



**Towards Universal
Accession by 2023**

African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)
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African Governance Seminar Series (AGOSS)

Concept Note

African Peer Review Mechanism - Research
Methodology and Development Division

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1. Introduction

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Continental Secretariat annually delivers the African Governance Seminar Series (AGOSS), which is a series of research conferences and workshops.

The African Governance Seminar Series (AGOSS) was conceived following the recognition that there is a gap and need to create a platform where academics and practitioners converge to interrogate dominant and orthodox approaches to governance, through an examination of practice, trends, and actors. The governance seminar series thus provides an interactive platform for dialogue, debate, and construction of afro-genic and afro-centric governance paradigms on the APRM's four thematic areas; democracy and political governance; economic governance and management; corporate governance and socio-economic development. Papers developed for the seminar and the discourse therein are to also draw profoundly from the APRM country assessments which have been implemented in over 20 African countries. It is envisaged that the papers will offer novel perspectives and introduce innovative approaches from various policy communities and academia.

Essentially, therefore, the seminars primarily seek to interrogate current, mainstream governance ideological and policy frameworks for suitability and feasibility to the political economy of governance and development in African. To ensure that the perspectives and proposals in the papers presented and peer reviewed at the seminar resonate with the political agenda of the African Union, the seminar objectives are underlined by the aspirations outlined in the AU *Agenda 2063: the Africa we want*.¹

Further, the seminars are implemented within the stipulations of the APRM mandate and in partnerships with a variety of institutions and stakeholders which facilitate and implement governance and public dialogues in Africa.

2. Background

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was established in 2003 by the Heads of States and Governments of the African Union (AU). Its mandate is to promote good governance and facilitate self-monitoring by participating Member States. The APRM process is founded on the principles of effective afro-genic and afro-centric political, economic, social, and corporate governance principles, including democracy; equitable economic development, the rule of law, responsive states, respect for human rights, and peaceful resolution of conflicts². The four Governance Pillars of the APRM are: i) Democracy

¹ African Union, 2016

² Memorandum of Understanding on the African Peer Review Mechanism, 6th Summit of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee, 9th March 2003, Abuja, Nigeria.

and Political Governance, ii) Economic Governance and Management, iii) Corporate Governance, as well as iv) Socio-Economic Development. Each thematic area focuses on different aspects of the promotion and establishment of good democratic governance. By joining the mechanism, African Member States agree to voluntarily undergo an independent review of their compliance with African and international governance standards, codes, and commitments. In this regard, the APRM process ensures the full participation of all stakeholders in society in the review of the member states, through a peer review process. To date, the APRM has 37 Member States, 23 of which have undergone the APRM review process.

3. Objective

The primary goal of the African Governance Seminar Series is to provide an interactive platform for debate and analysis of emerging novel developments and trends within governance in Africa, as well as to function as a peer review panel for APRM Occasional Papers submitted by various experts to the Seminar. Seminar Papers that meet writing standards will be published.

Key Objectives:

1. Develop and generate knowledge on innovative alternatives in governance practice and theory (reviewing and assessing emerging literature and trends on governance);
2. Monitor trends in Governance on the continent (allow for consolidation of various governance reports from within and outside the continent);
3. Create a community of practitioners and different actors (a network which the platform itself and community-expound on).
4. Peer review papers for publication.

4. Structure of the Seminar Series

This Seminar Series is structured as a full day seminar, comprising panel sessions, plenary sessions as well as podcast streaming. Each session will be led by a panel (chairperson, guest speaker and a lead discussant).

5. Audience:

The APRM African Governance Seminar Series aims to pool together an audience of approximately 30-60 people from different backgrounds and communities, and shall comprise of APRM Member States Ambassadors, government, Academics. International Development Agencies, Civil Society, Policy

Practitioners, Mass Media Organizations, Corporate sector, Independent Researchers, Diplomats and Think Tanks. There will be representation of youth and post graduate students from various recognised institutions. To include a wider audience, the annual Seminar is held physical, virtually or as a hybrid of both formats as required.

6. Implementing Partners

The Seminar Series will have six (6) implementing partners, one based in each region of the African Union; Southern, Eastern, Western, Northern, Central and Diaspora. These shall be recognized academic institutions such as universities or schools of government.

Academic Institutions

To maximize the impact of the seminar series, and to broaden interest and continental representation, the project partnership framework includes academic and training institutions from all five regions in Africa. Each regional implementing partners will actively participate in developing the content of seminars and identify participants from amongst their own networks of academics and practitioners in African governance. The regional partners will also host the seminars on a rotational basis.

AU Institutions and Other Collaborating Partners

This series collaborates with the APRM strategic partners. Further collaboration with Regional Business Foundations is encouraged.

7. Venue

The Seminar is held on a rotational basis and hosted by an anchor institution in each of the six (6) AU Regions (Central, East, North, South, West, and the Diaspora).

8. Frequency

The frequency of the Seminar is once a year.

9. Core Agenda

The core agenda will be fashioned around topics derived from the four APRM thematic areas, AU Agenda 2063, African Union Annual Theme, UN Agenda 2030 on SDGs, ACDEG and other AU frameworks. Each guest speaker will be expected to form a topic for each seminar.

10. Seminar Themes

The themes of the seminars are to be generated by the APRM, and on a case-by-case basis.

11. Guest Speakers

Renown and respected international industry captains, politicians, diplomats, authors, academics, both governmental and non-governmental practitioners from varying disciplines, organizations, think tanks, international development agencies, corporates from private sectors as well as independent researchers.

12. Expected Knowledge Products

It is envisioned that the proceedings from the seminars will be published as working series papers, occasional papers, and a book publication, namely:

1. Seminar Report.
2. Occasional Paper Series.
3. Book Publication.
4. Seminar Session Recordings and Media Interview Podcasts

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