

# APNODE

African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation

## **Report of the first Annual General Meeting of the African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation**

AfDB Headquarters, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 23-24 July 2015

### **Introduction**

This document is an account of the proceedings and outcomes of the first Annual General Meeting of the African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE), which took place on 23 and 24 July 2015 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

APNODE was launched in March 2014 in Yaoundé, Cameroon, by African parliamentarians recognizing the important function of evaluation in national decision-making and the crucial role of parliamentarians in ensuring that evaluation evidence is used for strengthening decision-making. A Steering Committee was formed in view of operationalizing APNODE, focusing on drafting the network Constitution and action plan. These two documents were finalized and adopted on an interim basis by the Steering Committee during its face-to-face meeting in September 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. At that meeting the Steering Committee also elected an Interim Executive Committee (IEC) of APNODE.

The first Annual General Meeting of the network aimed at officially operationalizing APNODE by adopting its Constitution, electing an Executive Committee, and endorsing a program of activities. It brought together current members of the network, other parliamentarians recognizing the value of evaluation in decision-making, and development partners. The meeting was also an opportunity for participants to exchange and learn from each other about the use of evaluation in promoting accountability and strong policy-making.

Hosted by the African Development Bank (the current Secretariat of APNODE), the meeting was organized in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and UN Women.

Participants included 50 parliamentarians from 14 African countries, representing all parts of the continent: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Somalia, Togo, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Representatives of the following development partners also attended the meeting: the African Development

Bank (AfDB), UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) and the Réseau Francophone de l'Évaluation (RFE).

## **I. Opening session**

Mr. Ronald Meyer, Executive Director for Germany, Switzerland and Portugal, and Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness at the African Development Bank, delivered welcoming remarks. He underlined the value of evaluation and evidence-based information in policymaking and the important role played by initiatives such as APNODE in the promotion of a culture of accountability and evaluation at the decision-making level.

Representing the national Parliament of the host country, Honorable Imbassou Ouattara Abbas, Chairman of the Technical Group on Monitoring & Evaluation of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire, expressed a word of welcome to all participants.

The Chairperson of the meeting and Interim Chairperson of APNODE, Senator Roger Mbassa Ndine (Cameroon) presented an overview of the agenda for the two-day meeting. The agenda was adopted without objections.

## **II. Presentation of APNODE**

This session aimed at providing the participants, and especially the new and potential members of APNODE, with a history of the network and a summary of the main activities it undertook to date.

Opening the session, Mr. Samer Hachem, Division Manager at the Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) of the AfDB, made a presentation on evaluation, focusing on its complementarity with the monitoring function and its role in the work of Parliamentarians. The participating Parliamentarians agreed that they can use evaluation to increase their accountability, by measuring the impact of the laws they passed, and the accountability of the executive branch, by making sure the national Parliament's decisions are being implemented.

Honorable Susan Musyoka (Kenya), Interim Vice-President of APNODE, presented the activities undertaken by the network since its launch in March 2014, including the preparation of the documents for consideration at the AGM, its representation at several national and regional events and seminars on development evaluation, and the registration of APNODE as a non-for-profit organization in Cameroon.

### **III. Adoption of the Network Constitution**

The Interim Chairperson, Senator Roger Mbassa Ndine, presented for the consideration of all participants the draft Constitution of APNODE, which had been adopted on an interim basis by the Steering Committee of APNODE on 25-26 September 2014 in Addis-Ababa (Ethiopia). In his presentation, Sen. Mbassa Ndine highlighted the key components of the document, namely the Objectives, the Executive Committee, Membership and Finance.

Following a detailed review of the content and language of the document, participants adopted the Constitution by consensus, with several amendments. The approved amendments are shown in the “track changes” version of the Constitution attached to this Report.

### **IV. Election of the Executive Committee**

As provided in the Constitution of the Network, this session aimed at electing the first Executive Committee of APNODE, immediately replacing the Interim Executive Committee. The IEC put forward a proposal for discussion.

After substantive discussions, and with a view to recognizing the work of the founding members, facilitating the transition to a formal network and improving the linguistic, regional and gender representation of the APNODE membership in the Executive Committee, the AGM decided by acclamation to maintain the current members of the Interim Executive Committee in the new Executive Committee and to add 3 new members. The elected Executive Committee is composed as follows and will serve a term of 2 years:

- **Chairperson:**  
Sen. Roger Mbassa Ndine (Cameroon)
- **Vice-Chairperson:**  
Hon. Susan Musyoka (Kenya)
- **Treasurer:**  
Hon. Mahmoud Thabit Kombo (Tanzania)
- **Member from the previous Executive Committee:**  
Hon. Evelyn Mpagi-Kaabule (Uganda)
- **Other elected members:**  
Hon. Girma Seifu Maru (Ethiopia)  
Hon. Kojo Appiah-Kubi (Ghana)  
Hon. Assou Jean-Marie Apezouke (Togo)  
Hon. Loula Mint Zerrough (Mauritania)  
Sen. André Richard Mousounda Mikala (Gabon)  
Hon. Imbassou Ouattara Abbas (Côte d’Ivoire)

Hon. David Chapfika (Zimbabwe)

- **Representatives from partner organizations:**  
African Development Bank  
United Nations Development Programme  
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

At the request of the AGM, the African Development Bank will continue to serve as the Secretariat of the Network until the establishment of another.

## **V. Consideration of operational policies**

Honorable Dr. Kojo Appiah-Kubi (Ghana) presented the draft operational policies of APNODE, namely the Draft Travel Policy and Draft Membership Policy.

After careful consideration of the proposed documents and clarifications from the Secretariat as needed, the Annual General Meeting adopted the two operational policies without amendments.

As regards to the additional funding necessary to attend international fora and events on evaluation, development partners highlighted that members could seek resources from other avenues, including their national Parliaments and partners.

## **VI. Consideration of the draft program of activities and budget for 2015-2016**

Honorable Evelyn Naome Mpagi-Kaabule (Uganda) presented the draft program of activities for the period 2015-2016 and its associated budget, as proposed by the Interim Executive Committee. It has four main headings: Advocacy & Networking, Capacity Development, Outreach, and Resource Mobilization.

The Secretariat invited the members to submit proposals for concrete events and activities to be supported under the headings of Advocacy & Networking and Capacity Development, by November 2015. For each activity, the expected results and timeline will be defined.

Participants agreed that members should strive to establish national chapters of APNODE, or sections on evaluation within their respective chambers of Parliament, as it is the best way for Parliaments to take action and to provide funding from their budgets. To support these efforts by members, the Executive Committee was advised to write to the Speakers of National Assemblies and Senates. Participants stressed the need for advocacy and communication about APNODE, and also suggested to collaborate with the Pan-African Parliament and regional parliaments.

On Capacity Development, it was suggested to organize regional workshops. The Secretariat asked members to send suggestions for workshops, taking into account the budgetary constraints. In general, it was emphasized that events do not need to be large in scale, but can also consist of a 2-hour seminar or workshop, with technical support from a partner.

Participants agreed that Outreach activities should be a priority at this stage. The Secretariat informed the meeting that it was in the process of recruiting a graphic designer to assist with the APNODE branding and the development of advocacy material. It was suggested by a partner to look into the branding of sister organizations, such as the South Asian Parliamentarian Forum on Development Evaluation.

As for Resource Mobilization, some members have already started consulting with their parliament. It was proposed to look into other partnerships, particularly for individual events and activities at country level (see below). The idea of setting a target percentage of the annual APNODE budget to be funded by Parliaments, for example 30%, was discussed.

Participants adopted by consensus the proposed budget and program of activities. They will keep the Secretariat informed of the awareness-raising, advocacy, outreach and other activities they undertake in relation to APNODE.

## **VII. Resource Mobilization**

Honorable Girma Seifu Maru (Ethiopia) presented the Financial Contribution to the APNODE Initiative (as of June 2015), and a proposed resource sustainability concept note.

The Secretariat clarified that part of the budget presented for 2015-2016 has already been spent on some activities, including this Annual General Meeting, and explained the breakdown of the contributions from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, other partners and national Parliaments.

In addition to approaching partner organizations at headquarters level, Unicef and UNWomen also advised to explore possible resources at country level, particularly for country-specific or local activities. Unicef informed that its country offices prepare their work programs in November and December, and that it is recommended to submit proposals for funding shortly before and during this period. Development partners also suggested to approach other partners, such as EvalPartners (small grants program), 3ie and USAID, and to look into mobilizing other resources from other networks and other parliamentary associations. There are also many materials on evaluation (written materials, videos, toolkits, training courses, etc.) available online. The Secretariat is available to support members in their contacts with local and regional partners.

Parliamentarians also underlined the need to mobilize resources for 2017 onwards. As a first step, they decided to send letters to the Speakers of the Houses of Parliament of the APNODE members and of the other African countries, to request them to create national caucuses and to obtain funding. Various other ideas to mobilize

resources were shared, including setting up a subcommittee of the Executive Committee on resource mobilizing, harnessing the skills of members in this area, and recruiting a retired individual well familiar with fundraising techniques and opportunities.

The concept note on Resource Mobilization of APNODE was endorsed without objections.

## **VII. Partnerships**

This session aimed at presenting the different development partners who have contributed to the establishment of APNODE and its activities to date and to provide a forum for potential future partners to present their organization and what they could bring to the network.

In their presentations, the African Development Bank, UNWomen, Unicef, AfrEA and the Reseau Francophone de l'Evaluation set out the various technical, human and material support that they can offer to APNODE members and individual APNODE activities. After the presentations, the participants agreed that they should take advantage of the existing network of members and partners to share information about and gain support for APNODE. The importance of mainstreaming gender equality, inclusivity and equitable development in evaluation was raised, noting that APNODE should also strive for equal representation of men and women within the network.

## **IX. Consideration of future venues for regional conferences and seminars**

It was agreed that virtual meetings of the Executive Committee should be held every two months and that all members of the Committee should aim to be present at all of these meetings. The Secretariat reiterated that several modes of connection were available to facilitate participation. The next virtual meeting was scheduled for October 2015. Additionally, participants decided that face-to-face meetings should be held at least once or twice a year. UNICEF offered to host a face-to-face meeting of the Executive Committee at its office in Dakar.

Participants also agreed that the next Annual General Meeting would take place in July 2016. Zimbabwe offered to host the meeting in Harare, with the aim of broadening membership from Southern Africa, especially countries from the Southern African Development Community.

## **X. Celebrating the 2015 Evaluation Year**

This session was organized to celebrate "EvalYear". The year 2015 was declared the International Year of Evaluation at the Third International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities organized in São Paulo, Brazil from 29 September to 2 October

2013. In recognition of the importance of evaluation, a number of events and workshops have been organized throughout the world.

A short video message from Marco Segone, Co-Chair of EvalPartners and Vice-Chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group was broadcast. A list of all EvalYear events, available on the EvalPartners website, was shared with the participants, encouraging them to add events organized in their countries. It was shared that a National Evaluation Day would be held in Gabon on 30 July 2015.

## **XI. Consideration of any other business proposed by the Interim Executive Committee and Any other business**

Hon. Evelyn Mpagi-Kaabule shared that the Speakers of the National Assemblies of the Pan-African Parliament would be meeting in the first week of August 2015 and that her Speaker will bring APNODE to the attention of the forum.

Hon. Loula Mint Zerrouh suggested to consider providing interpretation and translation of the documents into Arabic for future meetings.

Hon. Imbassou Abbas inquired about APNODE's communication policy. It was agreed that a press release on the AGM and its achievements should be drafted by the Secretariat and released after the meeting, following review and approval by the Executive Committee.

## **XII. Closing Remarks and the Way Forward**

Chairperson Senator Roger Mbassa Ndine and Ms. Karen Rot-Münstermann, Division Manager at the Independent Development Evaluation of the African Development Bank, delivered closing remarks. They congratulated the participants for their work during the meeting, which led, among other achievements to the establishment of the network as a formal organization through the adoption of its Constitution and election of its Executive Committee. They also congratulated the Secretariat for the preparation of the meeting and for achieving such a good participation, effectively raising the number of countries with APNODE members from 7 to 15.

The Chairperson summarized the main steps agreed by the participants during the meeting, including: to organize advocacy events, to write to all the African national parliaments and follow-up with their Speakers, to strengthen the membership through national chapters, to build capacity for APNODE members, to take steps to improve resource mobilization (including through national chapters), to set up timelines for the delivery of its activities, and to consider gender in its approach.

## **Seminar organised by the Governance and Financial Management Department**

Following the closing of the APNODE General Meeting, Ms. Evelynne Change, Principal Governance Officer at the Governance and Financial Management Department of the AfDB conducted a seminar for the participants. The presentation focused on the AfDB's role in promoting good financial and economic governance in Africa, including strengthening citizens' ability to hold governments to account. Ms. Change described the importance of governance and outlined the place of the governance agenda within the AfDB's Ten-Year Strategy. She then presented to the participants the different levels of intervention of the Bank and the key role of Parliaments in promoting good governance. The Bank for example supports programs to enhance the capacity of parliaments and parliamentarians, programs to enhance budget transparency, and parliamentary networks to enhance peer learning (like the African Parliamentarians' Network Against Corruption, APNAC). Ms. Change advised interested participants to have a look at the African Governance Outlook, which provides a broad overview of the state of governance on the continent.