

AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM

ALGERIA EVALUATION MISSION (10 NOV. - 5 DEC. 2007)

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

1. At the invitation of the Government of Algeria, Mrs. Marie-Angélique Savane, Member of the Panel of Eminent Persons of the African Peer Review (APRM), led an Evaluation Mission to Algeria, within the APRM framework, from 10 November to 5 December.
2. The APRM is a mechanism established by African Heads of State and Government in July 2002 to assess and help improve the participating countries' performance in good governance in four thematic areas: Democracy and Political Governance, Economic Governance and Management, Corporate Governance and Socio-Economic Development. Accession to the Mechanism is voluntary and Algeria was one of the founders and among the first countries that acceded to the Mechanism in 2003.
3. The evaluation of the country by African experts constitutes the second phase of the APRM process. The main objective of this phase is to organize the broadest possible consultations with Government officials and institutions of the Republic, members of parliament, representatives of political parties, groups of business operators, representatives of the civil society, including the Media, academics, trade unions, youth and women's organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), rural communities, strategic partners, the G8 partners and representatives of international organizations as well as African ambassadors accredited to the country. The ultimate goal is to deepen and complete the Self-Assessment Report in addition to making recommendations that are likely to improve governance in the country.
4. Mrs. Savané was accompanied by a strong delegation of about twenty high-level experts comprising independent experts in particular, as well as experts representing the strategic partners of APRM – African Development Bank (AfDB), UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The delegation also included experts from the APRM Secretariat working on the four thematic areas covered by the assessment. In the course of its tours, the Mission was accompanied by members of the National Governance Commission of Algeria.

5. On Sunday, 12 November 2006, the President of the Republic of Algeria, His Excellency Abdelaziz Bouteflika, granted the Leader of the APRM Delegation a 5-hour audience, which further attested to the personal commitment of the Head of State, one of the principal architects and initiator of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to the promotion of good governance. Mr. Abdelkader Messahel, the Minister responsible for Maghreb and African Affairs and National APRM Focal Point in Algeria, and Mrs. Fatima Zohra Karadja, Chairperson of the National Governance Commission (CNG), also attended the audience. The President of the Republic also extended the audience with a separate tête-à-tête with the Leader of the APRM Mission.
6. In the course of their talks, the President of the Republic assured the Leader of the APRM Mission that Algeria would be a « glasshouse»; he reiterated his personal commitment and the Algerian authorities' determination to ensure that the mission was conducted in a spirit of total transparency. He urged the Mission to show professionalism and be objective in carrying out its activities.
7. His Excellency Abdelkader Bensalah, Chairman of the Council of the Nation, received Mrs. Savané and her close collaborators and seized the opportunity to brief her on his institution and on its role in promoting democracy and the development of the country.
8. His Excellency Abdelaziz Belkhadem, Head of Government, also received Mrs. Savané and some members of the Mission at the beginning and at the end of the exercise. During their deliberations, he reiterated the importance that the Algerian Government attaches to the promotion of good governance in all sectors of the political, economic and social life of the country, as well as its commitment to furthering the cooperation to that end with the APRM, to which Algeria voluntarily acceded.
9. Mrs. Savané and the members of the Mission also had working sessions with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Labour and National Solidarity, the Minister of Family Affairs and Women's Status, the Minister of Rural Development and the Principal Secretary to the Minister of Defence.
10. After this takeoff, and, in conformity with the established procedure, the Work Programme agreed between the Mission, the National Commission on Governance (CNG) and the Focal Point was centred around meetings

with the CNG, public and private sector stakeholders as well as the civil society, for discussions on the Self-Assessment Report in a plenary assembly, and subsequently in workshops organized on the four themes covered by the APRM.

11. Meetings on more specific issues were also organized with personalities and groupings such as women's organizations, youth organizations and political parties - including those affiliated to the Presidential Alliance or the Opposition - bilateral and multilateral development partners, public and private media representatives and human rights organizations.
12. The Mission toured eleven Wilayas in the coastal region, the high plateaux, the South and the Greater South intermittently with the Algiers stage where it alternately held meetings with the Focal Point and the National Commission on Governance, Government Officials, the two Houses of the Parliament, the Civil Society, specialized institutions such as the National Economic and Social Council (CNES), the Supreme Islamic Council, the Supreme Council for Arabic Language and the Amazighité High Commission. The following Wilayas were visited: Guelma, Annaba, Sétif, Bordj Bou-Arréridj, Oran, Mostaganem, Tlemcen, Ghardaïa, Ouargla, Tamanrasset and Tizi-Ouzou.
13. In each of the Wilayas, the APRM Mission was accompanied by members of the National Commission on Governance including the Chairperson and one representative of the Ministry in charge of Maghreb and African Affairs, the National APRM Focal Point in Algeria. The Mission held plenary meetings with all the participants in order to present APRM and the assessment process as well as to clarify the objectives pursued and provide some guidelines before organizing technical workshops on the four themes covered by the APRM.
14. Other fruitful and very interesting discussions were held with select groups during the dinner debate on local and national governance. These working dinners organized around thematic tables invariably rallied parliamentarians from the two Houses, local councillors and local authorities, as well as representatives of associations, the civil society and the private sector. Members of the APRM Mission led the debates. One of the highlights of these meetings was certainly the debate with women entrepreneurs comprising a number of young graduates who had formerly remained unemployed for a long time but are now beneficiaries of the ANSEJ and ANGEM financial schemes established by the Algerian Government with a view to promoting employment.

15. The Mission visited the new Heliopolis University Centre at Guelma, the Ferhat Abbas University Centre at Setif, the new Tlemcen University Faculty of Medicine, University of Ouargla and University of Tamanrasset, among others. The Mission also inspected community development projects such as the new urban district of Bouhroua and the new Boubrik Village in Ghardaia; other areas visited included the social housing project sites in Tamanrasset, the industrial area and the « Condor » Electronics Company at Bordj Bou-Arréridj, the Amusement Park and the Tlemcen International Conference Centre, the Trans-Saharan Highway and a Private Clinic at Tizi-Ouzu.
16. The visit offered the APRM Mission the opportunity to observe and learn about progress made by Algeria with regard to national reconciliation and reconstruction, peace-building and fostering stability.
17. The field tours also enabled the APRM Delegation to fully assess the positive impact of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's national reconciliation policy on the people's living conditions. The Delegation also noted the remarkable investment-based socio-economic development efforts inspired in the country by the 2005-2009 Economic Recovery Plan, the Special South Programme and the Special High Plateaux Programme to which the Algerian Government has allocated 100 billion dollars for implementation.
18. Furthermore, the Mission had the pleasure of visiting some tourist attractions in the country. This offered the members the opportunity to appreciate Algeria's tourist potential in its rich cultural diversity.
19. Finally, the Delegation met with members of the African Diplomatic Corps to brief them on the current status of the Mechanism in Africa in general and in Algeria in particular. The meeting with the African Diplomats helped in bringing out their views about the APRM as an instrument that could promote African integration within the NEPAD framework.
20. In her numerous statements before the Press, in Algiers and the various Wilayas visited, the Leader of the APRM Delegation, Mrs. Marie-Angélique Savané, stressed the need for extensive participation of the civil society and social partners as a guarantee for the transparency and credibility of the process. She urged all the participants to commit themselves to the implementation of the Programme of Action after the presentation of the Report to the APRM Heads of State and Government

Forum in July 2007. Mrs. Savané paid tribute to the members of the National Commission on Governance, particularly to its Chairperson, for their dedication and personal commitment to the APRM cause in Algeria. She expressed satisfaction at the great strides Algeria has made in fostering peace and security, in the steps taken to meet the social demand and in ensuring judicious use of the country's financial resources.

21. At the end of the visit, the Leader of the APRM Mission expressed gratitude, on behalf of the Mission, to the President of the Republic, and to the Government and all the People of Algeria. She addressed special thanks to Minister Messahel, the APRM Focal Point, and his team, the National Commission and its Chairperson, Mrs. Karadja, as well as to Professor Mohamed Seghir Babes, Chairperson of the CNES and member of the APR Panel, for their warm hospitality and the excellent organization of the evaluation exercise, which helped in making the mission a great success.
22. The Mission Team will revisit Algeria in March 2007 to accomplish its work and finalize the report that will be presented to the APR Panel of Eminent Persons. The Panel will submit its Final Report with Algeria's comments to the APRM Heads of State and Government Forum at their June 2007 Session.

Done in Algiers on the 5th day of December 2006

Mr. Abdelkader Messahel

Minister in charge of

Maghreb and African Affairs

Mrs. Marie-Angélique Savané

Member of the APRM Panel of Eminent

Persons