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**The Struggle for Effective Change:
An Assessment of the APRM's
Achievements**

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1. Executive Summary

In July 2002 the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was established. This collective action taken by African Heads of State and Governments demonstrated the willingness to strengthen governance and achieve sustainable economic and political development. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was set up to monitor the commitment to the NEPAD and thereby increase responsibility and accountability. It was also designed to enable mutual assistance based on the concept of Peer Review, therefore seen as an effective and self-driven tool for enhancing change and strengthening governance throughout Africa. Over the last decade, 34 countries acceded to the APRM. This number demonstrates the want for self-improvement and transformation but cannot be regarded as a measure of performance for the APRM. Indeed only 17 countries have completed the first cycle of the APRM process. Even though the statistical and qualitative analyses performed in this thesis show marginal improvement in favour of the APRM, they do not show that governance has improved. The negligible progress recorded by the evaluation of governance performance from 2003-2012 as a function of the APRM demonstrate the APRM's ineffectiveness. The results reveal the issues encountered by the APRM's member states to profit from the APRM. The structure and process are found to be too complex to be adopted adequately by countries, consequently deferring beneficial outcomes. Member states lack commitment and compliance to the process as they do not encounter immediate benefits. To fully exploit the certainly existing potential of the APRM, the thesis recommends following actions to be taken. Based on (1) a common understanding of the mechanism and (2) its limitations, the APRM process can be simplified by (3) ensuring an efficient and comprehensible monitoring, and (4) incorporating SMART standards for recommendations. (5) Strengthening the existing capacities of the APR Secretariat, (6) conducting independent evaluations of the APRM and (7) clarifying the role of the African Union (AU) will further improve the capabilities and appeal of the APRM. As an efficient and effective tool the APRM is predestined to become the instrument to facilitate sustainable change in Africa.

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List of Abbreviations

AGA	African Governance Architecture
APR	African Peer Review
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CSM	Country Support Mission
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
GPS	Governance, Peace and Security Statistics
IIAG	Ibrahim Index of African Governance
IoP	Index of Progress
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPAD	New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development
NGC	National Governing Council
NPoA	National Programme of Action
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
SHASA	Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

2. Introduction

“The idea of an African Renaissance has once again re-emerged on the continental agenda” (Ajulu, 2001, p.1). While the idea of an emancipated Africa is not new, conditions now exist that allow for an actual transformation. To achieve the desired transformation, good governance is regarded as one the leading items in fostering sustainable development (Alence, 2004). This study refers to the Mo Ibrahim Foundation’s definition of governance “as the provision of the political, social and economic public goods and services 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” (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2014, head. IIAG Methodology, para. 1).

Although African countries are experiencing progress in the field of governance (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2013), ongoing debates around the issues related to governance show the need for clarification and guidance. Over the last decade, discussions have led to the establishment of instruments aimed at supporting and assisting efforts to improve governance. The formation of the African Union (AU) in 2002 addressed challenges in governance as a concern for development across Africa.

The creation of the New Economic Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) in 2003 portrayed Africa’s attempt at promoting good governance on the continent. Especially the accountability and monitoring component represented by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) demonstrates the willingness for autonomous and self-driven change.

The APRM, a voluntary self-monitoring exercise involving various stakeholders, was established to encourage constructive peer dialogue among Heads of State and governments. It advocates sharing experiences to expand on successful and exemplary practices across African countries. The APRM highlights best practices currently in place in Africa and underlines room for improvement. The APRM’s mandate is to “ensure that the policies and practices of participating states conform to the agreed political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards” (AU/NEPAD, 2003, p.2). By assessing countries in four categories, Democracy & Public Good Governance, Economic Governance & Management, Corporate Governance, and Socio-Economic Development, it informs national planning and decision-making processes.

But “the initial momentum that greeted the novelty of the APRM and the enthusiasm with its champions mobilized countries to sign-up appears to have waned¹” (UNECA, 2011a, p.18). When the APRM was launched, twelve countries acceded to the process, of which nine have completed the first review. Thereafter, African leaders such as Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade publicly confessed NEPAD’s failure. Wade stated in October 2007 that “nobody has yet understood anything from NEPAD and nobody implemented NEPAD” (Daily Observer, 2007). Later, NEPAD’s and the APRM’s sponsor, Thabo Mbeki agreed with Wade on the lack of progress since the establishment of NEPAD (Bond, 2010).

Even though external researchers have reviewed the relevance of the APRM’s role in African governance frameworks (Hope, 2005), and assessed its concept and design (Kanbur, 2004) they failed or were unable to address achievements supported by clear evidence. Consequently, this study aims to assess the evidence of the APRM’s achievements and evaluate its positive impact in a rather different approach than previous papers.

First, by looking at the implementation status of the recommendations provided and compiled in the APRM Country Review Reports and reviewed in the National Programme of Action (NPOA) Progress Reports progress can be demonstrated statistically. Results and consequent contribution of the APRM to nations’ and Africa’s governance structure are translated into comprehensive data. This produces the first numerically attested assessment of the APRM’s achievements.

Next, these results are matched and collated to the performances of several social and economic indicators from the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) published by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation. This step will provide evidence for the assumption that APRM Member Countries not only implement recommendations, but also experience improvements and profit from the costly and time-consuming activity.

The purpose of the comparison to the IIAG is to answer the question whether the African Peer Review Mechanism is an efficient and effective tool to “foster the adoption of policies,

¹ “The initial Champions of the APRM were President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and arguably, President Kuffour of Ghana. All of these leaders have left office due to term limitations or other reasons” (UNECA, 2011, p.18).

standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration” (AU/NEPAD, 2003, p.2).

This is particularly important given the continental and international community are losing confidence in the abilities of the APRM. An unbiased and readily understandable evaluation based on tangible information could not only improve the reliability and integrity of the mechanism but also build trust amongst involved stakeholders. As Osborne and Gaebler (1992) state: “If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support” (p.146).

In presenting the findings of these analyses, this study does not aim to frame a new mechanism or institution, rather proposes to reconnect the APRM to its objectives. Therefore this paper is structured as follows. The study begins with a review of the literature, summarizing main arguments and differences. An overview of the APRM and its process is provided in section 2. In section 3, the research and data analysis method of this study is described and explained. Section 4 reveals the results of the analysis, and section 5, the conclusions that can be drawn therein. Finally, based on this discussion of results, recommendations are proposed as to how we may maximize the APRM’s capabilities.

3. Conceptual Framework

In the late 20th century, the willingness to strengthen governance and achieve sustainable economic and political development was demonstrated by collective measures implemented in Africa. In particular, African Heads of State and governments gathered at the 37th Session of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in July 2001 and agreed on a “new vision for the revival and development of Africa” (AU/NEPAD, 2003c, p.1). They also established the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic & Corporate Governance to reaffirm their commitment to the promotion of democracy, governance and socio-economic development. To this effect, they set up the APRM to promote the responsibilities created under the Declaration.

In line with the transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) in July 2002, representatives gathered in Durban, South Africa implemented the New Economic Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), endorsing the importance and role of the APRM. More explicitly, the APRM was required to “ensure that the policies and practices of

participating States conform to the agreed political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards, and achieve mutually agreed objectives in socio-economic development contained in the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance” (AU/NEPAD, 2003, p.2).

After eleven years, the impact of the APRM is ready for critical scrutiny. Specifically, in order to identify shortcomings of the APRM’s founding document and its guidelines, this chapter examines the APRM’s structure, its purview and the steps taken to improve governance performance of participating countries.

3.1 APRM Structure

Formed by member states of the AU who voluntarily chose to join the APRM, the APR Heads of State Forum is the latter’s highest decision making body. This forum has the responsibility of considering, adopting, and taking ownership of country review reports from the APR Panel (AU/NEPAD, 2003d). Beyond validating and making the review reports available to the public domain through the APR Secretariat, the Forum also encourages peer-learning dialogue and exercises persuasion “to effect changes in country practice where recommended” (AU/NEPAD, 2003d, p.3). Although the APR Forum does provide an assessment of recommendations in its country review reports, its principal task of raising awareness of the process does not appear to be carried out effectively. That is to say that the core concept of peer review - communication and dialogue between peers to foster improvement - does not appear to be sufficiently articulated.

It was thought that the appointment of Liberia’s President H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2012 as chair of the APR Forum would play a ‘pivotal role’ in bringing new momentum to the continent’s premier tool for improving governance (Turianskyi, 2013). However, the under-representation of Heads of States of the APRM Member States during the eighteenth summit in 2013 revealed the current disinterest in the APRM.

The mandate of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons is to direct and manage the APRM “ensuring the independence, professionalism, and credibility of the process” (AU/NEPAD,

2003d, p.4). It is equally responsible for the appointment of APR Teams to conduct country reviews of member states (AU/NEPAD, 2003d).

The APR Secretariat located in South Africa “provides secretarial, technical, coordinating and administrative support services for the APRM” (Chikwanha, 2007, p.6). The Secretariat is in charge of facilitating the review process in countries and coordinating with partner institutions. While coordinating in line with review reports is crucial, the Secretariat falls short of providing clear strategic guidance to liaise the Secretariat’s work with that of the Forum and Eminent Person’s and the Strategic Partners (Chikwanha, 2007).

The APRM is supported by three strategic partner organizations, namely the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Union Commission (AUC). They all have a mandate to support the APRM in technical matters, but their partnerships take different forms. The role of UNECA is much broader in scope, as initially agreed upon during the 6th Summit of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee. It was responsible for conducting technical assessments on economic governance and management (AU/NEPAD, 2003d, p.8). In practice, UNECA is involved in mission support; technical support in key areas of the review process; the establishment of an APR database; creation of country profiles and research on key aspects of the APRM (UNECA, 2014). It is the most visible effort of support and a strong advocate of the APRM.

While the AfDB provides funding for the APRM and offers assistance in banking and financial concerns, the AUC supports the APRM in matters related to human rights, democracy and political governance. The commitment of the AUC has been subject of many critics in its lack of effective participation in the APRM process (Personal Communication, August 21, 2013).

At a national level, the APRM is decentralized and administered by the respective APR Country Teams. There is a National Focal Point group composed of high level national officials appointed by the Head of State and approved by the APR Panel. It is charged with mapping out a strategy for managing the APRM process in that country. Each country is further required to establish a National Commission/ National Governing Council (NGC)

autonomous from the government. It contains key-stakeholders and provides strategic policy direction (APRM Secretariat, 2014).

This layering of responsibilities and duties empowers each country to format its own review process, built around a standardized framework designed by the APR Secretariat (Chikwanha, 2007). This structure aims to facilitate dialogue among civil society organizations, the private sector and the government in processes of implementation and recommendation follow-up. Countries do not receive any specifications for the selection of research institutes commissioned to conduct the comprehensive self-assessment of the country, nor for the selection of instruments they find most relevant. As a result, practices across countries are predisposed to deviation and lead to a lack objectivity, consistency, and comparability among reports.

3.2 Thematic Areas

The APRM has devised objectives for assessing the performance of countries in four core areas, including a list of standards and codes that are expected to be implemented for each of these.

The first area under review, Democracy & Public Good Governance, aims to “consolidate a constitutional 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” (AU/NEPAD, 2003b, p.5). Designed to tackle issues and challenges in line with NEPAD’s agenda, the APRM process is also supposed to serve as an early warning system. In the case of Democracy & Public Good Governance, this implicates inter alia the potential to identify threats to peace and stability in Africa.

The second area, Economic Governance & Management, emphasizes the significance of good economic governance and transparency in financial management as essential requirements for promoting economic growth and reducing poverty (UNECA, 2014).

The third area, Corporate Governance assesses environmental management in the context of business activities. It oversees the extent to which corporate entities are applying

principles, values and practices that foster good corporate governance in the pursuit of their activities (AU/NEPAD, 2003b).

Lastly, the APRM's Socio-Economic Development division is committed to reducing poverty by sustaining economic development. It records development in the social sector through effective mechanisms that operate across the health, education, and finance sectors. It is involved in providing access to water, promoting gender equality and ensuring the participation of all stakeholders (AU/NEPAD, 2003b).

3.3 The APRM Life-Cycle

The review process cycle passes through five successive stages with the relevant actors (See 3.1 APRM Structure). The first stage begins after the signing of the MoU.

This first part of the APRM process is conducted by the Country Support Mission (CSM). It involves a comprehensive national self-assessment exercise with all relevant stakeholders. This base review is carried out within 18 months after a country accedes to the APRM (APRM Secretariat, 2014). The self-assessment serves as a situation and background report that will guide the subsequent actions of the APR Country Review Team.

The second stage consists of the Country Review Visit by the APR Secretariat and the APR Country Review Team. These two bodies consult the different stakeholders in order to produce the Country Self-Assessment Report, which will be based on their observations and the background report provided by the CSM.

In the third stage, APR Country Review Team formulates a Country Review Report. The governments of participating countries under review are invited to examine and discuss the report.

Next, the APR Panel of Eminent Persons submits the APRM Country Review Report including the National Programme of Action (NPoA) to the APR Heads of State Forum. It's in this phase that we have the peer review exercise, which will discuss the NPoA of the country under review. "The primary purpose of the National Programme of Action is to guide and mobilise the country's efforts in implementing the necessary changes"

(AU/NEPAD, 2003e, p.12). The NPoA therefore describes all actions that need to be taken to implement the stated recommendations.

Six months after consideration by the APR Heads of State Forum the first cycle of the APRM process is completed with the publication of the reports to key regional and sub-regional structures (AU/NEPAD, 2003e).

As part of the compliance, countries are expected to report annually on the implementation of the NPoA (APRM Secretariat, 2010). Thus, the first APRM cycle is followed by a yearly assessment of the actual state of affairs regarding the decided NPoA. These results of this assessment are published in an independent document called the NPoA Progress Reports.

3.4 Status of Countries (2013-2014)

The number of member countries that voluntarily acceded to the APRM reached 34 countries² in January 2014, with the signature of the MoU by the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. Even though this participation has taken aback observers (Fabricius, 2014), it demonstrates the vivacity of the exercise.

By now 17 countries³ have completed their first review while Kenya started the second APRM life-cycle in July 2011 (UNECA, 2014a).

This deviation from envisaged progress and rate indicates that time and funding required for countries to be reviewed were underestimated initially. According to data provided in Partnership Africa Canada it takes more than two years on average for a country to mobilize and fund the necessary capacities (Bing-Pappoe, 2010). These factors indicate why states with greater economic resources, such as South Africa, Nigeria or Kenya advanced faster than others. States with poorer conditions, such as Cameroon, Malawi or Senegal, are still waiting to undertake their first review. Nevertheless, the economic and political situation of a state is not the sole reason the progress of the APRM is behind

² Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Republic of Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia

³ Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia

expectations. Well-governed but perennially cautious Botswana has adopted a wait-and-see attitude towards the APRM in 2004 and decided not to join, arguing that other African institutions are already concerned with economic matters⁴.

Even if countries complete the review, access to reports is not always provided. Among the 17 countries that have completed their first review only 14 countries⁵ give open access to their reports on the internet.

4. Measuring Performance

4.1 Scope of Analysis

This study looks at the seven countries - namely Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda - that in addition to the publication of the APRM Country Review Reports (14 reports are available from 17 countries that have finalized the evaluation) have published the NPoA Progress Report⁶. Considering that some countries (Kenya, South Africa and Ghana) have already published multiple NPoA Progress Reports, the latest reviews have been taken into consideration as they are more likely to demonstrate change.

The APRM Country Review Report and NPoA Progress Reports consist of recommendations divided in four core areas: Democracy & Political Good Governance, Economic Governance & Management, Corporate Governance, and Socio-Economic Development.

Even though the structure of the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) differs from the APRM's, they include similar objectives. The IIAG also consists of four dimensions, namely Safety & Rule of Law, Participation & Human Rights, Sustainable Economic Opportunity, and Human Development, that can be directly related to the APRM's four core

⁴ Response by the Permanent Secretary for Development, Mr. Modise Modise to questions from the press about the NEPAD; 1-03-2004

⁵ *Algeria, Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda*

⁶ Available on the APRM Secretariat website or in the SAIIA APRM Toolkit

areas. The categories of the IIAG are made up of 14 sub-categories, consisting of 94 indicators (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2014). It is important to note that the 'Sustainable Economic Opportunity' area does not take into account the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) which is very prominent in the APRM's Corporate Governance area.

4.2 Method

To determine whether or not the APRM is enhancing change, the data analysis performed compares results of APRM Country Review Reports to the NPoA Progress Reports (See Table 1), subsequently linking this first analysis with the IIAG to challenge the results from the previous comparison.

Table 1: Documents consulted

Documents consulted				
Countries	Accession	Status	APRM Country Review Report	NPOA Progress Report
Ghana	March 2003	1st completed	2005	2009
Kenya	March 2003	2nd review started	2006	2007
Mozambique	March 2003	1st completed	2009	2014
Nigeria	March 2003	1st completed	2009	2011
Rwanda	March 2003	1st completed	2005	2007
South Africa	March 2003	1st completed	2007	2014
Uganda	March 2003	1st completed	2009	2009

The analysis consists of both qualitative data (APRM Country Review Reports, NPoA Progress Reports) and quantitative reports (IIAG) from 2003 to 2012. The complementary methods allow reducing bias in the perception of the quantitative data. The timeframe from 2003 to 2012 allows for a sufficiently long period of time indispensable when looking at development challenges.

The first part of the analysis involves the evaluation of the qualitative data. The APRM Country Review Reports are compared to the associated NPoA Progress Reports. The NPoA Progress Reports are part of the requirements for countries that have successfully participated in the first cycle of the peer review mechanism. They assess the progress made implementing the recommendations outlined in the APRM Country Review Reports.

The analysis is aggravated by the fact that findings on the recommendations of the APR Secretariat and the review of the planned activities of the NPoA do not match in all cases, nor are they always coherent. It is important to note that the research results provided in the NPoA Progress Report are mainly based on perceptions and are rarely supported by evidence. Furthermore, issues appeared in the NPoA Progress Report that were not raised

in the APRM Country Review Reports and issues mentioned by the recommendations were neglected in the NPoA Progress Reports. For instance, the question of unemployment in South Africa was addressed in the NPoA Progress Report but did not appear in any of the recommendations related to the Economic Governance & Management area in the APRM Country Review Report for South Africa. Although the guidelines for countries to prepare for and participate in the APRM require “clear, time-bound commitments” (APRM, 2013, p.11), deadlines are rarely mentioned in the reports. On top, responsibilities and key stakeholders were identified in Nigeria’s and South Africa’s NPoA but this is not a common practice either.

To overcome the challenge of incomparability, the study has developed an Index of Progress (IoP) allowing the status of implementation to be assessed. To discuss the status of the recommendations five types of grades for interpretation are created: (1) not addressed, (2) not initiated, (3) initiated, (4) ongoing, and (5) completed. The highest grade suggests that the recommendations have been implemented whereas the lowest reveals that the recommendations have not been discussed in the NPoA Progress Report and are therefore not addressed by the country. Recommendations are considered as ‘not initiated’ when they are mentioned and discussed in the NPoA Progress Report but no visible actions have been taken. ‘Initiated’ reveals that effort are being made while the grade ‘ongoing’ has been given to recommendations when the responsible body has provided evidence of significant efforts that indicate a reasonable chance of completion of the implementation. The grades are then multiplied by the percentage of recommendations in the relevant status. Delivering a score from 0 to 500 the IoP allows stakeholders to assess the progress made. The lowest possible IoP-score to be achieved by APRM Member States is 100 as they are already showing an encouraging effort to improve their governance performance and promote change. The top score is achieved when 100% of the recommendations are given the status (5) completed.

Afterwards, the study compares the status of the recommendations to the trends developed by the IIAG. Aggregating data from 32 sources including African based institutions such as the AfDB, the IIAG is the only indicator that provides data for 2003-2012 with regard to the seven countries under review.

5. Analysis and Results

5.1 Comparing the APRM Country Review Report to the NPoA Progress Report

5.1.1 Number of recommendations and implementation status (total)

Table 2 compiles the number of recommendations and their status of implementation by countries. The average amount of recommendations per APRM Country Review Report is 181, which makes the implementation process rather long and complex. It seems needlessly complicated to integrate this extensive amount of recommendations into the national strategic plans governments will have to set up. The highest number of recommendations can be found in Nigeria's APRM Country Review Report with 224 recommendations, whereas Rwanda's report includes only 97 recommendations. This disparity demonstrates the lack of standards and rules regarding the recommendations.

Table 2: Number of recommendations and respective status (total)

Number of recommendations and respective status (total)						
	Recommendations	(5) completed	(4) ongoing	(3) initiated	(2) not initiated	(1) not addressed
Ghana	192	10	34	19	27	102
		5,21%	17,71%	9,90%	14,06%	53,13%
Kenya	223	20	29	33	13	128
		8,97%	13,00%	14,80%	5,83%	57,40%
Mozambique	159	8	48	58	16	29
		5,03%	30,19%	36,48%	10,06%	18,24%
Nigeria	224	14	38	29	9	134
		6,25%	16,96%	12,95%	4,02%	59,82%
Rwanda	97	8	8	11	6	64

		8,25%	8,25%	11,34%	6,19%	65,98%
South Africa	178	3	24	19	1	131
		1,69%	13,48%	10,67%	0,56%	73,60%
Uganda	191	7	20	11	1	152
		3,66%	10,47%	5,76%	0,52%	79,58%
mean (total)	180,57	10,00	28,71	25,71	10,43	105,71
		5,58%	15,72%	14,56%	5,89%	58,25%

The most important aspect regarding the application of the recommendations lies in the fact that a large proportion of countries do not address these recommendations in the review of the NPoA. For instance, 79.58% of the 191 recommendations included in Uganda's report have not been addressed in the NPoA Progress Report. Even in the case of the APRM's founding country South Africa, 73.60% of the recommendations have not been addressed. Mozambique's status is exceptional in that only 18.24% of the recommendations have not been addressed compared to the average of 58.25%.

These alarming observations can be explained by two factors. First, in case of Ghana, Rwanda and South Africa, the latest NPoA Progress Report was used for this study and some recommendations could have been discussed in previous reports. This is not the case. However, this refers more to the quality of the report than the actual implementation of recommendations. Second, it is arguable that the NPoA Progress Report can provide evidence of the implementation of recommendations if it is published only one year after the publication of the APRM Country Review Report as in Rwanda. Nonetheless, in view of the large number of issues that are not addressed by the NPoA Progress Report, the APRM's goal to strengthen governance does not seem to be achieved. One can question the political motivation to actually learn from the APRM Country Review Report and take actions in form of the recommendations included in the NPoA. Furthermore, the largest proportion of recommendations that are actually mentioned and assessed is made up of the 'ongoing' and 'initiated' status with an average of 15.72% and 14.56% respectively. In

Nigeria, the adoption of a national policy by the government recognizing gender equality as a real concern for the country belongs to the 16.96% of recommendations with a status of 'ongoing'. Although the government of Mozambique made some progress in providing safe water to the population, the current and untapped challenge is to expand the coverage in rural areas and improve the quality of water supplied. This recommendation is included in the 36.48% of recommendations that have been 'initiated' by the government of Mozambique. This demonstrates how little interest countries have to truly implement and let alone adopt new norms and institutional frameworks.

Lastly, the smallest proportion of recommendations, only 5.58%, is considered to be 'completed' after more than 10 years APRM. Kenya is the country that registers the highest percentage with 8.97% of 223 recommendations completed. The government adopted recommendations, such as a witness Protection Act since December 30th 2006 to ensure that all public official actions can be scrutinized, set up programmes, such as the Company of the Year Award, or the Financial Reporting Award contributing to raising awareness for Corporate Social Responsibility.

5.1.2 Number of recommendations and implementation status (specific areas)

Another viable way to analyze the APRM is to look at the four areas for which objectives have been set and recommendations have been designed. Table 5 (See Appendix 1) relates the number of recommendation and the according implementation status to the area covered. The table questions if countries tend to be more capable of taking appropriate actions in one area than in another.

Above all, the results show that each individual country is facing different challenges, without observable patterns across countries. Whereas Kenya (49.78%), Ghana (43.23%) and South Africa (31.46%) count the largest number of recommendation in the corporate governance area, Rwanda (32.99%) and Nigeria (32.59%) register the largest number of recommendations in the Democracy & Political Good Governance area. Uganda is the exception with the focus on Socio-Economic governance (32.46%). As for Mozambique, 46 recommendations have been observed in both the Economic Governance Management and Socio Economic governance area (28.93% each). The domestic economic growth

currently experienced in South Africa, Kenya and Ghana might explain the importance of the corporate sector and the activities it is enhancing.

Although the amount of recommendations can be an indicator for the importance of an area and highlight urgent issues, the overall focus is set on Corporate Governance with 28.95% of the recommendations set out in the APRM Country Review Reports, it does not imply that these recommendations will be effectively implemented or even considered to improve the current situation. The example of Kenya illustrates this point powerfully, as the APRM Country Review Report for Kenya emphasizes on Corporate Governance more than in any other country. Only 9 (8.11%) from 111 recommendations provided in the Corporate Governance area have been completed. More significantly, 82 (73.87%) recommendations were not even addressed in the NPoA Progress Report. Another troubling ratio is evident in the status of progress in Uganda. Out of the 62 recommendations in the Socio-Economic governance area, the report indicates that only 1 (1.61%) has been completed and 50 (80.65%) were not addressed in the NPoA Progress Report anymore.

Second, the highest number of completed recommendations (31 in total across countries) can be found in the Democracy & Political Good Governance area in contrast to the lowest number of completed recommendations (6 in total across countries) found in the Socio-Economic Governance area. This is divergent to the distribution of recommendations where the main share is allocated within the Corporate Governance area. For instance, Ghana has by far the largest share of completed recommendations (8 compared to 1) in this area despite the fact that it is not the area with the highest number of recommendations in total (58 compared to 83 in the Corporate Governance area). This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that in the Democracy & Political Good Governance area most of the actions recommended are towards the passage, ratification, or implementation of treaties and laws or can lie in the revision of the Constitution of a country. Hereby the government is mostly the immediate implementing actor.

On the other hand, it is in the Socio-Economic Governance area, that only 6 recommendations have been completed. According to the APRM Objectives, Standards, Criteria, and Indicators, this area requires more visible results. Recommendations are formulated towards a more inclusive approach where civil society organizations and the

private sector will need to be involved in line with the government actions. Indeed the development of the social sector takes a participative and inclusive approach and more coordination efforts are needed. In this area, Mozambique seems to be the high achiever with 3 completed recommendations. The completed actions include the design of a promotion employment programme for the youth, the involvement of the government and the civil societies in social protection initiatives, and the entry into force of a Domestic Violence Law in July 2009.

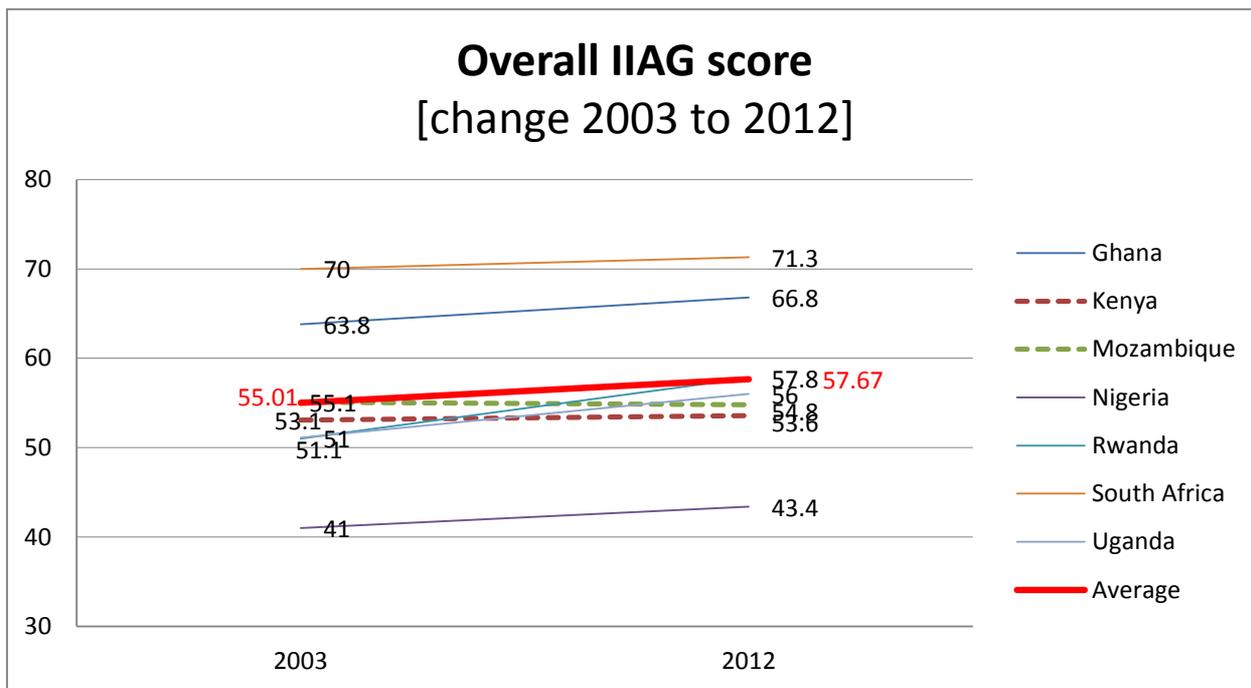
5.2 Governance performance as measured by the IIAG

5.2.1 Governance performance of the seven countries according to the IIAG

The Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) deals with the measure of governance outcomes in Africa by looking at national and regional performances across four categories: Safety & Rule of Law, Participation & Human Rights, Sustainable Economic Opportunity and Human Development. It ranks and evaluates African countries according to a scale from 0 to 100 (100 = best (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2013a)) throughout sub-categories, the four main categories and a total score. The overall standing of the 52 African countries puts the seven countries under review in this study (See Methods 4.2) as follows; South Africa is ranked 5th, followed by Ghana (7th), Rwanda (15th), Uganda (18th), Mozambique (20th), Kenya (21th), and Nigeria (41th).

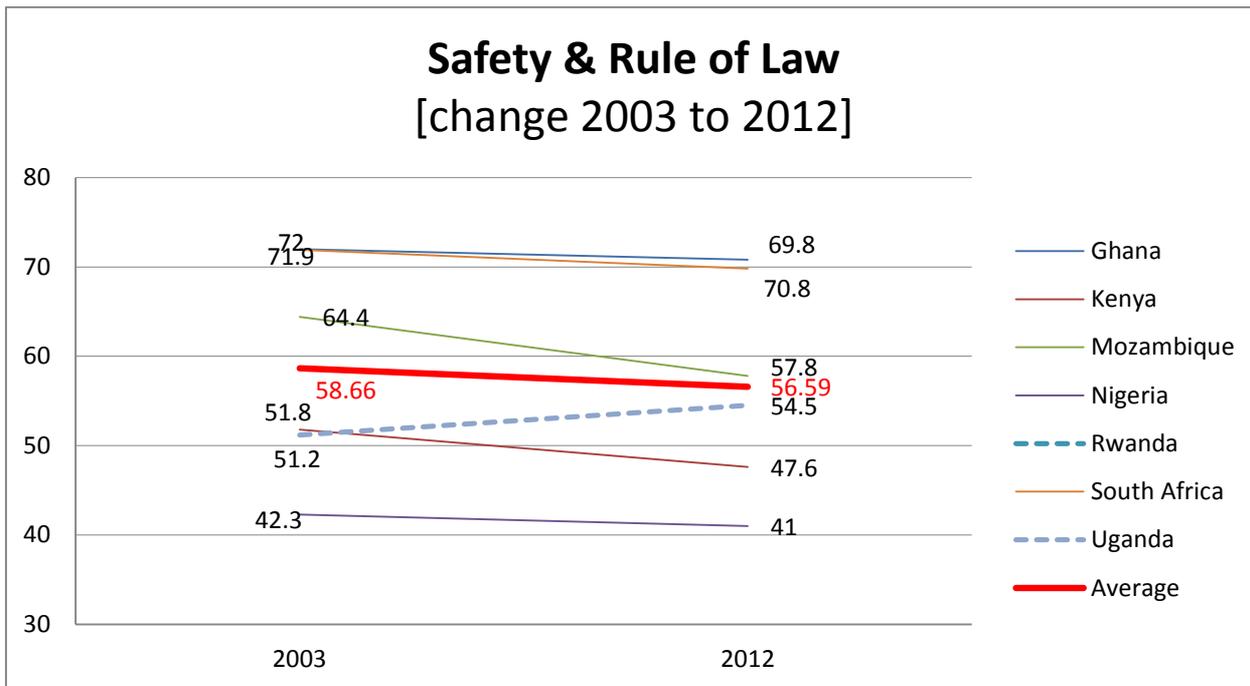
First of all the IIAG confirms that progress in the field of governance (Figure 1), with an average increase of 2.66 points, has been made from 2003 to 2012. The biggest improvement can be found in the scores of Rwanda (+6.80) and Uganda (+4.90). Uganda is also the only country that has registered improvement across all four categories, then again only by a nominal margin of +0.70 in Sustainable Economic Opportunity. Even more importantly, Uganda is the only country to improve in the field of Safety & Rule of Law.

Figure 1: Overall IIAG score (change 2003 to 2012)



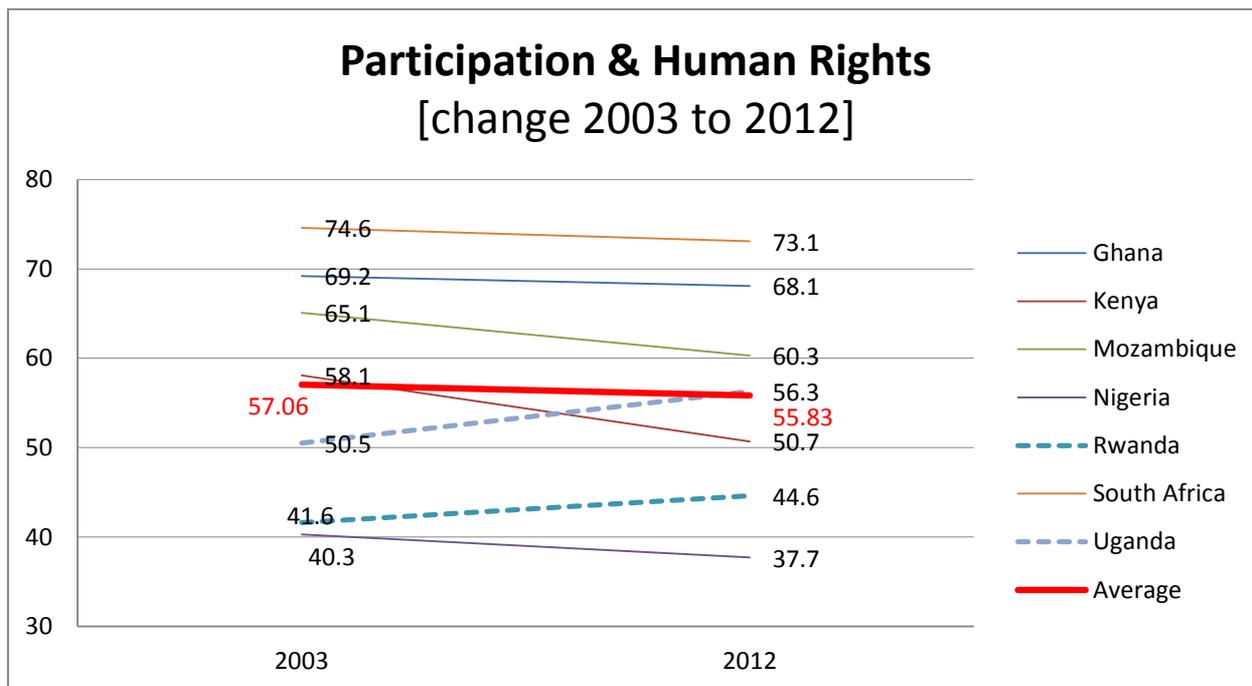
The disparity between the overall positive trend and the quite disturbing findings in the categories calls for a more detailed look at the composition of the country performances. While the overall governance performance slightly improved, Mozambique’s score declined by 0.30, largely due to a significant decline in Safety & Rule of Law (Figure 2) (-6.60). This trend is visible across countries as the average score declined (-2.06), only counteracted by Uganda (+3.30).

Figure 2: Safety & Rule of Law (change 2003 to 2012)



The same negative trend can be identified for Participation & Human Rights (Figure 3). In this category only Uganda (+5.80) and Rwanda (+3.00) can produce evidence of improvement. Kenya records the highest lost (-7.40) over the 9 years from 2003 to 2012 gradually recovering and stabilizing its score at around 51.0 from a big drop in 2009.

Figure 3: Participation & Human Rights (change 2003 to 2012)



Sustainable Economic Opportunity (Figure 4) and Human Development (Figure 5) are the two areas that include only positive performances for the 7 countries in question. Rwanda appears to be the good student with an increase of +13.0 and +13.3 respectively. While Ghana’s, Kenya’s, Mozambique’s and South Africa’s scores increased by an average of 3.53 in Sustainable Economic Opportunity, Nigeria’s performance is more substantial (7.1). Unlike its exemplary role in the previous two sectors, Uganda does not only lag behind in the Sustainable Economic Opportunity area (+0.7) but also does not play a leading role in Human Development (+10.00) where increases of more than 10 are not uncommon.

Figure 4: Sustainable Economic Development (change 2003 to 2012)

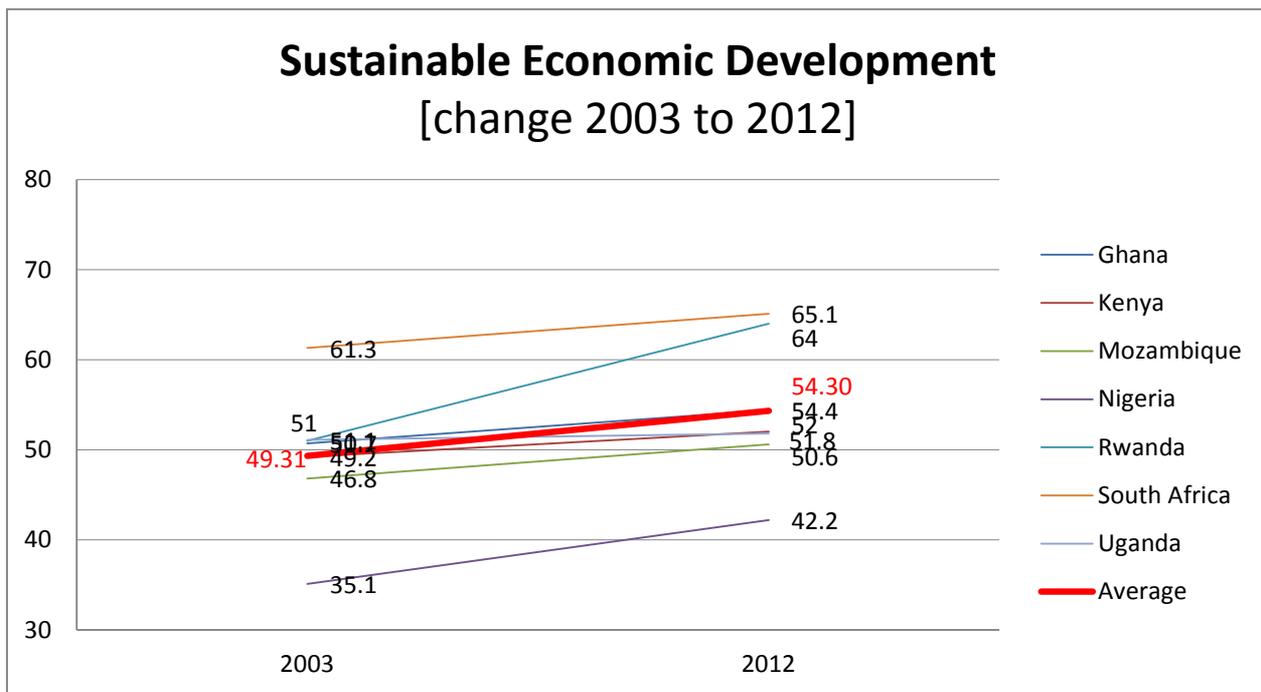
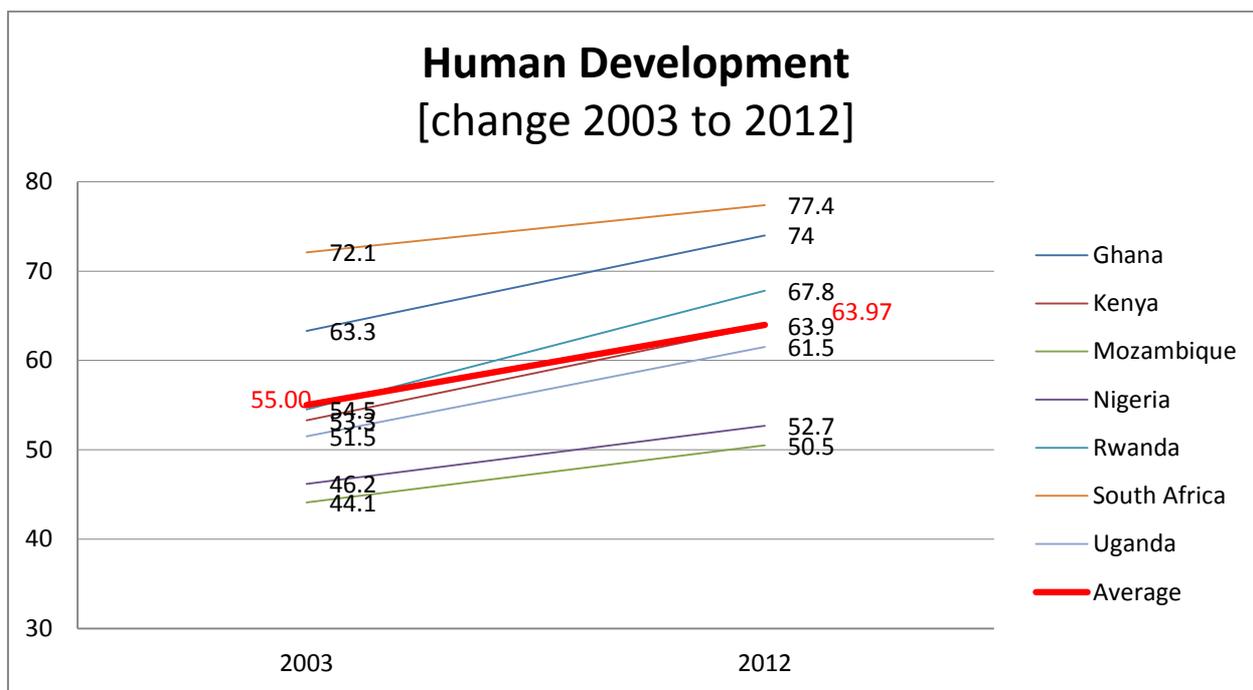


Figure 5: Human Development (change 2003 to 2012)



The difference between average improvement made between the area Human Development and the remaining three sectors is remarkable. While the score for Human

Development increased by 8.97 to a total of 63.97, therefore scoring highest among the four sectors, the rest increased by an average of 0.59, driven only by the development in Sustainable Economic Development.

5.2.2 IIAG scores since the APRM's Country Review Report publication date

While the countries publish the APRM Country Review Report at different times, the study analyses the governance performances for each respective country since the official publication year of the report (Table 3).

Table 3: IIAG scores since publication of APRM Country Review Reports

Year of Publication		Overall Score	Safety & Rule of Law	Participation & Human Rights	Sustainable Economic Opportunity	Human Development
2005	Ghana	4,60	1,10	2,10	3,20	12,00
2006	Kenya	0,40	-2,60	-7,60	2,30	9,20
2009	Mozambique	-0,30	-2,40	0,40	-0,90	1,80
2009	Nigeria	0,20	-4,10	4,00	0,70	-0,10
2005	Rwanda	6,20	-2,12	1,80	10,20	14,60
2007	South Africa	-0,40	-1,30	-0,40	-0,60	0,90
2007	Uganda	1,60	2,40	1,00	-1,00	4,20

Ghana and Rwanda acceded to the APRM in 2003 and published the APRM Country Review Report two years later in 2005. In this study they consequently represent the countries with the longest observation period. Ghana's performance is positive across all four categories with a significant improvement in the Human Development area (+12.00). Except for this category, the development observed is relatively limited. The notable change concerns the positive trends in Safety & Rule of Law (+1.10) and Participation & Human Rights (+2.10). Declining towards 2005 the scores gradually improved since the implementation of the NPoA. These findings appear to be consistent with the number of

NPoA recommendations completed as most of them have been recorded in the area of Democracy & Political Good Governance.

Rwanda's governance performance shows the largest improvement (+6.1) compared to the other countries under review despite the decrease (-2.12) in the Safety & Rule of Law area. Although the APRM Country Review Report also largely discussed this issue and provided the highest number of recommendations (32.99% of total recommendations) for Democracy & Political Good Governance, only 3 completed recommendations could be counted with more than 50% not addressed in the NPoA Progress Report. The initial impact of the NPoA that resulted in a positive trend in this area came to an abrupt halt in 2009.

The progression of Mozambique's and South Africa's scores is almost similar. In fact there is no significant development recordable. As discussed earlier, the time needed for recommendations of the NPoA to be effective can take time. This could be the reason why Mozambique's scores do not improve but rather stabilize. Its overall governance performance has decreased (-0.30), despite the noticeable efforts to initiate the implementation of the recommendations (36.48% recommendations initiated) provided in the APRM Country Review Report.

As for South Africa, the room for improvement is much smaller as it easily has the highest IIAG score (above 70) from the seven countries and is ranked 5th out of 52 countries in Africa. The only area that records a better score in 2012 than in 2007 is the Human Development category (+0.90). Indeed, South Africa is the country with the least completed recommendations. More remarkably for the initiator and founding member of the APRM is the fact that 73.5% of the recommendations have not been addressed in the NPoA Progress Report. This lack of commitment is underlined by the stagnating IIAG scores.

Kenya's score in the Participation & Human Rights category is worrisome. Key factor is the major drop (-26.7) in the Participation sub-category since 2005. Although Kenya is the country with the most completed recommendations (20) there is no visible impact of the NPoA in the IIAG scores.

In 2007, the APR Secretariat published Uganda's APRM Country Review Report. Uganda shows little improvement since. Safety & Rule of Law (+2.4) and Human Development (+4.2) remain reserved compared to other countries. However, the scores of Sustainable

Economic Development and Participation & Human Rights experienced a significant decline, now regenerating, after the introduction of the NPoA.

Nigeria's NPoA was published in 2009. Ranked 41st in the overall IIAG rating Nigeria has a lot of potential for improvement. The highest total number of recommendations (224) in the NPoA also emphasizes this fact. But, positive scores in Participation & Human Rights (+4.1) and Sustainable Economic Development (+0.7) are nullified by the negative scores of Safety & Rule of Law (-4.0) and Human Development (-0.1). This equilibrium renders Nigeria's overall positive governance performance (+0.2) and the impact of the APRM Country Review Report immaterial. The decline by 4.0 in the Safety & Rule of Law category despite the largest amount of recommendations (32.59%) in the area of Democracy & Political Good Governance adds weight to this assumption.

5.3 Results

Even though the number of completed implementations in Kenya shows that governments are able to complete the implementation of recommendations, only very few recommendations are actually implemented. The negligible overall number of completed recommendations (5.58%) can lead to the conclusion that APRM member countries lack commitment towards the actual follow-through.

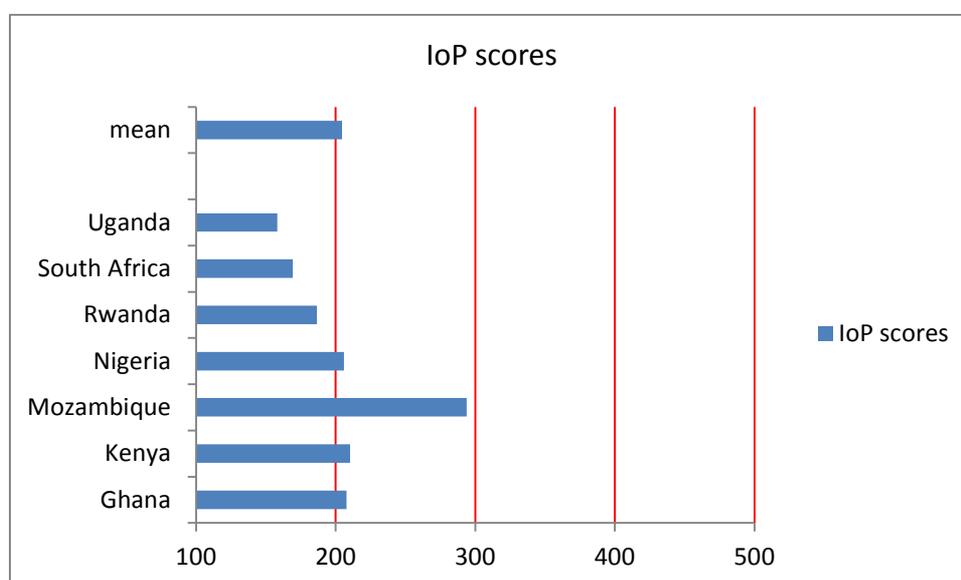
The IoP scores in Table 4 confirm the perception that member countries do not want or are not able to adhere to their NPoA.

Table 4: IoP-Scores

IoP (year of publication of the APRM Country Review Report (in brackets) to 2014)							
(2005)	(2006)	(2009)	(2009)	(2005)	(2007)	(2007)	
Ghana	Kenya	Mozambique	Nigeria	Rwanda	South Africa	Uganda	Average
208	210	294	206	187	169	158	204

The IoP assesses the progress made by the countries according to the comparison of the recommendations included in the APRM Country Review Report and the NPoA Progress Report. The average score is 204. Mozambique experienced the highest score (294) and is the only country that is close to achieving a 50% (IoP score 300) implementation rate. While Kenya (210), Ghana (208) and Nigeria (206) have already passed the 25% mark (IoP score 200), Rwanda (187), South Africa (169) and Uganda (158) are still struggling (Table 4). It is important to note that these countries have had different publication dates of their APRM Country Review Reports and therefore different time-spans to implement recommendations. This has no influence on the scores as Mozambique and Nigeria published the APRM Country Review Report in 2009, later than the other countries under review.

Figure 6: Progress according to IoP scores



The result is not in favour of the APRM as is confirmed by the evaluation of the IIAG. With an average incline of 1.53, the impact of the APRM in regard to governance performance monitored by the IIAG is negligible as the improvement is negligible.

6. Discussion and Recommendations

6.1 Obstacles and Prospects

This study does not aim at developing recommendations for individual countries - the comparison and analysis is performed to outline general trends and detect gaps and obstacles that undermine the performance of the APRM.

The analysis of the core concepts of the APRM – Africa, Peer Review, and Mechanism – indicates that they are not fully internalized by the actors involved in the exercise and thus the APRM is not completely operationalized. However, the complex APRM's structure seems to impede optimal utilization of the APRM's potential. The presentation of the APRM's structure points out the heavy bureaucratic structure coupled with the large scope to cover.

The two-tier mechanism, decentralized and independent at the national level, centralized and dependent at the intercontinental level, should lead to an easier and appreciated internalization and adoption of the exercise. But this separation also causes a lack of consistency among the countries and their practices. Despite the guidelines for countries to set up the NGC their creation lacks transparency and independence. The national structures furthermore have large responsibilities but limited funding.

The confusion induced by the blurred responsibilities of the technical partners is reason for more inefficiency.

The results of the data analysis underpin the general assumption of an inefficient and ineffective APRM. The marginal results in favour of the APRM (5.58% of recommendations completed, IIAG score incline by 1.53), do not show that governance has improved but rather underlines the assertion that the positive overall trend is influenced by strong factors. These factors consist of both exceptional results from singular countries and an imbalance of improvement between the four categories. It palliates the fact that real change has yet to come. Granting that there has been improvement in governance performances all together, the IIAG results make clear that especially the Safety & Rule of Law and Participation & Human Rights areas did not significantly improve not to say worsened over the course of the 9 year observation period. Even more, the evolution of the scores has not been

constant but fluctuant. This further strengthens the argument that countries are treading water and do not make substantial progress.

Gaps, such as the limited number of available reports and the omission of data affect the analysis. The results and overall lack of transparency do not produce satisfying answers but raise more questions. Questions that could be answered in the future by the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the Governance, Peace and Security (GPS) Statistics included in the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHASA) initiatives implemented by the AU. The AGA and SHASA aim to synchronize the collective actions taken in the process of African integration and transformation. It can only be hoped that the prospected establishment of these initiatives utilize but also nourish the potential of the APRM.

6.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the discussed results, the study has developed realistic and applicatory recommendations. These aim to fully exploit the capacities of the APRM to facilitate effective and sustainable change in Africa.

- 1. Internalize the concept of peer review to ensure a common understanding of the exercise*

Even if the demand for the APRM has been identified by stakeholders (Personal Communication, August 27, 2013), Heads of State do not show an effusive willingness to be reviewed and reveal sensitive data. The voluntary signature of the MoU, let alone the completion of the APRM process do not seem to work when good governance is a major problem. The core concepts and implications of the APRM have to be internalized by the Heads of State and Governments. A common understanding will create a sense of belonging to the APRM. Only through experienced trust, based on mutual consent, the APRM will provide the necessary environment that enables leaders to welcome discussion and learn from their peers. When the potential of peer review can be utilized the exercise will become even more valuable as the substantive APRM reports also serve as a national early warning system. The eruption of xenophobic tensions in South Africa in May 2008 was identified in the South Africa report but the governments did not undertake actions.

Identifying possible conflicts and issues that expand across borders will further intensify the feeling of solidarity.

2. Understand the limitations of the APRM

A “unique and innovative approach” (Busia, 2013, head. APRM as a unique home-grown approach to African shared values, para. 1) has been employed in pursuing governance transformation in Africa. The APRM has achieved great coverage among African countries, ever increasing the number of countries signing the MoU and completing the exercise, but some limitations apply which should be considered by every stakeholder. First, expectations tied to such mechanisms should be rational. The non-binding implementation process and monitoring analysis cannot produce the lasting desirable outcome by itself. Without the necessary from stakeholders, the APRM can only deliver reports and recommendations. Second, the APRM is a holistic approach, requesting all stakeholders to team up and create a framework for dialogue and actions. The large majority of the recommendations requires the government to take the first step by developing new tools and institutions. Although this new institutional framework has the objective to alter the circumstances of African lives, initiators and creators put too much hope in the People of Africa to take ownership of the APRM. In reality, the APRM does not appear to be the ultimate solution to Africa’s problems. The introduction of a time-consuming and resource-devouring peer review process into countries, already struggling to deal with various aid projects, puts a strain on both the capacities and the willingness to engage in such efforts. An additional institutional framework will not solve the lack of good governance but only create another partially implemented framework.

3. Ensure the efficient and comprehensible monitoring of the African Peer Review Mechanism by using the Index of Progress (IoP)

The mandatory NPoA Progress Reports are written without guidelines complicating the evaluation of the execution status of recommendations. An efficient and comprehensible indicator is needed to understand and help the APRM become more reputable. This study has developed the Index of Progress (IoP) allowing change of implementation to be tracked over time (See 3.2 Method). National governments can easily translate their progress in

regard to their NPoA in the pursuit of good governance to an IoP-score. The tool also provides an effective status of recommendations tracking system as changes can be monitored from one NPoA Progress Report to another. Moreover, the publicly available IoP-scores ranking countries, can be a successful method to mobilize and pressure the countries.

4. Incorporate the SMART standards for recommendations

The APRM process generates large amounts of data to underpin regional and continental policy-making. Therefore, the APRM's target was to set high standard reviews that stakeholders could accept in terms of quality and credibility. Reliability and intelligibility of the peer reviews and resulting reports are crucial to achieve the intended impact. The collection of data for the analysis revealed the difficulties encountered. The exact comparison of the APRM Country Review Reports to the NPoA Progress Reports, two coherent and congeneric documents, can be regarded as challenging not to say virtually impossible. Therefore the development of guidelines for designing reports and addressing SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Result-oriented and Time-bound) recommendations should be made a priority by the APR Secretariat. The introduction of SMART standards will help to monitor and track the recommendations and ensure consistency between reports. Addressing issues with a refined scope will also make the exercise more manageable for the parties involved in the implementation of the recommendations.

5. Strengthen the capacities of the APR Secretariat to facilitate effective interaction

The APRM structure can be qualified as a two-speed project where the structure itself is distinct from the APRM's structures set up in participating countries. It is an impediment to the APRM's mission of enhancing dialogue and peer learning. The APR Secretariat is identified as the core body to ensure and facilitate interactions throughout the 5 stages process (See 3.3 The APRM Life-Cycle). A strengthened APR Secretariat needs to take the responsibility to build effective interaction between the APR Forum, the APR Panel, the APR Country Team and the strategic partners. In order to experience lean structures that allow for efficient communication and powerful work procedures, the APR Country Team

has to be shaped accordingly. The provision of clear and common standards and guidelines for the APR Country Team will maintain a consistent structure among countries.

6. Conduct an independent evaluation of the APRM

The APRM base document highlights the necessity of a review of the APRM once every five years (APRM, 2003). It implies that by now already 2 reviews should have been conducted by the “Conference of the participating countries” (APRM, 2003, p.6). However, the study recommends the implementation of an independent evaluation in order to avoid bias and support knowledge development by looking at both the procedures and produced results. The independent evaluation has to have access to all relevant information and can be regarded as an audit.

7. Review, clarify and adjust the commitment and actions of the African Union (AU)

The APRM was initiated as a valuable African-led tool facilitating practical analysis of and frank discussions about national governance systems. At its origins, the APRM has been launched as an autonomous structure evolving in the NEPAD’s framework and was created to avoid the complexities inherent to the AU (Personal Communication, August 16, 2013). Nevertheless, a new institutional framework emerging in Africa requires exploring the APRM taking into account the AU. The latest effort undertaken by the AU to strengthen coordination across governance related fields is the African Governance Architecture (AGA) established in 2009 (AU, 2009). The AGA’s platform has been specifically designed to enhance member state’s commitment towards these frameworks (Personal Communication, August 16, 2013). This initiative has to be welcomed as it demonstrates the AU’s will to engage the APRM in its governance agenda. But the AGA also raises concerns. While the AU’s capacities are limited (Laporte, G. & Mackie. J, 2010), it is launching an additional institutional framework inevitably increasing complexity. Therefore the APRM’s relation to the AU and AGA needs to be clarified. To avoid insufficient support due to misunderstandings or dissensions, actions need to be taken to adjust and reposition the APRM within the AU framework.

7. Conclusion

The importance of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to accelerate the transformation in Africa in order to achieve political stability, economic growth, sustainable development and continental integration can be doubted. But despite the weaknesses discussed and also elucidated by other researchers, an initiative like the APRM is long overdue (Kebonang & Fombad, 2009).

On the one hand, the bold, unique and innovative approach of tackling problems sparks hope for the future (APRM Secretariat, 2014). On the other hand, the persistent governance challenges encountered by the seven countries under review, despite the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), depict the ineffectiveness of the APRM. Even more, countries which have finished the first cycle of the APRM or even published several National Programme of Action (NPOA) Progress Reports did not perform any better. This shows the lack of improvement and benefit which should have been achieved by adhering to the APRM.

The recommendations provided in this study strengthen the APRM for the future. Ensuring efficient and effective processes, the African Peer Review Mechanism can become a powerful tool and cornerstone in the self-driven transformation of Africa.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

	Number of recommendations	Democracy & Political Good Governance						Economic Governance and Management					Corporate Governance					Socio-Economic Governance							
		Total	Completed	Ongoing	Initiated	not initiated	not addressed	Total	Completed	Ongoing	Initiated	Not initiated	Not addressed	Total	Completed	Ongoing	Initiated	Not initiated	Not addressed	Total	Completed	Ongoing	Initiated	Not initiated	Not addressed
Ghana	192	58	8	9	7	11	23	24	1	10	1	2	10	83	0	10	8	12	53	27	1	5	3	2	16
Kenya	223	59	5	13	12	2	27	21	5	3	4	0	9	111	9	3	9	8	82	32	1	10	8	3	10
Mozambique	159	42	4	8	25	0	5	46	0	30	10	2	4	25	1	4	6	14	0	46	3	6	17	0	20
Nigeria	224	73	5	11	10	1	46	39	2	12	4	0	21	47	7	7	5	4	24	65	0	8	10	4	43
Rwanda	97	32	3	5	5	2	17	22	3	0	1	4	14	23	2	2	2	0	17	20	0	1	3	0	16
South Africa	178	44	1	10	6	0	27	29	1	4	4	0	20	56	1	2	3	0	50	49	0	8	6	1	34
Uganda	191	52	5	6	4	1	36	43	1	5	3	0	34	34	0	1	1	0	32	62	1	8	3	0	50
total		360	31	62	69	17	181	224	13	64	27	8	112	379	20	29	34	38	258	301	6	46	50	10	189

Table 5: Number of recommendations and respective status (specific areas)