

Rugunda launches APRM report

By Moses Mulondo

The Prime Minister, Ruhakana Rugunda, has launched Uganda's second African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) report, which assesses the country's progress in promoting democracy and good governance.

In the report compiled by the Uganda governing council of APRM, the absence of presidential term limits and lack of internal democracy in political parties are highlighted as some of the problems hindering the progress of democracy and good governance in Uganda. Others are the absence of a

trusted electoral commission, executive's interference with the independence of Parliament and the Judiciary as well as the high rate of corruption.

The report states that since the Public Order Management Act came into force, Police has used it in a partisan way to curtail the freedom of assembly for the political parties and civil society groups.

On the independence of Parliament, the team noted that: "There have been instances where the Executive has influenced the work of Parliament in ways that most Ugandans feel has blurred the separation of powers."

BETWEEN THE LINES: What is APRM?

■ APRM is an initiative of the African Union which promotes democracy and good governance through periodical assessment of heads of state and their governments in implementing the necessary reforms.

The report contends that despite the numerous policies put in place to fight corruption, the vice is still rampant in the country.

Rugunda launched the report in the presence of a delegation from the APRM secretariat in South Africa led by Bishop Dinis Sengulane Salomao, who is a member of the APRM panel of eminent persons.

"Uganda is committed to the APR process and our commitment is unequivocal. We are among the pioneers and in 2008, we were the 7th country to be reviewed. We agreed to submit a report for the second report and ensure we implement recommendations in the 2008 report," Rugunda said.

Bishop Sengulane said



Prime Minister Rugunda said Uganda is committed to the APRM process

Uganda needs to address concerns on the credibility of the electoral process, violation of human rights, corruption, high unemployment, high maternal mortality rate, and the need for leaders to be accountable to the citizens.

The bishop, who hails from Mozambique, commended Uganda for volunteering to the second phase of review.

APRM is an initiative of the African Union, which promotes democracy and good governance through periodical assessment of heads of state and their governments in implementing the necessary reforms.

President Yoweri Museveni and Uganda at large will be assessed in the next African Union summit, which will take place in January next year.

APRM secretariat officials are in Uganda for two weeks to verify the content of the report by interacting with various stakeholders to ensure what is contained in the report reflects the truth of what is happening in the country.

The experts also raised concern that the challenges which were put in the 2008 report are not different from those in that of 2017.

The chief executive officer of the South African-based APRM secretariat Prof. Edward Maloka, said: "As we assess Uganda on the 2017 report, we shall also assess progress made in implementing recommendations in the previous report."

He made the remarks after being asked why the African Union should, through APRM, continue to waste time and resources on the assessments when the recommendations are rarely implemented.

Delivering a message from President Yoweri Museveni, the state minister for finance, David Bahati, said the President wanted some changes so that APRM focuses on the 13 bottlenecks which are hindering Africa's progress.

These bottlenecks include ideological disorientation (sectarianism of tribe and religion), interference with the private sector, under-developed infrastructure, weak institutions, under-development of the human resource and fragmented markets.

Others are lack of industrialisation, under-development of the services sector, the attack on democracy and governance, lack of domestic resource mobilisation and structural inequalities in access to opportunities.

"The President is looking forward to the team's findings as far as Uganda has progressed in addressing those bottlenecks," Bahati said.



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