

WEBINAR: UN RESOLUTION ON OMBUDSMAN AND MEDIATORS

Tuesday, 23 February 2021 - 10h00 (English)

- Acting Public Protector of South Africa – Advocate Kholeka Gcaleka (*standing in for the 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 African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) board – Professor Managay Reddi

Our esteemed panel:

- Ombudsman of Namibia - Advocate John Walters (*it is wonderful to share this platform with you once again*)
- President of the International Ombudsman Institute and Ombudsman of Ireland - Mr Peter Tyndall
- Ombudsman of Morocco – Honourable Justice Mohamed Benlilou
- Secretary-General of the International Ombudsman Institute and Austrian Ombudsman - Mr Werner Amon (*thank you for availing yourself to share your expertise with us once again*)
- Public Protector of Zambia and Africa Regional President of the International Ombudsman Institute - Honourable Caroline Sokoni (*it is good to see you again after our session in January*)
- Excellencies and Honourable Ombudsmen who are able to join us
- Distinguished participants/guests
- Members of the media

Greetings Senior Colleagues,

My name is Brian McArthur, and as Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Law and Management Studies, it is my pleasure to present the welcome message.

It is my privilege, on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and Council of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, to welcome you to the second webinar for 2021 of the AORC focusing on the United Nations Resolution on Ombudsman and Mediator Institutions.

The theme of our webinar is timely as the Resolution on the role of the Ombudsman, Mediator and other national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly just two months ago (16 December 2020).

The Ombudsman Institution faces many challenges when executing its mandate to be an effective voice for the voiceless and a change agent for good governance, human rights and the rule of law. Thus, the adoption of the Resolution on the role of Ombudsman by the UN General Assembly is a significant development towards supporting and strengthening the Ombudsman Institution internationally.

As UKZN, the home of the AORC, we are delighted to have the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) as a collaborating partner for this webinar. Such partnerships enable us to realise our vision to be the premier University of African Scholarship. In October, as we commemorated Ombudsman Month, Mr Amon shared the strategy of the IOI for Ombudsman under threat. I'm looking forward to hearing from the IOI and our esteemed panel about the meaning of the UN Resolution, the Venice Principles and their significance to the Ombudsman and mediator institutions throughout the African continent and beyond.

As you know, the main purpose of the AORC is to promote capacity development, knowledge generation and professionalism within African Ombudsman institutions in furtherance of good governance, the rule of law, and human rights. I hope you will find today's session enlightening and that it will enhance your knowledge on the significance of the United Nations Resolution on the Ombudsman and the Venice Principles as the first global standard for the protection and promotion of Ombudsman institutions.

Once again, a warm welcome to the second webinar of the AORC in 2021.

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

Thank you.