

WEBINAR: SYSTEMIC INVESTIGATIONS

Welcome Address

By

Professor Brian McArthur
Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Head (Acting)
College of Law and Management Studies
University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)

Tuesday, 8 June 2021 - 10h00 (English)

- Chairperson of the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) Board; President of African Ombudsman and Mediators' Association (AOMA) and Public Protector of South Africa – Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane
- Dean and Head of the UKZN School of Law and member of the AORC board – Professor Managay Reddi

Our esteemed panel:

- It is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to Senior Fellow (2020) of the Advanced Leadership Initiative at Harvard University; the former Director of AORC; and former Ombudsman of Bermuda - Advocate Arlene Brock
It is great to welcome you back to your home! I'm pleased that you are still able to support the work of AORC.
- Greetings to the former Ombudsman of Malawi – Honourable Martha Chizuma and congratulations on your new position as the Director General of the Anti-Corruption Bureau of Malawi.
- Greetings to the Deputy Ombudsman of Ontario - Ms Barbara Finlay
- Excellencies and Honourable Ombudsman who are able to join us
- Distinguished participants/guests
- Members of the media

Greetings Senior Colleagues,

As the Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Law and Management Studies, it is my absolute pleasure on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and Council of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, to welcome you to the fifth webinar session for 2021 of the AORC themed: Systemic Investigations.

We are meeting at a critical time when Africa is dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on our economies. Looking at the rollout of vaccines, many African states have yet to secure any doses, while others have secured supplies for no more than 10% of their populations. It is unclear when and if much needed vaccines will reach indigent communities. On the other hand, unscrupulous business organizations

have taken advantage of the situation and benefitted from corrupt government contracts. This is a systemic challenge with dire consequences for local communities.

If we look at the 2021 African Election Calendar of the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, this is a challenging year for democracy in Africa as many of our states are undergoing the election process. During the electioneering, politicians make promises to communities in exchange for votes. In the past we have seen promises being broken leaving vulnerable communities dealing with systemic socio-economic challenges.

While great strides have been achieved on the technology front, states are now further exposed to cybercrimes, in particular our continental economic hubs such as South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya.

These are just a few of many systemic challenges facing our continent in 2021. Therefore, the Ombudsman Institution has a mammoth task to ensure that governments are held accountable for their activities and practices.

In keeping with the mandate of AORC to promote capacity development, knowledge generation and professionalism within African Ombudsman institutions, today's webinar focuses the spotlight on systemic investigations.

I look forward to hearing our esteemed panel unpack various facets of systemic investigations which will empower the Offices of Ombudsman in the furtherance of good governance, the rule of law, and human rights in Africa.

I once again welcome you to the fifth webinar of the AORC in 2021.

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

Thank you.