

### ADVANCING MANAGEMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS FOR AFRICA TRANSFORMATION

#### *The Role of Parliaments*

*From the African Community of Practice on Management for  
Development Results at the African Capacity Building Foundation*



Case Study  
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#### SYNOPSIS

Advancing the use of Management for Development Results (MfDR) principles, instruments and tools for effective development offers a unique opportunity to chart out a new era for regional integration as key pillar not only of the Busan declaration on partnership, but also of the South-south cooperation and particularly for ensuring that effective development takes place as a fundamental process to Africa transformation agenda. This paper aims at highlighting the roles of African parliamentary and participation in delivering development results in Africa.

**Key findings:** Based on desk review of available literature, findings show that, African parliaments have a big role to play in developing MfDR culture in Africa. However, there is lot of capacity constraints facing parliamentarians for them to effectively perform this role. Study findings also show that it is becoming widely recognized that when African parliaments are effective in their oversight role, it positively influences development results. The inadequate capacity of parliaments, the stranglehold of the executive over the legislature, the dependence of the judiciary vis-à-vis the executive are the key constraints faced by African Parliaments in their oversight role and promotion of accountability for governments.

**Key recommendations:** The paper recommends the development of capacity building programs to strengthen the role and effectiveness of African parliaments by increasing their ability to represent the population, critically review the work of the executive and promote accountability. Specific recommendations include the promotion of research that provides evidence to law formulation and oversight of the executive; the support to peer-learning among African parliaments and the collaboration between national Communities of Practices and parliaments. African institutions including the African Capacity Building Foundation, the African Union, and the African Development Bank are called to invest in and coordinate such efforts if Africa has to achieve effective development and continental blue print Agendas 2030 and 2063.

#### Introduction

In the recent times, there is growing interest more than ever before in democracy and good governance around the world. This is a reflection of the increasing acceptance of the fact that democracy and good governance are fundamental requirements to achieve sustainable development and improve MfDR culture in Africa (AfDB 2016). Parliaments as one of the key state institutions in a democratic

system of governance have a critical role to play in promoting good governance based on MfDR culture. As the democratically elected representatives of the people, parliaments have the honorable task to ensure government by the people and for the people (UNECA 2014). In the performance of their key functions of legislation, representation and oversight, parliaments can actively engage in the development and implementation of laws, policies, and practices

that promote democracy and good governance and therefore enhance the MfDR culture.

The weak development results achieved so far in African countries is attributed, to not only the lack of capacity of governments to properly account for the funds used in development programs, but also weak institutions, and exclusion of key beneficiaries in decision making. Development partners and taxpayers have intensified the call for governments to demonstrate value and impact of their policies, programs, and projects. Donors and partners highlighted at the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan (2011) Paris (2008), and Accra (2003)<sup>1</sup>, the importance for governments accountable to their citizens and reaffirmed the active role to be played by parliaments in this respect (OECD 2016). Moreover, donors and partner countries emphasized the need for governments to be accountable to its citizens; and acknowledged the essential role of parliaments in promoting accountability through their oversight roles thereby ensuring effective and efficient utilization of national resources in line with the needs and expectations of the citizenry (ibid). Moreover, accountability for results is essential for effective prioritization and utilization of national resources for sustainable growth and development. The global economic slowdown and the increased demand for improved public service delivery among others has led to increased demand for efficient and effective utilization of national resources (UNDP 2015, WB 2015). Accountable leadership and responsive institutions are the most fundamental requirements for the achievement of the goals of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Parliaments are recognized as state institutions whose constitutional mandate is to represent and protect the citizens of developing desires. Despite this, African parliaments still face a

number of constraints to monitoring capacity and effectively carry out its mandates (ibid). Even development practitioners increasingly recognize openly that when African parliaments will be effective in their oversight role, the development will be more effective.

### Objective of the study

This study attempts to examine the contribution and roles of Africa parliaments in promoting MfDR culture within their core mandate framework of enforcing good governance and consolidating democracy in Africa. It focuses on the representational role of parliament thereby examining how parliaments respond to the mounting public pressure for greater involvement, transparency, accountability, and better service delivery to citizens.

Desk review was the main methodology used in collecting the necessary data and information used in this paper. Reports and publications by various national and regional bodies were critically reviewed for this purpose. One of the shortcomings in this paper is limited literature to show case how various Africa parliaments are advancing result agenda in Africa.

Before we examine the role of parliament in achieving MfDR culture in Africa, it's important we first look at the main principles and pillars for MfDR as well as key responsibilities of African parliaments. This approach will help us to examine the way in which parliaments' core mandates can play important role in the efforts of instituting and achieving MfDR culture in African countries.

### MfDR principles and pillars

The MfDR principles were agreed during the Second Roundtable on Results in Marrakech in

<sup>1</sup>

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/thehighlevelfor>

[aonaideffectivenessahistory.htm](http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/thehighlevelfor) (accessed 10 March 2016)

2004<sup>2</sup>. These principles form the basis for sound performance management. They are applicable at any level and within a variety of interventions (national, sector, program, project, and organization), and they influence the use of specific strategies and tools at various phases of national and development programming. There is significant synergy among the principles. They should all be considered at every phase of any development initiative, as the basis for deciding which specific performance management tools to apply. The principles do not constitute a step-by-step, sequential recipe for MfDR. The five MfDR principles are drawn from the MfDR resource book<sup>3</sup>. A principle is a basic generalization that is accepted as true and that can be used as the basis for ongoing reasoning or conduct.

Below is the list of those principles:

1. Focus the Dialogue on Results at All Phases
2. Align Programming, Monitoring, and Evaluation with Results
3. Keep Measurement and Reporting Simple
4. Manage For, Not By, Results
5. Use Results Information for Learning and Decision Making

In addition to these principles, MfDR approach is organized around 6 pillars as presented below (AfriK4R, 2015).

- Leadership for results
- Planning for results
- Budgeting for results
- Monitoring and Evaluation for results
- Accountability and Partnerships for results
- Institutional capacity for results

Statistics and gender and youth empowerment for results are cross cutting issues in MfDR.

### Role of parliament in achieving MfDR in Africa

Traditionally, African parliaments' roles include: legislation, representation and oversight or control of the executive. Basing on these key roles and mandate of Africa parliaments, it is clear that the parliament is central in advancing the use of managing for development results principles, instruments and tools for effective development and achievement of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 as well as national specific goals. Below are examples of how African state and partners can use the parliamentary systems and instruments to advance results culture in Africa.

**Through the special parliamentary committees** African parliaments can help making parliaments more responsive by broadening community access to the parliamentary process, whereby sections of the community or groups lacking direct parliamentary representation, may thus achieve presence and voice in the deliberative process. It is therefore crucial to ensure that those who will be disproportionately affected by legislation have an opportunity to voice their concerns rather than simply being at the mercy of majoritarian decision-making.

**Enforcing participatory processes:** The involvement of people in policy decision making and implementation processes is an extremely important aspect for the promotion of democracy and good governance and key to the promotion of development effectiveness in Africa, particularly at this time when the continent needs to marshal all its available resources for economic and social development. For the moment, the involvement of the wide spectrum of people in decision-making processes, including governance, is rather limited in most African countries. The parliaments have a role to promote this to happen. According to

<sup>2</sup><http://www.mfdr.org/Sourcebook/1stEdition/4-MfDRPrinciples.pdf> (accessed on March 20 2016)

<sup>3</sup><http://www.mfdr.org/Sourcebook/1stEdition/4-MfDRPrinciples.pdf> (accessed on March 20 2016)

USAID (2005), greater involvement of people in decision making is essential for the advancement of democracy, the promotion of good governance and the achievement of peace and stability in a country. Domination by a single party or group of people and excessive executive control limit competition in the political and economic arenas. Parliaments and parliamentarians have a critical role to play in promoting democracy and good governance which facilitates the participation of all stakeholders.

**The oversight role of parliament assists in controlling the executive.** As the only State institution that can hold the government accountable, the parliament can play a crucial role if effectively sensitized and involved in advocating and advancing MfDR principles. In this regard they can be very useful in programmes and work related to leadership for results, planning for results, and accountability for results as well as regional integration for results. These can easily be achieved through their functions by

- establishing regular hearings in parliament, including broadcast discussions in parliament on TV and Radio;
- establishing a “televised question hour” where the President and ministers are subject to direct questioning by the citizens;
- establishing a special Anti-Corruption Committee and discuss and debate corruption issues frequently;
- Organizing visits to special programmes, reviewing and asking critical questions on programmes and project monitoring and evaluation reports.

**The role of the Pan African Parliament (PAP):** Article 18 of the Pan African Parliament (PAP) Protocol requires the PAP to work in close co-operation with Parliaments of Regional Economic Communities and the National Parliaments or other deliberative organs of Member States. In addition, as it is required by Article 3 of the Protocol, the PAP is to consult

Parliaments in Africa to develop a mechanism to ensure the sound and effective communication and full participation of the peoples of Africa within the integration processes of Africa.

The PAP is therefore, fully empowered to discuss or express an opinion on any matter, either on its own initiative or at the request of the assembly or other policy organs. It is also empowered to make any recommendation it may deem fit relating to, inter alia, matters pertaining to respect of human rights, the consolidation of democratic institutions and the culture of democracy, as well as the promotion of good governance and the rule of law in Africa. It is therefore expected that within the context of promoting participatory development in Africa, PAP would ensure that Member States adhere to good governance, transparency and accountability; enhance the culture of human rights and democracy in Africa; and let the peoples of Africa know what the objectives and policies of the African Union are so that they might be able to integrate themselves continentally while still working within the framework of the AU.

**The role of The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)** in advancing the result culture for achieving the transformation agenda in African countries cannot be underestimated<sup>4</sup>. The APRM is a mutually agreed instrument voluntarily acceded to by the member states of the African Union as a self-monitoring mechanism (AU 2014). Founded in 2003, the mandate of the APRM is to encourage conformity in regard to political, economic, and corporate governance values, codes, and standards, among African countries and the objectives in socio-economic development within the New Partnership for Africa's Development<sup>5</sup>. It is indeed an innovative and challenging initiative in the field of African governance. It is the very first continental governance effort to use a wide

<sup>4</sup> <http://aprm-au.org/pages?pagelid=mandate> (accessed April 10 2016)

<sup>5</sup> <http://aprm-au.org/pages?pagelid=mandate> (accessed April 17, 2016)

participatory approach to solicit popular views of the people about how they wish to be governed (ibid; NEPAD 2016, UNECA 2014). The APRM seeks to create opportunities for African citizens and civil society to dialogue, influence, and shape the outcomes of the governance processes on the continent. It is intended to provide an opportunity for citizens and civil society at large to participate fully in the debates and policy dialogues shaping the governance of their respective countries and public concerns. The APRM emphasizes constructive engagement between the three major stakeholders in national APRM processes: government, private sector, and civil society. The overall objective is to capacitate and empower citizens and civil society to engage with national governments on a continuous and mutually-beneficial basis. The African parliaments can therefore be very instrumental in the use of the findings and recommendations from country APRM reports to holding accountable the executive to deliver better results and effective governance practices.

### Key constraints facing African parliaments

Findings in this paper show that, the African parliaments hold a crucial role in advancing result agenda in Africa. However, parliaments in Africa face number of constraints that are hindering their capacities in delivering on their core mandate. Below are just few of them:

#### Lack of capacity

While earlier literature on African parliaments in the 1970s and 1980s emphasized the fact that African parliaments lack legislatives/constitutional powers, recent studies indicate that the main challenge of most African parliaments today are lack of capacity both human, financial and material (soft and hard capacities). Most Parliamentary Committees have no advisors or sufficient research staff (UNECA 2014). There is very limited physical space for Committees meetings and most MPs do not have appropriate offices and the necessary

equipment to perform their functions efficiently (ibid). In terms of engaging people, access to rural areas, as results of weak infrastructure is a very big challenge (ibid).

#### Lack of appropriate laws, policies, and mechanisms towards enhancing citizens' participation.

Despite the efforts undertaken by most African countries in promoting people's participation in decision making processes, a number of them still lack appropriate laws, policies, and mechanisms towards enhancing citizens' participation in economic, social, and political decision-making (UNDP 2015, ECA 2014, AU 2015). This challenge can be addressed by 1) integrating the parliament's public participation function within its overall mechanism, structures and operations, and 2) providing the appropriate resources (human, financial and material) and capacities to both individual members of parliaments and parliamentary committees. Moreover, a common criticism of parliamentarians and politicians in general to participation is that they only engage the public during an election campaign, and once elected they lose interest in local concerns. Although this may not always reflect the reality of the way some elected representatives work, it is a true perception among the citizens in most African countries. Involving the public in policy making is therefore a fundamental public desire to be listened to and taken seriously at all times. The ideal scenario would be a close cooperation between parliaments and the respective societal actors vis-à-vis the governments, within an established framework which is: sustainable, structurally integrated, thematically embedded, politically relevant, broad-based and inclusive, decentralized, representative, conflict-aware, and safeguarded by the rule of law.

#### The parliament itself lacks accountability

In many African parliaments there is very little accountability for how parliamentary consultation processes are used and how they feed into final decision-making. Most African



parliaments do not have a requirement that Cabinet submissions specify views presented during community consultation processes and how they relate to final recommendations. Nor do they require feedback to community groups concerning the use made of their contributions. The failure to set up adequate processes for community dialogue over policy development has led scholars such as John Uhr (2009) to suggest that there should be parliamentary oversight to ensure consultation remains meaningful as an institution of representative democracy.

### **Weak political system, and or incapable parliamentary systems**

While Africa has recorded impressive GDP growth over the years, this growth has not been effectively translated into inclusive development. That is, it benefits the rich more than the poor—or the rich becomes richer and the poor poorer, which is not consistent with sustainable development. An estimated 6 out of the 10 most unequal countries in the world are in Africa (UNECA 2015, UNDP 2015). The following are specific problem areas that would need vital policy response: (i) human development; (ii) transparency and institutional strengthening for the African parliament to effectively contribute to instituting result agenda in African countries.

### **African parliaments' ability to hold the executive accountable for development results**

There has been derivative capacity of the parliament (especially the opposition wing) in holding the executive accountable. That, because a number of African nations' development plans are aligned to the ruling party manifestos, dictating policies, deployment, and institutions' performance. Such plans are perceived by the opposition as ruling party programs; thus there are little incentives for checks and balances from the opposition. The way some of the programs are prepared, many without significant parliamentary input, has been a problem. For

instance, lack of deep budgetary skills and financial literacy has severely hampered the budget scrutiny and oversight role of parliament. There are also constraints in terms of lack of timely, reliable, and complete facts, figures, and information to conduct intelligent, persuasive, and impactful debates. In many cases, the research wings of parliaments are not well resourced and supported. And in fact as many parliamentarians belong to the ruling party, their independence, and critiquing role can be at best tepid and forthright. Those parliamentarians who are personally well-endowed materially, and not reliant on parliamentary income, can speak their minds more powerfully.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Capable legislatures are crucial in creating an enabling environment for effective socioeconomic and sustainable development and good governance in emerging African democracies. The legislature is the principal forum for communicating peoples' needs. Its core functions include checking the efficacy of the executive, ensuring transparency and accountability in economic management, and formulating coherent laws that uphold human rights and enhance achievement of development results. These functions make the parliament a valuable instrument for promoting good governance, democracy and the rule of law. Fulfilling this mandate through the parliamentary processes, however, requires an enabling environment and the legislature to possess essential soft and hard capacities such as individual skills, organizational and resource capacities. However, in Africa, the parliaments are unable to fulfill these noble roles because of various reasons including among others: constitutional dominance of the Executive/Presidency; the lack of resources and/or capacity and the lack of acceptance in the public. The study concludes that the parliament has an important role to play in advancing result agenda in Africa. A democratically elected

parliament is the only true voice of the people and accountability to the people it serves is the basic plank of a democratic system. Based on the findings in this paper, the study recommends, among others, that:

- a) The institutions that are the custodian and supporters of the AfriK4R programme (ACBF, AfDB, WAEMU and COMESA) should include consultations and capacity building of the African parliaments as well advocacy (media and CSOs) as one of their key strategies in advancing result agenda in Africa. They should develop a comprehensive capacity building program on the capacity issues highlighted to increase administrative, human, communication, and research capacities of African parliaments. National Communities of Practice (COPs) should also be capacitated and sensitized on the importance to consulting and get on board the parliament in the processes of promoting and implementing MfDR in their countries. They should ensure active involvement of parliaments in all development processes, and provide adequate time for parliamentary debate on all development issues;
- b) African governments should adopt appropriate laws and policies so that citizens' participation in decision-making processes could go beyond casting ballots at elections and referendums to being more able to participate effectively in the work of various institutions of governance, both at national and local levels.
- c) Parliament should strive to empower citizens to actively participate in the governance processes through active participation in elections, constitutional reforms, and contributing to the government policy agenda.
- d) For the parliament to promote result agenda, democracy and good governance, thereby enhancing people's participation, it should be more open and easily accessible to the public so that the citizens could follow more closely the activities and operations of the parliament in decision-making processes that affect their lives, including governance. The involvement of the media to this endeavor is highly recommended.
- e) ACBF should promote research that provides evidence to law formulation and oversight of the executive and support peer-learning among African parliaments and ensure follow-up on implementation of good practices in each country's parliament. A special study to establish readiness status of African parliament for advancing MfDR is especially recommended. There is also a need for detailed study on constraints African Parliaments encounter; a sample of African countries could be chosen for this on the basis of levels of socioeconomic development, giving more attention to less developed and fragile states.
- f) AfDB and ACBF should work together to see how the APRM can help in advancing result agenda by helping countries to develop performance targets for all parliamentarians and share these with their constituencies for periodic measurement of their performance and reporting, ensuring that results are published.

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