



African Peer Review
Mechanism

***NEPAD/ OECD Regional Roundtable on “Strengthening Investment
Climate Assessment and Reform in NEPAD Countries”
27-28 November 2007
Lusaka, Zambia***

**OPENING REMARKS BY DR. BERNARD KOUASSI, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF THE APRM SECRETARIAT**

The Minister for Commerce, Trade and Industry, Republic of Zambia
Other Representatives of the Zambian Government
Member of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons
Prof. Firmino Mucavele, CEO of NEPAD Secretariat
Mr. Mario Amano, Deputy Secretary General of the OECD
Focal Points of the APRM
Representatives of National Governing Councils of the APRM
Distinguished Ladies and Gentleman,

It is my honour and privilege to welcome all of you to Zambia. I wish to express our deep gratitude to all of you for being able to join us to participate in this important workshop on ***Strengthening Investment Climate Assessment and Reform in NEPAD Countries*** despite your very busy schedules. We are immensely grateful to the

host, the Zambian Government for the excellent arrangement and facilities.

Investment is of crucial importance to Africa. The central role of private investment for growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development is now firmly established both theoretically and empirically. The potential for highly profitable foreign and domestic investment in Africa is enormous, but many investors remain unaware of the opportunities. Although Foreign Investment in Africa has been increasing in recent years, it still lags far behind the flows to other developing regions, in part because of the generally negative image of the continent portrayed in the international media. Africa's profitability is still perhaps an open secret. We genuinely hope that this Roundtable will assist African Countries in reforming the investment environment.

Your Excellencies, permit me to give a brief update on the APRM process which is undoubtedly a key milestone in the continent's history of political and economic reforms.

The APRM is now widely acknowledged as a success story. Currently, 27 countries are participating in it on a voluntary basis representing three-quarters of the African population. Several other countries are expected to join sooner or latter. Since its inception, Participating African countries have demonstrated their determination for the APRM to succeed and to be owned and driven

by them. At the continental level, they have funded a substantial part of its budget (about 75 Percent). Indeed, African leaders are jealously guarding its ownership.

As you may be aware, we have finalized the reviews of five countries, namely Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa and Algeria, in that order since the inception of the APRM in 2003. The report on the country evaluation of Benin is at an advanced stage. Uganda and Nigeria are scheduled to receive country review missions in February 2008. The fact that only five countries have so far been peer reviewed seems to indicate that the mechanism is progressing at a very slow pace. We hope other countries, especially those that have received advance and support missions, will quicken the pace of the self-assessment processes, so that they too can join this enviable group of countries that have been peer reviewed.

Four years on, the APRM has won acclaim worldwide. To date, the review process which actually started in 2004 has commanded a lot of interest and has been embraced in a very positive way by African states that have signed up for it. The credibility of the APRM remains high with the reports so far delivered. It represents a bold new approach to governance in Africa.

Earlier in the month (8-9 November 2007), the APRM in collaboration with the Algeria government, organised a workshop on streamlining and fast tracking the APRM process on the basis of experience sharing and peer learning.

Over 100 participants from 13 countries that have already finalized or launched the process as well as our strategic partners (UNECA, UNDP and African Development Bank), NEPAD Secretariat and National Research Institutions participated.

The workshop made concrete proposals on review of the processes and instruments of the APRM; revision of the questionnaire and design of prototype research framework; and design of monitoring and evaluation guidelines for reporting on national programmes of action. The Panel is currently studying the Report of this very enriching workshop with a view to implementing the recommendations early next year.

In conclusion, I wish the Roundtable every success in its deliberation.