

The University of KwaZulu-Natal

And

The African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC), a research and training arm of the African Ombudsman and Mediators' Association (AOMA)

Cordially invite you to a Facilitated Discussion

STRENGTHENING THE MANDATE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Tuesday, 21 September 2021

In celebration of Ombudsman Month which is normally held in October each year and to raise awareness of the Ombudsman institution, AORC is hosting a facilitated discussion dealing with *"effective tools to strengthen the mandate of the Ombudsman institution"*. This topic builds on the discussion held last October entitled "Ombudsman under threat."

The existence of the institution of the Ombudsman ensures a certain access to administrative justice that is not possible without it. Globally the Ombudsman institution is increasingly understood (along with other Constitutionally established independent oversight institutions such as Auditors General and Electoral Commissions) to be the fourth – integrity - branch of government. The mandate of Ombudsman is to be an effective voice for the voiceless and change agent for good governance, human rights and the rule of law.

This facilitated discussion will focus on practical and effective ways the mandate of the Ombudsman can be strengthened to enhance good governance and accountability in the context of formidable challenges and rapid developments in issues such as human rights, health, communications, conflict and the environment.

The discussion will explore the following:

- Why there is a need to strengthen the mandate of the Ombudsman,
- The most practical and effective tools to empower the Ombudsman to execute their mandate optimally, and

Venice Principles and the UN Resolution as international standards informing strong, independent offices

Please click on the RSVP link below should you wish to participate.

Date

Tuesday, 21 September 2021

Time

10h00 – 11h30

Speakers & Facilitator

Speaker 1 – Hon. Caroline Sokoni, Public Protector of Zambia

Speaker 2 – Adv. John Walters, Acting Ombudsman of Namibia

Speaker 3 – Mr. Werner Amon, General Secretary of the IOI

Facilitator – Hon. Grace Tikambenji Malera – Ombudsman - Malawi

Click **HERE** to RSVP : https://ukzn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_SbQN-KeQR2u-kNSlgtOzyg

Please note that there will be no live question and answers due to time constraints. Participants may however submit relevant questions to Franky Lwelela (Lwelela@ukzn.ac.za) or Marion Adonis (adonism@ukzn.ac.za) by 10:00 on Monday, 20 September or use the Q & A function during the webinar. Time has been allocated for a response to questions raised before and during the session. If there is insufficient time to respond to all, the questions and answers will be made available on the AOMA/AORC website www.aoma.ukzn.ac.za.

Enquiries only : Franky Lwelela

OR Marion Adonis

Email: Lwelela@ukzn.ac.za

Email: adonism@ukzn.ac.za

Speaker & Facilitator Profiles:



Hon. Grace Tikambenji Malera a Lawyer and Human Rights Expert, with 19 years of work experience working with both state and non-state actors. Worked across the governance sector in Malawi, on a broad range of thematic areas including: human rights broadly; gender and women's rights, children's rights and access to justice. Holds a Bachelor of Law Degree (LLB Honours), obtained from the University of Malawi, Chancellor College in 2002, and graduated from the University of the Free State, Republic of South Africa with a Masters in Law Degree (LLM) in 2007. She was called to the Malawi Bar in 2002, to practice law in both the Supreme Court and High Court of Malawi, and courts subordinate thereto. Appointed as Ombudsman of

Malawi effective 1st September 2021. Immediate past Team Leader of UKaid's Malawi's flagship Programme on Violence Against Women and Girls: Prevention and Response also known as the Tithetse Nkhanza Programme from 2019 to 2021. The Programme aimed to contribute to Malawi Government's efforts of reducing the prevalence of violence against women and girls in Malawi and improving the justice system for women and girls living with violence in Malawi. Previously held the positions of: Executive Director of ActionAid International Malawi, 2017 to 2018; Executive Secretary (Chief Executive Officer), of the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC), 2012 to 2017, Director of Legal Services and Deputy Director of Legal Services, from 2003 to 2012 in MHRC. She is also a socio-legal researcher with key competencies and knowledge and skill set in working with both quantitative and qualitative assignments, and has in this regard carried out numerous consulting assignments for governments departments and agencies, local and international NGOs, and UN agencies. She also has vast experience working with regional and international human rights mechanisms at the African Commission and United Nations levels respectively. She served as a member of the Special Law Commission on the Review of Electoral Laws (2016/2017), as well as a member of the Special Law Commission on the development of the Trafficking in Persons Legislation. She is a recipient of the prestigious Chevening Fellowship Award (2008), DANIDA Research Fellowship Award (2005), a Ford Foundation Scholarship Grant towards her Masters Degree Study (2006/07), and The United States Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs International Visitor Leadership Program Award (2010). She is an exceptional human rights and gender advocate. She's an architect of some NGOs working in governance as well as in the advancement of women's rights and serves in a number of Boards of human rights NGOs in Malawi. She is passionate about using the law as a tool for social change and attainment of social justice and gender equality and inclusion. In 2019 Grace was the Moderator of Malawi Presidential Debate ahead of the 2019 Malawi Tripartite Elections.



Hon. Caroline Chuma Zulu Sokoni, the current Public Protector of Zambia, has served in the office of the Country's National Ombudsman for fifteen (15) years. She began her professional career in 1989 as a State Advocate under the then Ministry of Legal Affairs (now known as Ministry of Justice). She has a Masters of Law in Criminology from Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London in the United Kingdom and served under the Ministry of Justice for fifteen years. She was appointed as Acting Director of Public Prosecutions for the Republic of Zambia in February 2004 and was also appointed as the Task Team leader for the Legal component of the Water Resources Management Project, a policy formulation body tasked to

spearhead the reform of the Water Resources Management process in Zambia. She presided over the Town and Country Planning Tribunal as the Vice Chairperson between 2003 and 2005. In November 2004, she was appointed as the Investigator General for Zambia's National Ombudsman Office. At the time of her appointment the Office was known as the Commission for Investigations.



John Walters obtained the degrees BA (1977) and LLB (1980) from the University of the Western Cape in South Africa and was admitted as advocate of the Supreme Court of South Africa (South West Africa Division; as it was then called) in 1981. Mr Walters has been a career prosecutor since 1981 and magistrate since 1985. He spent some time in private practice until appointed as Acting Prosecutor-General in December 2002 until 31 December 2003. From April 1998 until March 2006, Mr Walters was the Chairperson of the Transportation Commission of Namibia; he was a member of the Board for

Legal Education from 1996 to March 2004 and a member (ex officio) of the Law Reform and Development Commission of Namibia since July 2004 until date. Mr Walters is also a Board member of the African Ombudsman Research Centre. Mr Walters was appointed as Ombudsman of the Republic of Namibia in July 2004. He succeeded Adv. Bience Gawanas as the third substantive Ombudsman of Namibia. He joined the International Ombudsman Institute (I.O.I) Board of Directors as African Regional Vice-President in 2009. He was elected 1st Vice-President of the IOI in 2012 and President of the IOI in October 2014. His term of office as President of the IOI ended in November 2016.



Werner Amon was a Member of Parliament for 25 years. He was the Chairman of the Austrian delegation to the Council of Europe (CoE) and Vice-President of the CoE's Parliamentary Assembly. Mr Amon was elected as one of the three Austrian Ombudsman in July 2019. As Ombudsman, he is responsible for monitoring the administration of the judiciary, the public prosecution and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as investigating complaints concerning communal matters. Since 2019, Mr Amon is the Secretary General of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI).