

WEBINAR: “CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MANAGEMENT”
Tuesday, 2 November 2021: 10h00 - 11h30

Greetings colleagues

I am Professor Brian McArthur, the Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Law and Management Studies. I am delighted to welcome you to the ninth webinar session of the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) in 2021.

It is also my honour to welcome our esteemed panel:

- Chairperson of the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) Board; President of the African Ombudsman and Mediators' Association (AOMA) and Public Protector of South Africa – Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane
- Adv. Arlene Brock, Former Director of AORC
- Hon. Abimbola Ayo-Yusuf, Ombudsman of Nigeria
- Dr. Roger Oppong Koranteng, Head, Public Sector Governance, Commonwealth Secretariat in London.
- I also have the pleasure to welcome Hon. Lala Ratsirahonana, Ombudsman of Madagascar, our facilitator today.
- Dean and Head of the UKZN School of Law and member of the AORC board – Professor Managay Reddi

Greetings to all distinguished colleagues in attendance. Thank you all for availing yourselves today.

Colleagues, we are all acutely aware that in creating one's own sense of meaning in the world, the reality is that our single-minded world creation also has a range of associations where choices, decisions and negotiations are made in relation to others. These choices may not always be predicated or result in a calm, assured or agreed upon outcome.

As a world with social or class antagonisms, stratified by wealth, income, educational attainment, occupation, and social networks – we are constantly choosing, deciding, negotiating and adjusting individually to build our legacy.

In this adjustment, we aim to balance our rights with those of others – guided by law and order, subjective as it may be, person to person and place to place. At some point, we all recognise that what we do, independently and collectively, will to some

degree both have cause and effect on others. In this, we accept that there will always be a reaction or response, as we exist and co-exist.

Since conflict is natural, knowing how to resolve it is also within the makeup of human beings. Whenever we develop or form associations with others, we are entering into relationships where choices and decisions have to be made.

In the Office of the Ombudsman, the scales of justice impartiality and the obligation of the law to weigh the evidence presented, requires handling and resolving matters through legal pursuance, sensibly, fairly, and efficiently. The possibility of conflict is always present.

Today, our panellists unpack the broad range of conflicts and identify the threats and opportunities to communication - considering with rigor, how best to deal efficiently with the difficulty and volatility that may arise.

We recognise and respect the invaluable, unique nature of people, and seek to locate self within the broader community of all life on earth. Colleagues, with COP26, upon us and its affirmation of the sanctity of life on earth, we acknowledge that we are all inextricably linked.

I look forward to hearing from our respected panel members who will prompt discussion and ideas for better practice by the AORC to resolve conflict in the most inclusive, ethical, cost effective and timeous manner, limiting any negative impact on parties.

It is now my pleasure to hand over to Advocate Mkhwebane, who will formally welcome you as the Chairperson of AORC.

Thank you.