

The African Ombudsman and Mediators Association

1st Indian Ocean Regional Meeting

Port Louis, Mauritius

13 - 14 October 2011

In attendance

Mr. Soleman **HATTEEA** – Ombudsman (Mauritius), Regional Coordinator

Mrs. Monique Andreas **Esoavelomandroso** – Médiatrice de la République de Madagascar

Mrs. Marie-Paule **Gertrude** – Principal Investigation Officer, Seychelles

Mrs. Wendy **Michel** – Assistant Investigation Officer, Seychelles

Mr. Mohammad Ali **Zeadally** – Senior Investigations Officer (Mauritius)

Absent: Mrs. Dona **ZATTE** – Ombudsman of Seychelles

The Regional Coordinator, Mr. Soleman Hatteea, Ombudsman for Mauritius opened the meeting by welcoming the delegates and thanked them for their presence. He however regretted the absence of the Ombudsman of Seychelles. Mrs. Gertrude presented the apology of the latter who was unable to attend due to certain commitments.

The Regional Coordinator wished to confirm whether the respective countries have by now received a list of members of the Association to which a positive reply was received.

The Regional Coordinator raised the question of membership fees and Mrs. Gertrude confirmed that Seychelles has already paid all dues, whereas for Madagascar

Mrs. Esoavelomandroso informed the meeting that no invoice has so far been received except

that they have received only the Bank Account Number for payment which according to her is not sufficient. She insisted that a proper Invoice be sent to her Office in order to allow her to effect necessary payment. The Regional Coordinator reported that the Secretariat had already been so informed since 9 September 2011. The Regional Coordinator undertook to inform the Secretariat once again.

The Regional Coordinator further informed the delegates that membership fees have now been increased from U.S. \$500 to U.S. \$1000 minimum. Members may pay more if they so wish. The Regional Coordinator requested the delegates to see to it that the Association receives the full amount of membership fees and that bank charges be borne by the respective countries.

The Regional Coordinator then informed the delegates that it has been decided that the Permanent Secretariat in South Africa would now be transferred to the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) at the University of KwaZulu, Natal. This will be tabled for adoption at the next General Assembly in Mali.

The delegates were further informed that whilst Angola had committed itself to paying for the purchase of laptop computers and photocopier for the Centre, contribution from other members for its operational costs would be welcome.

The Regional Coordinator then handed a copy of “AOMA History”, document S of the pack distributed in Addis Ababa as well as a copy of the Statutes of the Association to the delegates who thanked the Regional Coordinator for same. The Regional Coordinator invited the

delegates to make their own contribution to the draft proposals for amendments to the Constitution.

The Regional Coordinator also handed to the delegates a copy of Resolutions of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of AOMA held on 15 September 2011 at Addis Ababa for their information and for purposes of discussion. Various resolutions were explained and discussed.

As regards the appointment of a Deputy Regional Coordinator, it was decided that as the Indian Ocean Region comprises only three countries so far, there was no need for such an appointment.

Questions were asked about the Libyan account and the Regional Coordinator explained the circumstances in which AOMA funds landed into that account. Developments in Libya will be monitored and a decision taken at the General Assembly.

Delegates were also informed about AOMA's accreditation to the African Union and of the appointment of Judge Abuzeid Ahmed as AOMA's Ambassador to the African Union. They were also informed that a delegation of AOMA was received by His Excellency, Chairperson Mr. Jean Ping, at the Headquarters of the Union during our stay in Addis Ababa.

The opportunity was then seized by the delegates to get to know each other better as this was the very first meeting of the Indian Ocean Region and to give an account of their activities.

The Regional Coordinator described the structure and functioning of the Ombudsman's Office of Mauritius. About 350 complaints are registered yearly whereas 400 to 500 other complaints which do not fall under the purview of the Ombudsman are received. These complaints are referred to the authorities concerned and, in deserving cases, there is a follow-up that takes place. Otherwise the writers are advised what course of action to follow.

The delegate of Madagascar then gave brief account of her office, explaining that the Médiateur de la République is appointed on a contract basis of six years non-renewable and that she herself has assumed office since 2008. One of her main functions is to receive complaints of the people caused by illegal or unfair administrative measures. She has also made a request that AOMA's accreditation to the African Union be made known to the Secretary General of Indian Ocean Commission*. The Regional Coordinator replied that this may be done through the AORC. She finally queried whether it would be possible for AOMA to approach AOMF or a donor agency to finance her travel to Mali next year for the General Assembly.

The delegate of Seychelles gave a brief picture of the office of the Ombudsman of Seychelles whereby she reported that the Ombudsman derives power from the Constitution itself. Seychelles has a population of 83,000 inhabitants and about 95 cases are registered every year out of which about 20 are retained for investigation. However, apart from receiving complaints, the Office also tenders legal advice to members of the public.

Finally delegates were reminded of the forthcoming General Assembly in Mali and drew their attention to the proposed theme. The Regional Coordinator invited them to make a

presentation if they so wish and, in the event they would do so, to communicate same to AORC well ahead of time for purposes of translation, etc.

The opportunity was also seized to discuss about the forthcoming elections that will be taking place in Mali and as to who is going to represent the Indian Ocean Region on the future Executive Committee. Delegates will take time to consider.

It was finally suggested that the next regional meeting would take place in Seychelles at an appropriate time in 2012. The Ombudsman of Seychelles would have to be consulted.

The Regional Coordinator closed the meeting by thanking the delegates once more for their presence and participation.

Done at Port Louis on 14 October 2011.

Ombudsman's Office

*The Indian Ocean Commission is an inter-governmental organization grouping, Comoros, Reunion Island (France), Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles and whose objective is to promote sustainable development of the Western Indian Ocean Islands. It represents the island states in international fora and defends their interest with regard to specific environmental and economic issues. It also facilitates regional cooperation and integration. (Fax: 230 4252709)

