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## **AFRICAN OMBUDSMAN AND MEDIATORS (AOMA) REPORT FOR IOI CONFERENCE**

### **1. Introduction**

AOMA EXCO meetings took place in September 2011 in Addis Ababa, and at the end of April 2012 in Windhoek, Namibia. Between the two EXCOs, the Southern, Eastern and Indian Ocean Regions of AOMA have convened; and the Board of the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) has also had meetings. Many of the activities of AOMA undertaken within the past year, are the outcome of resolutions taken at the Addis Exco.

### **2. AOMA Accredited as AU Observer**

On Tuesday 13 September 2011 the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr Jean Ping, received in his office at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, the President of AOMA, Dr Paulo Tjipilica, who was accompanied by a high level delegation. During the meeting, Dr Tjipilica handed over a letter of introduction for AOMA's First Permanent Observer to the African Union, in the person of Honorable Judge Ahmed Mohamed Abuzeid, the Ombudsman from Sudan, who will be the liaison functionary between the two Organizations.

The Chairperson welcomed this appointment and assured AOMA's delegation of the full support of AU Commission in enhancing the bilateral co-operation with AOMA in several fields of common interest, such as electoral observation missions, advocating peace and democracy on the continent, and promoting respect for Human Rights, rule of law and good governance.

### **3. AUC and AOMA MOU**

The African Union Commission met with representatives of AOMA from 20 to 22 June 2012 in Luanda, and achieved another milestone in pursuit of their partnership in the pursuit of good governance in Africa. The coordination meeting, which was attended by high level delegations from the Commission and AOMA, follows on the accreditation of AOMA as an observer body with a permanent representative in the AU.

The coordination meeting concluded with a draft Joint Operational implementation Framework for the MOU, which regulates the relationship between the Commission and



the continental Ombudsman and Mediators body. covers seven strategic objectives, namely

- The establishment and strengthening of Ombudsman Institutions in all member states of the African Union;
- The popularisation of the African Union Shared Values Legal Instruments within the AU member states and the public;
- The ratification of the AU Shared Values Legal Instruments;
- The domestication and implementation of the AU Shared Values Legal Instruments;
- Monitoring the implementation of the AU Shared Values Legal Instruments including through the Peer Review Mechanism at the level of the African Governance Platform;
- The creation of synergy between the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association and other African Institutions; and
- Efficient management of the cooperation between the two parties.

Among the specific provisions of the Joint implementation Framework, is a commitment regarding the recognition of AOMA as a Pan African institution dedicated to the promotion of good governance.

The agreement envisages AOMA playing a role in the dissemination and entrenchment of AU shared values, particularly those dealing with governance in Africa. AOMA and its technical engine, the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) based in Durban, South Africa, are also set to play a meaningful role in peace and stability initiatives in the continent, including conflict resolution and election monitoring.

A central provision of the Joint Operational Implementation Framework is the entrenchment and enhancement of the Ombudsman institution as a central pillar of good governance in Africa. Both parties expressed a belief in a positive relationship between good governance and the pursuit of peace and development in the African continent.



It was also agreed that:

- The two parties will meet at least twice a year in order to monitor the implementation of the seven strategic objectives.
- The two parties commit themselves to organising regular bilateral conferences on issues of common interest.
- The AUC shall invite AOMA to participate in the African Union Elections Observation Missions.
- AOMA shall assist the African Union in preventing and resolving conflicts in collaboration with the African Union's Panel of the Wise.
- The two parties shall jointly hold a conference with their respective development partners in order to efficiently use their resources, raise funds for their joint activities and avoid duplication of efforts and resources.

#### 4. AORC TRAINING

One of the key objectives of AOMA is to encourage the establishment, development and promotion of African Ombudsman institutions through mutual support, co-operation and joint activities through information sharing, **training**, and development of Ombudsman and staff.

In line with the above objective, the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC), with the assistance of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) GmbH, offered a training course for investigators in ombudsman offices. Based on expertise and skills, the Queen Margaret University (Edinburgh), in partnership with Public Administration International (London), were the successful bidders.

The pilot training took place from 9 – 13 July 2012 in the Boardroom of the UKZN Law Faculty, Durban. Apart from the 20 participants who were trained, the event was opened by the Public Protector of South Africa, and attended by the AORC Secretariat, and some members of the Law Faculty.

According to the Terms of Reference for the project, two (2) officials from ten (10) selected English-speaking AOMA member countries, were invited. These are: Botswana, Lesotho, Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Training covered the following main topics:



- i. Background, History and Context of the Ombudsman Institution
- ii. Complaint Diagnosis and Planning
- iii. Investigation Skills.
- iv. Reaching Decisions and Reporting
- v. Remedial Action and Learning from Complaints

## 5. AORC Strategic Plan

The AORC Strategic Plan was developed from the AOMA Strategic Plan and the Needs Assessment Report by AOMA EXCO to position the research centre as the centre of excellence in ombudsman research and training as well as strengthening the African ombudsman institution in Africa within a rapidly changing environment.

The strategic planning process afforded the AORC Board and AORC Secretariat an opportunity to reflect on the state of the Centre, the challenges ahead and the sources of support available. The development of AORC Strategic Plan seeks to bring to life the aspirations of the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association (AOMA) in our endeavour to strengthen the Ombudsman Institutions in Africa and become among the best in the world. This Strategic Plan indicates a commitment to improve the operation of the AORC and guide its delivery in the identified strategic areas. In order to fulfil this mandate we formulated and incorporated strategic objectives which outline our aspirations and the impact we wish to make in the long term.

Some key features of the AORC Strategy are:

Long term-

- Design of research programme, training programme, and
- Design programme to engage new democracies, and programmes to support newly established ombudsman office and develop their capacity
- Support and training for ombudsman institutions

Short term-

- Improve internal capacity
- Establish working groups on ombudsmanship and course development
- Establish strategic partnerships and sign MOUs with carefully and purposefully selected partners

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African Ombudsman and Mediators Association  
Association des Ombudsman et Mediateurs Africains  
Associação dos Ombudsman e Mediadores Africanos

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A programme for monitoring and evaluating the progress in meeting these objectives has been put in place to allow for a strategic review of the delivery process on a continual basis. Once again, GIZ is appreciated for their role in securing the services of a contractor to facilitate the process and develop the Strategic Plan.