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## Press Release

25<sup>th</sup> January 2013

### **Civil Society Welcomes Governments' Commitment to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)**

The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), in collaboration with Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP) and Caritas Zambia, are very much delighted that the government through the Minister of Justice, Hon. Wynter Kabimba, has reaffirmed its commitment to the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process in Zambia, by providing the necessary support and resources towards realizing its objectives, says Mr. Kizito Chalwe, JCTR Faith and Justice Programme Officer.

In the meeting held on January 21, 2013, the Honorable Minister of Justice, categorically stated that APRM fits well with the PF's aspirations on democratic governance. The Minister further stated that, in so far as APRM supports progressive dialogue, PF does not intend to kill the engagement that exists between government and civil society because civil society's objectives on promoting good governance are also PF's objectives."

"Therefore, as civil society organisations keen on promoting good governance in Zambia, we commit ourselves to engaging the government in implementing APRM related activities to all parts of the country says Mr. Chalwe. We agree with the minister's statement that democracy grows by engaging a wider spectrum of society.

Civil Society has been involved in the APRM process since 2006 when Zambia acceded to the process in Khartoum. Zambia is scheduled to be peer reviewed in January 2013. As Civil Society we are optimistic that the Justice Minister would provide the required leadership and political will to deliver Zambia's APRM process," says Mr. Chalwe. This would require government and other stakeholders to get involved and collaborate adequately in addressing the recommendations from the Heads of States and ensure that the National Plan of Action receives the necessary attention and resources required.

We therefore call upon MPs to go beyond the exercise of approving the budget meant for APRM processes and task themselves with sensitizing their constituencies on the significance of APRM. We make a similar call to the media to ensure that as many people as possible access information to provide checks and balances to the government especially in the implementation of the APRM. This process needs input from every concerned citizen for purposes of legitimacy and monitoring of progress asserts Mr. Chalwe.

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