



مركز بحوث الرقابيين الأفارقة

African Ombudsman Research Centre

Centre de Recherche des Ombudsman Africains

Centro de Investigação da Provedoria de Justiça Africana

REPORT ON AORC ACTIVITES FROM 1 AUGUST 2015 – FEBRUARY 2016

Introduction

The following report serves to summarize the AORC's activities from August 2015 to date, as well as its current projects, against the backdrop of the Centre's five Strategic Outcomes, which are as follows:

1. To become a capable and sustainable organisation;
2. Improve the capacity of AOMA, the ombudsman and ombudsman offices;
3. Conduct relevant research to support the agenda of the AOMA;
4. Enhance the positioning of AOMA and the Ombudsman institution; and
5. Coordinate the operationalization of the MOU between the AUC and AOMA

Co-option of members of the AORC Board

Working towards AORC's Strategic Outcome of becoming a capable and sustainable organisation, the co-option of members of the AORC has been identified as a necessary measure, and as requiring finalisation. Resolution 6 was taken at the 12th Board Meeting on the 29 July 2015, which stated that the co-option of office bearers would be put on hold until the next complete Board meeting, before a final decision is made.

This matter now requires the attention of the Board currently in session.

Preparation for the Arabic Ombudsman Training

Preparations for the Arabic Ombudsman training are currently underway. Staff at the Ombudsman offices of Mauritania, Libya and Sudan have been invited to participate. Quotes for travel, accommodation and catering have been secured, the budget and terms of reference have been approved, and a trainer has now been selected.

Tunisia, Libya and Sudan were initially short listed to host this training, however, security issues in all three of these locations have raised concerns. As an alternative, Egypt has been suggested. Egypt is not a member of AOMA but it is the most conveniently located country in terms of distance from the other participating countries, and is also an Arabic country. Furthermore the Human Rights Commissioner for Egypt Mr Mohamed Fayek, is willing to assist in securing safe and affordable logistics. Giving Egypt the chance to host the training might provide an opportunity to initiate a relationship with the Ombudsman of Egypt and encourage the country to join AOMA. The Centre will be writing to Mr Mohamed Fayek to ask if he would be prepared to take on an official role as host for this training.

The Centre has been in communication with all stakeholders to get in touch with participating countries to confirm suitable dates and availability. The initial date suggested for the training was the 28th November to 2nd December 2015. Due to logistical difficulties this was then rescheduled for 7th to 11th March 2016. This date is now less than a month away, and as arrangements have yet to be finalised, it is recommended that the Board approves a further postponement of this training to April to allow adequate time for arrangements to be finalised.

In response to AORC's calls, two individuals tendered to conduct this training. After a review of cost and experience, Dr. Fatema Khafagy, Former Ombudsman for the National Council for Women Rights in Egypt, was selected to provide both the translation of materials into Arabic and a five day training course for participants.

Research

Over 2013-2014 AORC conducted a Comparative Analysis study to analyse and compare legal systems within AOMA members, with the aim of revealing the challenges and strengths of Ombudsmen offices in Africa, the differences and similarities among them, and in order to make recommendations for the development of normative standards. The Centre is currently investigating the extension of this study with an additional 8 countries, which have yet to be selected. Directive is now needed by the Board to take this initiative forward.

In order to fulfil its strategic objective of improving the capacity of ombudsman and ombudsman offices, AORC is eager to move forward with the proposed 'Enforcement and Implementation mechanisms of Ombudsmen Decisions' study, which is currently in the pipeline. The aim of this study is to document and assess the challenges and strengths of AOMA members; their legal mandates as regards the enforceability of their recommendations, and what can be done to strengthen these with the aim of developing normative standards and best practices for AOMA members.

Advocacy

The AORC's website and its social media accounts have been updated on a regular basis under the oversight of the AORC's Communication and Advocacy Officer, Franky Lwelela.

To promote the work of the Centre and build its networks the AORC is also eager to move forward with its newsletter which has reached its 6th edition to date. AORC has sent the content for the 7th and 8th editions to Public Protectors Office for review, however for the past 18 months publication has been delayed due to the process of transfer of funds to UKZN. AORC needs to seek the approval of the Board so that it can begin doing this process internally within UKZN. The content of the 7th and 8th editions will also need to be revised to ensure that it is up to date.

Preparations towards the 5th General Assembly of AOMA in Tanzania in September 2016

The 5th General Assembly of AOMA will be taking place in Tanzania in September 2016. A formal request has been received by AORC from AOMA, inquiring if the Centre would be in a position to provide financial and technical assistance. This is another matter which requires the attention of the Board in its current sitting, to determine the manner and extent of the support that AORC will be able to offer.