



والوسطاء المظالم لأمناء الأفريقية الرابطة
African Ombudsman and Mediators Association
Association des Ombudsman et Médiateurs Africains
Associação de Provedores de Justiça e Mediadores Africanos

SUBJECT: OPENING SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF AOMA AND OMBUDSMAN OF ANGOLA, DR. FLORBELA ROCHA ARAÚJO, AT THE WEBINAR ON THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE ROLE OF OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTIONS.

LUANDA/2024



OPENING SPEECH

Honorable Ombudsmen, African Mediators and Presidents of National Human Rights Commissions.

Dear Speakers and Moderator.

Honorable Deputy Ombudsman of Angola, Dr. Aguinaldo Guedes Cristóvão.

Distinguished Holders of Management Positions and Heads of Ombudsman Offices and Human Rights Institutions.

Dear Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning everybody.

The promotion of human rights is the most important task that civilization has assigned to itself throughout history. A difficult task, certainly, but imperative – and absolutely rewarding, given the fact that human rights are fundamental to the dignity, equality and well-being of all individuals.

Human rights, internationally guaranteed, legally protected and universal, are based on a system of common values, and focus on the dignity of the human being, obliging States and state agents to protect individuals and groups. They cannot be suppressed or denied, they are equal and interdependent, that is, none of them is more important than the others and the enjoyment of any one affects the enjoyment of the rest.

At this time when we are witnessing the advancement of intolerant speeches, and witnessing a range of situations that violate human rights in different parts of the world, it becomes even more necessary to reiterate our commitment to the values that allowed and allow moral and ethical evolution of humanity and make the protection of human rights more effective, providing avenues for redress and accountability.

This Webinar is being held with the theme: Promotion of Human Rights: Transparency, Accountability and the Role of Ombudsman Institutions.

Our institutions represent key actors that can fill the gaps in the application of international human rights law. They work to guarantee the rule of law and fight against impunity in our countries. When established in accordance with the Paris Principles, these institutions become fundamental actors in the national system for the protection of human rights and promote important ties between the State, civil society and international human rights bodies.

For this reason, the Ombudsman has a central role in implementing national systems for the promotion and protection of human rights, recognizing them as essential partners for international entities that act in matters of human rights.

Honorable African Ombudsmen and Mediators!

Ladies and Gentlemen.

The Ombudsman, as an independent public institution, whose purpose is to defend the rights, freedoms and guarantees of citizens, ensuring, through informal means, the justice and legality of public administration, performs a very complex job and must work in promotion of human rights, transparency, administrative justice and the fight against corruption, in accordance with (article 1(c) of the AOMA Statute).



Initially, the constitutional and legal design of the Ombudsman's mandate is broadly outlined in the protection and promotion of fundamental rights, and not just in the search for a fair solution in the face of the actions or omissions of the public administration.

From a thematic point of view, this focus is particularly intense in certain areas of activity, such as, for example, the subject of the penitentiary system and the rights of prisoners and in the promotion and dissemination of the content of each of the rights and freedoms fundamentals of citizens.

This is where the most nuclear rights often come into play, more closely inherent to the principle of human dignity, and which are widely enshrined in international instruments.

These prerogatives, in particular, combined with the capacity to intervene on his own initiative, allow the Ombudsman to contribute to the greatest possible alignment of legislation and practice with international law in matters of respect for human rights, as well as with the recommendations issued by bodies international standards for monitoring respect for these rights.

On the other hand, the knowledge and experience acquired by the Ombudsman in the performance of his duties allows him to provide international entities with an impartial and detailed perspective on the human rights situation, thus enabling them to carry out their mission in a more informed manner.

My Ladies and Gentlemen!

Each State has the primary duty to protect its own population from serious and continuous violations of human rights, as well as the consequences of humanitarian crises, whether caused by nature or man.

Human rights are increasingly present as a common language and ethical basis of international relations. Unfortunately, experience teaches us that legality often prevails over justice when the insistence on human rights makes them stand out as the exclusive result of legislative resolutions or normative decisions taken by various bodies.

Respect for human rights must be rooted mainly in justice, the result of a common sense of equity, based primarily on solidarity between members of society and therefore valid for all times and for all peoples. Therefore, human rights must be respected as an expression of justice and not simply because they can be respected at the will of legislators.

It is essential to strengthen mechanisms to combat lack of transparency, administrative justice and corruption, through stricter laws, efficient control and inspection systems, and adequate punishment for human rights violators. The promotion of education, ethics and a culture of integrity are essential measures to prevent society, and Ombudsman Institutions must work to educate society about their rights and obligations in the face of acts carried out by the Public Administration, to building a fairer and freer society.

Our institutions will only make sense if they work to ensure that citizens have a space where they can informally present their complaints and grievances, that these same bodies safeguard the citizen's best interests, guaranteeing their safety, protection and justice. and the dignity that he deserves and that are enshrined in law.

The Ombudsman is the firm voice for those who have no voice. He is the voice of the citizen and the guarantor of Justice and legality in the activities of public administration through informal



means. The work of the Ombudsman is quite complex, requiring insight, impartiality and impartiality to prevent illegalities and resolve citizen complaints.

Therefore, I declare this Webinar open and recommend that each of us must continue to promote and present to the Government, Parliament or any other competent body, in a consultative capacity, either at the request of these authorities or based on their power to act on its own initiative, opinions, recommendations, proposals and reports on any issues relating to the promotion and protection of human rights.

Thank you for your attention and collaboration.

FOR THE DEFENSE OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS, FREEDOMS AND GUARANTEES

THE OMBUDSMAN OF ANGOLA AND PRESIDENT OF AOMA

FLORBELA ROCHA ARAÚJO