



African Ombudsman and Mediators Association

African Ombudsman Association
Association des
Ombudsman/Mediateurs Africains

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT
AOMA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SESSION 18 June 2013
Ouagadougou

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Executive Secretary's Report

English copy

Presented by: Public Protector SA Adv Thuli N. Madonsela, Executive Secretary

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

President of Aoma and colleagues

This is the fourth Executive Committee meeting of AOMA since this Executive Committee assumed office in April 2010. We are sincerely grateful to our colleague, Madame Alima Traore, the government of Burkina Faso and the people of this country for hosting us. I must also indicate that I have received raving reviews on the quality of hospitality.

I apologize for not being able to join you at the commencement of our proceedings. As indicated in my letter to the President, I was away at a the Tallberg Forum in Tallberg ,Sweden. I only got back on 17 June 2013 and could only commence my journey here, on the same day. It would be a good idea if colleagues can check out the Tallberg initiative, an amazing initiative of men and women committed to creating a better world based on mutual respect, human solidarity and sustainable development. This year's forum, which was the 13th went under the title, "How on earth can we live together" Central to the dialogue was effective, compassionate and sustainable governance at corporate, domestic and global levels. We already live together at all of these levels, the issue we have to deal with is how to we make living together a mutually rewarding exercise.

While I learned many things at the forum particularly on the important issue of governance, the key lessons I carry with me to-date were derived at a breakaway session on compassionate leadership. As Ombudsman I believe compassionate leadership should inform the quality of human interactions and decision-making in our offices, our service delivery processes and our interactions under the auspices of our association, AOMA.

My experience with the Tallberg Forum also made me begin to ask questions regarding the value we add to each other and our nation states through AOMA activities. Convening and attending our meetings is an expensive undertaking. Are we deriving value for money? Do we go back home after each EXCO or General assembly session feeling recharged and ready to do more to improve public sector governance in our respective countries? If not is there room for reviewing our sessions with a view to enhancing value for money?

We meet at a time when many of our democracies and the world at large are at cross roads. In two year's time world leaders will convene under the United Nations to review achievements on the 10 Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2005. One of those goals was to halve poverty by 2015. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization

(FAO) Director General Jose Graziano da Silva, only 16 countries have reached the goal of halving the number of undernourished people. As Ombudsman committed individually and collectively with promoting good governance in Africa, it should concern that only one African country, Ghana, is among the 16 states that have delivered on their promises. According to the UN, 1.4 billion on earth continue to live below the poverty line of \$1.25 and on the razor edge of starvation. Should this concern us as Ombudsman and as AOMA in far as Africa is concerned.

Statistics show that Africa is rising with the DGP of the continent and some of our countries featuring among the fastest in the world. But should it concern us that the gini-coefficient of some of our countries is growing rather than narrowing. In other words inequality is growing despite the reduction of inequality being one of the MDGs. Motherhood still spells the death penalty for many women in our countries despite the reduction of maternal mortality being one of the MDGs. The same applies to infant mortality. Is there room for AOMA exploring the extent to which good governance lapses, including corruption, the absence of value based decision-making or blatant indifference in government process may be a key contributor to the failure to reach the MDG milestones in our continent?

Can our relationship with the African Union be a strategic platform for us to assist leaders reassess and redirect MDG processes in our continent?

When my team and I participated at the APRM 10 year Anniversary and Review in Addis Ababa, the suggestion that AOMA and APRM should collaborate, was received enthusiastically.

After all we are both focusing on the quality or appropriateness of governance arrangements in our continent's domestic governance systems. Of course, our relationship with the AU Commission for Political Affairs is the optimal avenue for our collaboration with the AU in assisting the continent with its democracy and governance enhancement endeavors.

I would like to hear your views on this and if we are in agreement, on action to be taken going forward. I now turn to the Secretariats implementation of the decisions of the last EXCO held in Luanda, 18-20 March 2013.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF EXCO AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECISIONS

2.1 Cooperation between AOMA and the AU

Together with members of the Public Protector SA, I participated in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) 10 Year Anniversary Review, which formed part of the African Union (AU) Jubilee celebrations in Addis Ababa 19 May 2013. During her presentation as a panelist on best practices, I extended an invitation to the APRM

secretariat regarding collaboration, an idea that was received enthusiastically. During an informal meeting with the APRM CEO, it was agreed to meet in Midrand, South Africa shortly to flash out the approach to collaboration and consider the MOU.

I wrote a letter to the AU Chairperson request a meeting with the AOMA office bearers following a chance meeting at which the AU Chairperson said she was not aware of AOMA.

Elements of the AU Framework were integrated in the AORC Strategic Plan and corporate plan 2013/14.

2.2 The situation in Mali

This matter has been left to the President of AOMA as he has been constantly engaged with Mali.

2.3 Preparations for the fourth General Assembly

I wrote to the Kenya Ombudsman advising of EXCO decision in Angola March 2013 that we should have another assessment visit. This assessment visit was planned to be coupled with the trip to the APRM Anniversary in Addis Ababa in May 2013. The Kenya Ombudsman wrote back, revoking his country's offer to host the 4th AOMA General. The reason he gave was that he felt disrespected by AOMA for second guessing his country's readiness to host. A copy of the letter is included in the pack.

2.4 Constitutional Review Process

The constitutional review process proceeded smoothly. The Committee Report is included in the packs for discussion during the EXCO.

2.5 Honorary Titles to Former Members

Members are advised to submit proposals to Mr Risenga Maruma in my office.

2.6 Training of Ombudsman and their Personnel

- a) The Sharpen your Teeth Training in Zambia is on track
- b) A process is underway to provide French Training. A person recommended by the AORC secretariat was not approved by the Chairperson of the Board as he had no background in Ombudsman studies or training.
- c) The Portuguese Training Project primarily targeting Mozambique has not yet been implemented.
- d) A Train the Trainer Programme is to be considered at the next board meeting

2.7 Establishment of a Permanent seat for AOMA

The matter considered closed as there were no takers. The General Assembly resolution on SA as seat accordingly stands.

2.8 Cooperation between AOMA and IOI

As Executive Secretary, I delegated the Chief Executive Officer of the Public Protector South Africa and the Deputy Public Protector to travel to Vienna, Austria to support signing by AOMA Deputy President, Mme Alima Deborah Traore on 16 April 2013. The signed Memorandum of Understanding is in the EXCO pack.

2.9 Assisting Tanzania's bid for 2016 IOI World Conference

The Executive Secretariat and the Public Protector South Africa team supported Tanzania with view to having such conference coincide with Tanzania's Diamond Jubilee. The Team participated in an IOI inspection of Tanzania's facilities and supported the bid presentation in Vienna, Austria on 16 April 2013. Unfortunately, the bid went to Thailand. A report on the IOI Bid process is included in the EXCO pack.

2.10 Collaboration with the United Nations

The Department of International Relations (DIRCO) South Africa has been approached to facilitate the process of establishing a cooperative relationship with the UN.

2.11 Auditing of AOMA Finances

The auditing has been undertaken as per the EXCO decision of March 2013. Draft audited statements are enclosed in the EXCO pack for review and signing. Where there was difficulty in tracking subscriptions many of you helped. Thank you.

2.12 Legal Status of AOMA

The Department of International Relations & Cooperation (DIRCO) is proceeding with the process of assisting the Public Protector SA to accord AOMA a diplomatic status.

3. OTHER SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES

Other activities undertaken by the secretariat in the last 3 months were the following:

3.1. AOMA Newsletter

The latest AOMA Newsletter was released in June 2013. Copies were included in the EXCO packs. We thank the AORC and Public Protector South Africa team for assistance in putting together the bulletin.

3.2. AOMA Website

The website is operational. Members are advised to contribute content to the site.

3.3. Supervision of activities of the African Ombudsman Research Centre

a) As Executive Secretary, I continue to chair the Board of Directors of AORC. The Board has supervised the development of and is currently ensuring the implementation of the AORC Strategic Plan and related activities. Specific activities during the period under review included:

- i. **Staff Appointments:** Two interns were appointed namely Ms Susan Foley and Mr Ngomu Frang Lwelela. A conscious decision was made to recruit professional with English, French and Portuguese proficiency.

The Director's position remains unclear as the preferred candidate indicated he was unable to assume duties in July as initially indicated. The Board is to review the matter at its next meeting and decide on the way forward.

- ii. **Strategic Plan:** Finalisation of Strategic Plan and Annual Corporate Plan executed. Copies are in the EXCO pack.

iii. Implementation of Research Programme

iv. Implementation of Training Programme.

v. Assistance to AOMA

AORC has continued to provide administrative support to AOMA primarily in respect of **assistance** with the AOMA newsletter, website and coordination including preparations for Ouagadougou

4. MEMBERSHIP

Membership continues to grow. Paid membership is at.....The EXCO pack includes an application for membership for the Ombudsman for Banking Services, Advocate Clive Pillay. I recommend that the application be accepted.

5. FINANCES

Financial statements of AOMA are included as an attachment. The statement covers revenue from subscriptions, expenditure and the balance as of 31 May 2013.

The AORC Financial Statements are included for noting. It must be noted that the AORC funding comes solely from the government of South Africa, committed through the African Renaissance Fund of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation.

EXCO is requested to note and ratify expenditure on the EXCO travel expenses of our colleague Mr Hatteea, Ombudsman of Mauritius. We apologise for the delay that was caused by lack of understanding of the financial authorization processes for AOMA funds in the original submission.

EXCO to note that the AU Financial authorisation and submission discussed at the last EXCO have not yet being received.

6. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

I wish to express my gratitude to all members for their cooperation and support. My gratitude also goes to the President of AOMA for his commitment and passionate leadership of the organization. For Secretarial Services, I am sincerely grateful to the AORC team and Public Protector South Africa team for their tireless work. These teams perform AOMA work in addition to their core business. I am happy to announce that we are on the verge of appointing two staff members to specifically deal with AOMA and our international relations work. One is a manager and the other a French-speaking intern.

I am confident that we will use the next two days to strengthen our association to enhance its value add to members. I hope we will also take decisive action on the outstanding conference and General Assembly.. I wish all of us a successful week and trust that the next few days mark a key milestone in the development and growth of our association as well as solidifying AOMA's footprint and influence in Africa.

I would appreciate your views on the agreed issues I have raised.

Thank you

Adv Thuli N. Madonsela
Executive Secretary: AOMA
Public Protector South Africa