are some recommendations, which outline what should be done to make the instrument of the African peer review successful and effective.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND PROVISION OF ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS

The NEPAD and the APRM are ambitious initiatives designed by Africans to respond to uniquely African challenges. They derive their legitimacy from African ownership and their success to a large measure hinges on Africans assuming leadership of the processes with the international community joining in partnership to support these efforts. It should be stressed that the *raison d'être* of peer review is to ensure that the policies and practices of member states of the AU conform to the agreed values, principles and standards contained in the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic, and Corporate Governance. Thus, peer review findings and recommendations help countries improve their policies and share best practices of good governance. Therefore, the APRM should not be seen as a mechanism of interference or control, but as an instrument of cooperation which affords African states the opportunity to compare policy experiences, exchange ideas on the best practices to adopt in order to improve their governance and achieve development objectives.

The political will pledged by African leaders is an essential but not sufficient

element to ensure the promotion of policies and practices of good governance and sustainable development. The principle of voluntary accession to the peer review is acknowledged as a sign of respect of state sovereignty, and indeed an expression of the democratic order of the APRM. However, voluntary participation undermines the collective efforts of addressing issues of governance and development in Africa.

Similarly, lack of clear enforcement measures highlights the weaknesses of the APRM. In any governance system, enforcement mechanisms are essential to ensure that role-players comply with the rules, and the objectives set are achieved. Enforcement measures are incentives (rewards or sanctions) that motivate countries to abide by the rules and implement the commitments they made, especially in the final Programme of Action. The danger of overlooking the issue of "enforcement mechanism" is that the peer review process may fall into the same trap of mere talk show as previous initiatives while little gets off the ground. Paragraph 24 of the APRM base document shows that African leaders have considered this issue as it states: "if the political will is not forthcoming from the Government, the participating states should first do everything practicable to engage it in constructive dialogue, offering in the process technical and other appropriate assistance. If dialogue proves unavailing, the participating Heads of State and Government may wish to put the Government on notice of their collective intention to proceed with appropriate measures by a given date". However, they have failed to be clear about what measures they would take if the political will is not forthcoming. African leaders should demonstrate their determination to achieve the political and economic transformation of the continent. Many countries appear to show interest in the NEPAD vision and projects, but reject the APRM as an unnecessary instrument. NEPAD and APRM initiatives would stand a better chance of success if they lay down clear protocols and guidelines of engagement. To this end the following is recommended:

First, a common understanding of what these initiatives are and what they seek to achieve must be reached among African states (leaders). Secondly, a funding formula based on country financial

capacity must be negotiated and determined. African leaders cannot keep on depending on donors to implement their initiatives. It is imperative that they commit financial resources to support these initiatives. Thirdly, measures of enforcement should be explored. A series of measures exist, which may motivate countries to participate in the APRM:

- *Regionalising the APRM: the peer review may be more acceptable to African countries and effective if instituted at the level of RECs. All African states belong to one or two RECs and there seems to be more of a sentiment of belongingness and allegiance to these regional structures than continental ones. The RECs may be more effective in ensuring that all member states go through the peer review, because they have the power to impose sanctions on recalcitrants, if necessary. However, regionalising the APRM can be expensive, as it requires building the capacity (human, finance, technical) for the RECs to undertake this new mandate.*

- *Making access to and benefit from the NEPAD projects conditional upon accession to the APRM. This will require a country that wants to participate in a particular NEPAD project to accept the peer review. In fact, the peer review is necessary, because harmonisation of standards and practices may be required for some collective projects.*

- *Providing substantial aid packages through debt relief, preferential trade schemes and development assistance to countries, which accept to undergo the peer review. Not only would the aid package facilitate the implementation of the Programme of Action developed from the peer review process, but it would also act as an incentive for countries to join the APRM.*

DONORS' SUPPORT AND MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Domestic political commitments alone cannot tackle governance issues. The thesis argues that national governance cannot be understood in isolation from the international environment, which influences it to a great deal. Thus, consolidation of good governance in Africa will greatly depend on the support and consistency of the international community in its aid and development policies. The history of governance and development in Africa reveals how foreign policies have been inconsistent in relation to democracy and good governance, which has encouraged manipulative practices of authoritarian leaders and allow them to sustain repressive regimes. The G8-Africa Action Plan has pledged to support African countries, which uphold the principles and practices of good governance through the instrument of the APRM. Developed countries and their institutions must therefore be held accountable for meeting these financial commitments and their consistency in support of democracy and good governance on the continent. Countries that agree to undergo the peer review process should be financially supported, in particular to implement the Plan of Action, which is the result of the peer review process. Financial incentives through debt relief, preferential trade schemes and greater aid flows are high motivating factors that would compel African countries to join the APRM and rigorously undertake and sustain political and economic reforms. Therefore, in this regard the following is recommended:

> *A mechanism that would monitor and evaluate donors' performance in relation to financial commitments they made for instance in the G8-Africa Action Plan, and the UN Resolution (57/7 of 2002) in support of the NEPAD/APRM should be established. The mechanism would be an effective enforcement measure for all role players involved in Africa's governance and development.*

PRESSURE FROM CIVIL SOCIETY

Interest groups and other organisations of civil society are powerful instruments that will make African governments more democratic, transparent, accountable and effective. Although the APRM insists on the involvement of

all stakeholders including civil society organisations and businesses in the self-assessment process, there are no clear guidelines on how these stakeholders should participate. The reality is that civil society and the general public have a little knowledge of the APRM, its objectives and processes. It is important to publicise the APRM and its work through the media and other communication tools and to ensure that the population can access the information on the APRM easily. The APRM process must be inclusive of all the voices of communities, especially the marginalised. To achieve, this there must be clear guidelines about participating in the APRM process at the country level. There is also the need to translate these documents into African languages to make the message of APRM accessible to the average person. It is recommended that:

> ***The APRM sets clear guidelines of participation of national stakeholders. These should include issues, such as the size and composition of the APR National Commission, population diversity representation, and country geographic representation. The APRM questionnaire should be translated into local languages to facilitate the participation of national stakeholders. Care should be taken to ensure that the voices of all segments of the population are heard and represented in the APRM evaluation.***

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Strong and effective institutions are essential to the success of the peer review process and to the building of good governing states. Institutions, which are the catalyst and custodian of good governance, such as the legislature, the judiciary, the ombudsman, the auditor of accounts, and civil society, must be strengthened and their independence promoted. The findings from the peer review will be effectively implemented if there are institutions with sufficient power and integrity to ensure that policies and recommendations contained in the Programme of Action are translated into binding political commitments for implementation. Similarly, the bureaucracy, which is the principal implementing agent of public policies, requires

continuous capacity building to be on top of its challenging duties. However, institutions will not alone change the status quo in political governance if people are still suffering from ignorance and the forces of human misery. Poverty is closely linked to political processes in Africa. Institutions are often weak, because people running them are deprived; and so they are manipulated by self-centred leaders for their personal ends. The same applies to the public. Leaders often manipulate the electorate, the ultimate power holder in a democracy, through poverty relief promises to obtain votes. Only when Africans are free from hunger, illiteracy and the other ills of poverty, can democracy take root and institutions work effectively, as they cannot sell their conscience and choice to corrupt leaders. To this end, the following is recommended:

> *Build and strengthen the institutional, human and financial capacity of institutions of governance, such as the parliament, the judiciary, and other public "oversight" bodies, and promote their independence so that they can effectively perform their functions. Furthermore, programmes of poverty reduction must take centre stage in the whole process of the African peer review. Thus, integration of the final Programme of Action from the peer review with other national development plans, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategic Programme, is imperative.*

DOMESTICATING THE APRM

The APRM in its search to foster policies and practices of good governance must avoid the one-fits-all model to governance. While the values and principles of good governance are universal, the cultural and socio-political differences that characterise African polities must be recognised and taken into consideration. The socio-political and economic realities of post-war countries such as Rwanda, Liberia and Burundi, are not similar to those of stable and peaceful countries, for instance. The ethnic, racial, regional and cultural cleavages, where they exist, must be handled with care when policy changes are proposed considering that countries' histories are different. The

APRM is about Africans finding effective solutions to African problems. For instance, Rwanda came up with a unique traditional legal system "Gacaca" to provide a speedy trial for the more than 150000 detainees presumed guilty of genocide crimes. This is a local response to a specific problem. It may not subscribe to the conventional form of justice, but may provide effective and sustainable solutions for Rwandans. Therefore, domesticating the APRM is essential as circumstances differ from country to country. This does not mean compromising universal principles of good governance. However, a balance must be struck between international standards and best practices of governance and local realities in order to reach sustainable solutions to governance and development. Therefore, the following is recommended:

> ***The APRM should strike a balance between the promotion of international standards and best practices of good governance and the consideration of socio-political, cultural and economic specificities of African countries.***

TARGETING CRITICAL GOVERNANCE AND POLICY ISSUES

Another problem with the APRM is that it is overly ambitious, covering a broad range of issues, with insufficient resources to address them. Targeting calls for a more focused instrument: an APRM aligned with NEPAD governance and policy priorities and issues. The reasons for initiating the NEPAD and the APRM should guide the targeting. Targeting offers the necessary means to meet the challenges of an efficient and effective African peer review.

This study proposes that the APRM be narrowed to two focal areas, the political and economic governance, packing together similar important themes and avoiding duplication of objectives in the process. Political reviews are imperative to deal with political governance issues and to make political and administrative actors accountable. Similarly, an African dialogue on economic policies is essential despite the IMFand World Bank reviews.

The experience and research of economic policies in Africa (for instance the structural adjustment policies) has shown that African leaders have generally

had limited choice over their economic policy decisions. Economic reviews by Africans themselves provide opportunities to Africans to chart new paths for economic development and can counterbalance the reviews and recommendations of the Bretton Woods Institutions. The argument is that the APRM should focus on those issues that are essential for the achievement of key NEPAD objectives: peace and political security, high economic growth and economic integration. Other issues of governance can be left to the care of national governments and civil society organisations, and other international organisations, which are generally involved in social affairs. It is, therefore, recommended that the APRM questionnaire be streamlined along the above lines. Further research is necessary as the proposal below is a mere illustration of how the streamlining can be done.

> ***The APRM should be narrowed to the political and economic governance reviews. The political governance review aims to ensure peace and political stability. It should cover critical issues, such as intra- and inter-country conflicts; constitutional democracy and the rule of law; separation of powers and the independence of institutions; accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of the public service; and fight corruption. The economic governance review should focus on those areas essential to boost economic growth and economic regional integration. Critical to this review are issues of ensuring macro-economic stability; promoting sound public finance; trade and investment policies; effective and sustainable use of resources; and policies and strategies for faster regionalisation.***

SYSTEM OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The APRM is said to be a mechanism and a process of learning and sharing policy experiences and best practices among participating countries. However, the process of the APRM is silent on how this will be done. African leaders may exchange ideas on key points during the APR Forum. However, the APRM covers technical aspects of governance and policy that the APR

Forum is not appropriate for lengthy discussions and exchange of best practices. It is, therefore, important to create mechanisms allowing technical institutions such as ministries and other public institutions to share and to learn from each others' experiences and best practices. This can be done through regional seminars and workshops involving participating countries in the APRM to exchange their experiences of the peer review and lessons they have learned. Equally important is to create media of dissemination, such as the APRM annual reports, and electronic database, which will capture the experiences of countries in the process of peer review, the best practices and success stories to be emulated. This will assist other countries to be peer reviewed to understand the process and other technical requirements (such as how to involve national stakeholders). An electronic database offers an efficient mechanism for countries to access APRM related data and information. A regional network of stakeholders from various participating countries should also be envisaged. It would provide participants the opportunity to share experiences over political and economic governance, policy initiations, progress and difficulties in the implementation of the PoA.

> *It is recommended that mechanisms for sharing and disseminating best practices and lessons learned during the peer review process be established. The mechanisms may include regional workshops and seminars, an electronic database system, which captures the peer review process, evaluation findings and recommendations. Also regional networks of various stakeholders, such as the civil society network where these participants exchange information on the progress and difficulties in the implementation of their Programme of Action are needed.*

In conclusion, this study has analysed the ability of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to address critical issues of political governance in Africa. The analyses and suggestions positioned in this research project have illuminated the major impediments to the APRM. These include the voluntary nature of the APRM, and lack of both sufficient funding and strong political commitment to support the peer review. The APRM is a decisive instrument to

infuse good governance in Africa. The uniqueness of the APRM lies in its wide participatory process, thus giving the citizens the opportunity to partake in the governance of their country and the monitoring of public affairs.

However, the challenges identified by this study must be addressed to allow the APRM to achieve its ultimate purpose which is to create a continent that is politically stable and economically developed. Judging by past experience, Africa is renowned for the grandeur of its rhetoric in policy initiatives and lack of political will and commitment when it comes to implementation. There is no doubt that the road to a successful and effective APRM, and thus to a peaceful and prosperous Africa, lies in the future; but the foundation for Africa's political and economic renaissance is the present. It is therefore recommended that African leadership strongly supports the APRM through political commitment and provision of financial resources. National governance cannot be understood in isolation from international rules and activities that influence it. Thus, sustained support from donors and other multilateral development agencies to the APRM is paramount to the sustainability of good governance and APRM activities in Africa.

This study does not pretend to be exhaustive in its analysis of the APRM. Further research on a number of issues is necessary to further elucidate the various challenges facing the NEPAD and the APRM in their attempt to bring political stability and economic development in Africa. The aspects that require further investigation include the financing of the APRM to make it effective and sustainable; the design of a mechanism to monitor donors' performance in relation to NEPAD and APRM; cost-benefit analysis of the APRM; and evaluation of the impact of the APRM on peer reviewed countries.