

REPORT ON AORC TRAINING

A. FRENCH-SPEAKING OFFICIALS IN OMBUDSMAN OFFICES

1. BACKGROUND

From 11 – 19 November 2013, almost 20 French-speaking officials from Ombudsman offices across Africa gathered at the Intercontinental Hotel in Lusaka, Zambia for two training programmes.

The first course that the participants attended was Sharpening Your Teeth, a 2 ½ day intensive course focusing on how to carry out systematic investigations. The course was developed and carried out by the Ombudsman of Ontario, Canada, Adv. Andre Marin.

The second course, a 5 day pilot training program entitled “French Investigators Training”, was commissioned and organized by the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) in Durban, South Africa and sponsored by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in Pretoria. The original course material itself was developed by Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The course was developed to be a broad but thorough introduction into what it means to be an Ombudsman and to work in an Ombudsman office. The 5-day training in Zambia marked the first time that this training material was carried out in French. It had previously been conducted once before, in 2012, in English.

The eight days of training got off to a positive start thanks to the opening ceremony arranged by the Investigator General of Zambia, Mrs Caroline Sokoni. The Honourable Acting Chief Justice of Zambia, Mrs Lombe Chibesakunda, presided over this ceremony. Other dignitaries in attendance were Adv. John Walters, (Ombudsman of Namibia, and Vice President of the IOI), Mrs Alima Traore (Mediateur du Faso, and Vice President of AOMA) and the Ambassador of France to Zambia, Mrs Marie-Annick Bourdin.

2. TRAINEES

The following 8 countries sent 2 officials each to attend the second leg of the training:

- Benin
- Burundi
- Burkina Faso
- Chad
- Djibouti
- Ivory Coast
- Niger
- Tunisia.

Four participants were unfortunately unable to attend at the last minute – 2 from Gabon and 2 from Rwanda. This would have brought the total of participants up to the initially intended 20.

For the Sharpening Your Teeth training, the total number of trainees was 18, as both the Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso sent 3 participants each for the initial leg of training.

3. TRAINERS

As previously mentioned, the Sharpening Your Teeth training was conducted by the Ombudsman of Ontario, Adv. Andre Marin. He was assisted by the Director of Communication in his office, Ms Linda Williamson. Both proved to be engaging and knowledgeable trainers and the participants took the opportunity to learn as much as they could from these two experienced individuals.

The second training was conducted by Dr Rajendra Parsad Gunpath, a Professor of Law at the University of Mauritius. With an extensive background in investigative techniques, two doctorates in law and a lengthy career in lecturing behind him, the professor was deemed more than suitable to conduct the training. His enthusiasm for his subject and vast legal expertise was much appreciated by the participants.

4. PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

The level of participation in both training courses was very high and was, for the most part, unsolicited. That is to say, the participants engaged with the material and the trainer at every opportunity, both when it was required in the form of structured questions appearing in the material as well as when it emerged organically from comments made or questions posed by the participants themselves. In addition, the attendance rate was almost 100% across the almost 8 days of training.

5. PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES TO FRANCOPHONE PARTICIPANTS AND COMMENCEMENT OF ENGLISH SHARPENING YOUR TEETH COURSE

The Sharpening Your Teeth certificates were awarded during a Gala Dinner on the night of Wednesday 13 November. The certificates were presented to the participants by the evening's guest of honour, the Zambian Deputy Minister of Justice, Dr Ngosa Simbyakula. Also in attendance at the Gala Dinner was Mrs Anette Nhekairo, the Director of the Law Development Commission in Zambia. She presided over a panel comprising the Ombudsman of Botswana, Namibia, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Zambia, Ontario and South Africa, which proved to be a highlight of the evening.

The certificates for the second French training were presented to the participants by the Investigator General of Zambia herself, Mrs Caroline Sokoni. She was assisted by Adv. Ishara Bodasing, the Acting Director of the AORC and Prof. Gunpath. Also in attendance at this ceremony were two Deputy Commissioners from Mrs Sokoni's office, as well as Mrs Bourdin, the Ambassador of France to Zambia who had been present at the opening ceremony.

B. ENGLISH SPEAKING OFFICIALS IN OMBUDSMAN OFFICES

The Gala Dinner of 13 November, while marking the end of the French leg of the Sharpening Your Teeth Training, signalled the beginning of the English leg, which ran from 14 – 16 November.

Over sixty English-speaking officials from Ombudsman offices across Africa gathered together for this 2 ½ day training course, which was once again conducted by Adv. Andre Marin and his Canadian colleagues. The participants came from as far afield as Ethiopia, the Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria and South Africa. There was also a significant Zambian delegation in attendance.

As with the French training, the English training was deemed a success by all and was marked by high levels of participation and enthusiasm. Ideas were shared and experiences exchanged and both the Anglophone and Francophone participants left Zambia with renewed energy, eager to put all they had learned into practice in their own offices.

IOI AFRICA MEETING – 13 November 2013

Coinciding with the training sessions was the IOI Africa meeting. Considering the IOI's role as a co-sponsor of the Sharpen Your Teeth training, alongside the AORC, and with several African Ombudsman being present to support their officials being trained, Mrs Sokoni – who serves the IOI as the head of its Africa chapter – took the opportunity to schedule a meeting of the IOI Africa members.

Present at this meeting were the Ombudsman of Kenya, Burkina Faso, Namibia and South Africa, and delegated representatives from the offices of Djibouti, Cote d'Ivoire and Tunisia. The minutes of this meeting will be made available online in the coming weeks.