



منظمة الموفقين والوسطاء والرفايين الإفريقية
 African Ombudsman and Mediators Association
 Association des Ombudsman et Mediateurs Africains
 Associação dos Ombudsman e Mediadores

AFRICAN OMBUDSMAN



Today

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Africa Hosts First International Ombud Expo

From 28-31 October 2019, African Ombudsman institutions joined their counterparts from other parts of the world in the first ever International Ombud Expo (IOE) in Abuja, Nigeria. It is my distinct pleasure to present this special edition of *African Ombudsman Today* as a highlight of this historic event. In addition to providing a snapshot of the key features of the Expo and the offices that participated in it, this edition presents the personal reflections and assessments of a selection of Ombudsmen and dignitaries who attended the event. Being a first-time event, contributors were encouraged to speak frankly about their experiences, including how they evaluate the innovative approach of the Expo, the benefits that their offices derived from participating, and how, if at all, they wish to see the Expo organised in the future.

The IOE 2019 brought together participants representing national and specialty ombud and grievance handling offices spread across five continents. As President of the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association (AOMA) and Public Protector of South Africa, I was honoured to co-host the Expo with Hon. Chille Wagner Igbawua, the Chief Commissioner of the Public Complaints Commission (PCC) and Ombudsman of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The event itself was organised by an international collaboration of organisations and agencies with Governance and Management Services International (GMSI) supported by the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) as Secretariat and Project Manager.

We were honoured, too, to receive special messages from

the following: Mr Peter Tyndall, President of the International Ombudsman Institute and Ombudsman and Information Commissioner for Ireland; Ambassador Inger Ultvedt, Swedish Embassy in Nigeria; Rob Behrens, Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman of the United Kingdom; Dr Arjoon Suddhoo, Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, London; Advocate Bience Gawanas, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Special Adviser on Africa; and the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria. Professor Yemi Osinbajo, the Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, ably represented by Special Adviser Mrs Mariam Uwais, graciously conducted the official opening of the event.

Against the backdrop of the ever-increasing demand placed on ombud and related oversight bodies around the world, IOE 2019 was a unique first-time event indeed. In the words of one of my colleagues, "the Expo was a special opportunity to not only share the work of Ombudsman and oversight offices but also increase our knowledge



Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane
 Public Protector of South Africa

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Ombudsmen and dignitaries at IOE 2019.

base of the wider Ombudsman community. We saw first-hand what others are doing across a wide array of not just countries but different types of Ombudsman, new specialised areas and other kinds of complaint handling bodies". As another colleague described his experience, the Expo "provided a most exciting experience for my officers to gain new insights, learn from others, and benchmark with other offices on the conduct of their operations. Further, I have been able to reach out to most of my counterparts in Africa and made a number of contacts that I believe will be beneficial for my operations back at home'. Other participants appreciated the rare opportunity the Expo afforded them to 'accumulate quite a considerable number of annual reports, pamphlets, CDs and other documents of the offices of other countries to enrich our library'.

Another notable highlight of IOE 2019 was the special session to celebrate the role and contributions of 'Women Leaders in Ombudsman and Oversight Institutions'. A first-

"IOE 2019 proved to be a resounding success. It set the tone for an innovative and more incisive approach to sharing knowledge, engaging sister organisations, and promoting the Ombudsman for the advancement of good governance."

time event as well, this included a pictorial exhibition of women leaders, past and present, from across the world. As one of the lead speakers remarked afterwards, “it was enlightening to learn that there have been no less than 300 women who have led Ombudsman and other similar governance institutions across the globe over the last 200 years”.

The Expo concluded with a public recognition of the achievements of three eminent former Ombudspersons, namely: Justice Florence N. Mumba, Africa’s first woman Ombudsperson and former Investigator-General of Zambia, and Ms Alba M.T. Martijn, former Ombudsman of Curacao and former President of the Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA); and Lt. General T.T. Matanzima, Africa’s first and former Military Ombud of South Africa. As the event coordinator aptly reminded us while conferring the honours, IOE’s overriding objective is to assure every serving Ombudsman that their contributions and immense personal sacrifices on behalf of the rest of us will never be forgotten.

By all accounts, therefore, IOE 2019 proved to be a resounding success. It set the tone for an innovative and

more incisive approach to sharing knowledge, engaging sister organisations, and promoting the Ombudsman for the advancement of good governance. Remarkably, all the contributors to this special issue endorsed that the Expo should be developed into ‘a recurring event to hold in a different location each time’.

I cannot over-emphasise our deep gratitude to all the individuals and organisations who contributed to the success of the epoch-making Expo. We are profoundly grateful to the Federal Government of Nigeria and the City of Abuja for hosting and extending to us the warmest hospitality of the people of Nigeria. By the same token, it will be a serious omission not to highlight the role played by Professor Victor Ayeni who created the concept of the Expo and with his team facilitated such a beneficial programme. Lastly, we are appreciative of all the colleagues who took time to share their experiences and assessments.

It is my hope that this special edition of our newsletter will do sufficient justice to the events of the first IOE. I wish you pleasant reading.

Prof. Ayeni and Adv. Mkhwebane.





About IOE 2019

The **International Ombud Expo 2019** brought together over 250 participants representing national and specialty ombud and grievance-handling offices from 38 countries in an exhibition of the role and operations of these unique institutions in facilitating better governance and driving performance in governments and organisations across the world. The three-day international event, and first of its kind, was held from 28-31 October, 2019 at the Sheraton Hotel, Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria.

Convened under the theme: **Extending the Ombud Frontiers: Better Governance, Enhanced Performance**, IOE 2019 was organised by an international collaboration of organisations and agencies consisting of the following: Federal Government of Nigeria; Public Complaints Commission and Ombudsman Office of Nigeria (PCC); Federal Capital Territory Administration of Nigeria (FCTA); International Ombudsman Institute (IOI); African Ombudsman and Mediateurs Association (AOMA); Public Protector of South Africa (PPSA); African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC); Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA); Instituto Latinoamericano Del Ombudsman – Defensorias Del Pueblo (ILO); Ombudsman of Bermuda; Commonwealth Secretariat; United Nations; and Governance and Management Services International (GMSI),



who also served as the Secretariat and Project Manager of the Expo.

Ombudsman offices and practitioners from the following countries participated in the Expo, namely: Angola, Bermuda, Botswana, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Curacao-Netherlands, Jamaica, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Namibia, Uganda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South African Military Ombud, Pakistan, Senegal ICRC, Swaziland, Tanzania, The Gambia, Zambia, Nigeria, United Kingdom, USA as well as the Commonwealth Secretariat, London

The first **IOE 2019** featured, among others:

- An exhibition of the work of different ombud offices and oversight institutions
- Parallel experts' sessions and workshops on topical issues and the Ombudsman practice
- Unparalleled insight into how ombud institutions

execute their roles and make a difference in governments and organisations across the globe

- One-on-one interaction and sharing of experiences with ombud leaders, diverse functionaries and a wide range of stakeholders
- Study tours of ombud, anti-corruption, human rights and related oversight organisations in Nigeria
- Meeting with wide-ranging organisations that service and facilitate the role of ombud offices in different parts of the world
- A special celebration of the role and impact of women leaders in ombud and oversight institutions
- Honour recognition of the contributions of eminent former Ombudsmen

The spread and popularisation of the ombud institutions across the world over the last five decades has been unprecedented. It is estimated that there are over 50 000 ombud offices, grievance handlers, and complaint bodies in operation in over 150 countries while the demand for more offices continues to grow by the day. Thus, IOE 2019 also provided a unique first-hand insight for policymakers, corporate leaders and organisation managers on the

role of ombud and grievance handling in tackling wide-ranging governance problems, managing conflicts, and boosting performance and productivity of governments and organisations around the world.

What Offices Exhibited

The rich display of the work and experiences of offices and organisations included the exhibition of:

- Reports and official publications
- Audio-visual displays on role, operations and performance
- Media reports and excerpts
- Campaign publication of organisations' services and other literature
- Physical evidence of achievements and success stories
- Technology use and business processes
- IT software
- Documentary visuals, videos and other online sources
- Interactive videos
- Training and capacity development materials
- Book publications and other intellectual materials
- Cultural artefacts

Dr Roger Koranteng – Commonwealth Secretariat.



Celebrating Women Leaders

For the first time ever, the **IOE 2019** included a special event dedicated to showcasing women leaders, the sharing of experiences, and expert discussions on their contributions. Under the theme: **Women Leaders in Ombudsman and Oversight Institutions**, this special Expo Event involved:

- A pictorial exhibition of women leaders in Ombudsman and oversight institutions, past and present, from across the world
- An Expert Forum where women Ombudsman and oversight leaders shared experiences and knowledge towards enhancing personal and institutional effectiveness of women leaders
- Exposition of the phenomenal role that women leaders have played through the years, the factors that have driven such successes, and the drawing out of lessons for prospective leaders
- Illumination of the uniquely effective role women leaders continue to play in resolving conflicts, promoting peace building, and boosting the performance and productivity of governments and organisations
- Extensive discussions of how women can further use Ombudsman, complaints handling and related oversight institutions to promote gender equality and women in development, especially in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls

Recognition of Eminent Former Ombudsmen

The Expo concluded with a public recognition of the achievements of three eminent former Ombudspersons, namely:

- Justice Florence N. Mumba, Africa's first woman Ombudsperson and former Investigator-General of Zambia
- Ms Alba M.T. Martijn, former Ombudsman of Curacao and former President of the Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA)
- Lt. General T.T. Matanzima, Africa's first and former Military Ombud of South Africa

In conferring the honours, IOE's overriding objective was not only to convey a collective appreciation but also to reassure

every serving Ombudsman that even after they relinquish office, their contributions and immense personal sacrifices on behalf of the rest of us will never be forgotten.

Key Benefits for Participants and Offices

Participants and exhibitors at the IOE 2019 benefitted in many ways, including:

- **A rare comprehensive experience in one location** of ombud types, complaint handlers, grievance-handling offices together with organisations that service and facilitate their roles
- **Exposure to a rich display** of how ombud and grievance-handling offices effectively tackle a wide range of governance concerns, help reduce corruption, manage conflicts, enhance customer service, drive innovation, defend and promote human rights as well as boost performance and productivity of governments and organisations
- **Participation** in parallel workshops and experts' sessions on topical issues
- **Capacity enhancement** of participating officials and functionaries through sustained exposure to the success stories of counterpart institutions from across the world;
- **Ombud brands awareness and showcasing** of the work of ombud and related oversight institutions as an indispensable feature of any well-functioning government and organisation determined to surpass their performance bottom line
- **Exchange of best practices** on the role and operations of different ombud types and how they realise sustainable performance in an often-unpredictable governance and organisational landscape
- **Opportunity for offices and institutions to benchmark** by evaluating themselves against the lessons of experiences of counterparts elsewhere and drawing lessons therefrom
- **Fostering strategic relationships and networking** towards enhancing the role and performance of ombud organisations
- **International media spotlight and coverage** for participants and exhibitors through the event, and in the record of the event now permanently available on the world-wide web

For a detailed record of the first IOE, follow the links to the event summary, pictures and video content:

- <https://www.internationalombudexpo.com/summary-of-outcome/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3PwJV9uqtTAi7I9pQ1qGxA/>
- <https://www.internationalombudexpo.com/gallery/>

IOE in Pictures



IOE in Pictures



IOE in Pictures



IOE in Pictures



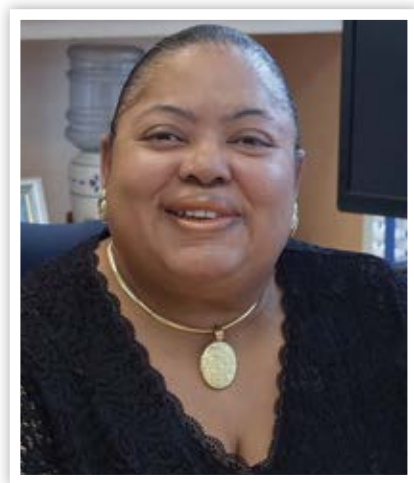
IOE in Pictures



IOE in Pictures



Reflections and Experiences of the Expo



Hon. Victoria Pearman
Ombudsman of Bermuda

“The concept of the Expo is an exciting and valuable innovation. We were very interested when we learned about a first-of-its-kind event [that] was unlike any other conference we have previously participated in . . . I came with high expectations and was not disappointed. . . It was an opportunity to see first-hand what others are doing across a wide array of not just countries but different types of Ombudsman, new specialised areas and other kinds of complaint handling bodies.”

The Office of the Ombudsman for Bermuda is located in the city of Hamilton on the island of Bermuda. The Office investigates complaints about the administrative actions of public authorities, including government departments, boards and bodies established or funded by the Legislature. Ours is an independent, non-government office that provides an impartial form of alternative dispute resolution that is less formal and more flexible and accessible than going through the Courts. Anyone who feels personally and unjustly treated by an administrative action of a public authority can make a complaint. Our services are free and available to everyone.

I was appointed as Bermuda’s second Ombudsman effective 17 March 2014 and have been a member of the Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA) Council since 2015. I served as CAROA President from July 2017 to July 2019. I was also elected as International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) Regional President for the Caribbean and Latin America in February 2019. Prior to my appointment as Ombudsman, I worked as a litigation attorney for over 20 years and have a varied background in administrative, constitutional, civil and criminal law. I also served as a Government Senator and Junior Minister.

The concept of the International Ombud Expo is an exciting and valuable innovation. Seeing the literature, visual displays and experiencing the ability to discuss helped to give a deeper insight into the work that colleagues are doing.

Although I did not really know what to expect, I came with high expectations and was not disappointed. The Expo provided a special opportunity, not only to share the work

of our office and increase our knowledge base of the wider Ombudsman community, but also to highlight that of our Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA) sister offices in the region. Any time colleagues can learn from one another and share experiences is invaluable and mutually beneficial. There is much benefit as well from the discussions and interactions that flowed informally outside of formal sessions. Further, the value of establishing face-to-face connections with colleagues cannot be overstated. The collegial nature of the work we do as Ombudsmen is unique and there are few people outside of our colleagues who can relate to it and to whom we can look to for support. It strengthens us when we are surrounded by those we can collaborate and exchange ideas with and get perspective on issues that we may have been wrestling with.

The Office of the Ombudsman for Bermuda and CAROA are proud to be sponsors of the IOE 2019. I represented both my Office and CAROA as we were aware it was a challenge for colleagues from the Caribbean and Latin America region to travel to attend the Expo, especially members who had travelled to Bermuda for our biennial conference in May. However, it was important to find a way to ensure that they had a presence so that we had a combined booth, which received much interest. Colleagues at the Expo were very interested in CAROA, which gave me the opportunity to share more about the work colleagues that are doing in the region.

The parallel expert sessions covered topical areas of interest and I would have liked to have attended more than the schedule permitted. There was a greater degree of interaction among

REFLECTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE EXPO

"As many colleagues as possible from across our global institution must be able to participate. I am looking forward to hearing about plans for future expos in this decade and beyond."

participants, and the questions and observations posed during the sessions gave new insight as we learned by sharing and debate. Of particular interest was hearing colleagues discuss challenges when it came to acceptance and implementation of their recommendations. Pressing for compliance without powers of enforcement may drive offices to the courts, which doesn't fit naturally with Ombudsman practice. Participating in these sessions afforded me deeper insight, especially the need to understand the demands of increased mandates in matters such as anti-corruption and how recommendations could be best implemented.

The special women event was another extraordinary innovation. This was an enlightening event as we saw just how many women serve or have served as Ombudsmen or complaints commissioners. To see this showcase, the photos, and list of names was enlightening and uplifting. Dr Ayeni, the IOE and colleagues who contributed deserve our thanks for the acknowledgement. It causes one to consider how many women have come to be recognised in this work without any apparent campaign or organised effort. It would be worth exploring how and why that happened and what lessons or observations can be learned from it. This special event and the list that was compiled also provide a good starting point for more work to be done in this area of women leaders. The work done thus far is a valuable tool and a launching point for deeper research to be carried out. There is a sense of pride that our institution has so many women leaders. Our male colleagues were very

supportive of this recognition and celebrated the contribution of women leaders.

Even though there was a diversity of participants, specialities, mandate, regions and size, it is clear that most of the challenges faced are the same: adequacy of resources, challenges with the acceptance of recommendations, and flexibility of the institution to take on more responsibilities and roles without overreaching, yet maintaining relevance. It can be difficult to consider how these all fit and the priority needed for them. It is important to get the balance right between advocating alternative dispute resolution on one hand and effective follow-through on implementation. We must also be conscious of the consequences of what we highlight and the method we choose in doing so.

Every session provided participants with something they were able to reflect on, and provided points of relevance as we heard about trends outside of our respective offices, countries or regions. I was fortunate to be able to exchange ideas and contact information with colleagues and have already continued our discussions with several of them. It is encouraging to be reminded that we do not stand alone and it is empowering to know that we are one of many. A library of solutions is available to us through this collective resource.

Going forward, I would support the holding of the Expo again without reservation and hope that even more delegates from all six regions and organisations will recognise the value in attending and realise what they missed. Ideally, I would like to see this become a biennial event if resources will allow it, but given the time and resources required realistically, it could be held every four years. Consideration must be taken to ensure that it does not occur close to other major international Ombudsman conferences or events such as the IOI World Conference so that as many colleagues as possible from across our global institution will be able to participate. I am looking forward to hearing about plans for future expos in this decade and beyond.

Dr Ayeni (GMSI), the IOE 2019 Secretariat, and the Nigerian Ombudsman Office, are to be commended for their vision and pioneering endeavour to introduce the first-ever Ombudsman Expo and for its success. They should be very proud of their accomplishment of taking on this initiative. Ombudsman knowledge, expertise and innovation come from all regions and everyone has an equally valuable contribution to make to our global institution.

REFLECTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE EXPO



Hon. Caroline Z. Sokoni

Public Protector of Zambia

“The event was highly educative to our institution as it enabled the exchange of ideas and experience with other participating institutions. Our institution benefitted a lot in terms of learning the best practices from other participants, and some of these ideas are being implemented already to enhance our effectiveness and visibility.”

The Office of the Public Protector Zambia is a successor institution to the Office of the Investigator-General, which was formally established following the assent to the Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 2 of 2016. The Office is located in Lusaka and its key functions include to:

- a. Initiate, receive, investigate and resolve complaints of alleged maladministration in State Institutions;
- b. Disseminate information on the evil and dangerous effects of maladministration on society;
- c. Disseminate information and sensitise the public on the negative effects of maladministration; and
- d. Educate the Public in the fight against maladministration.

I have been Public Protector and head of the institution since 2004. Prior to this, I served as Director of Public Prosecution and Advocate of the High and Supreme Courts in Zambia. I have also been the President of the African Chapter of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI).

Our office decided to participate in IOE 2019 for the obvious reason that we saw it providing a platform for us to disseminate information and sensitise sister organisations on the operations of our office. As it turned out, the Expo was also highly educative as it enabled the exchange of ideas and experience with other participating institutions. Our institution benefitted a lot in terms of learning the best practices from other participants, and some of these ideas are being implemented already to enhance our effectiveness and visibility.

The Expo sessions proved to be huge learning experiences indeed. Many participants acquired more knowledge from experts on the Ombudsman concept as well as familiarised themselves with various best practices in implementing their mandates. By the same token, the Special Event on Women Leaders recognised and appreciated the contributions that women Ombudsmen across the world have made in promoting and advancing the concept of Ombudsmanship. The special award for distinguished former Ombudsmen was a highlight and confirmed how much the Ombudsman community worldwide appreciates the contributions made by these individuals.

I have no doubt that the IOE is a good initiative that needs to be supported. Going by our experience in Abuja, we would support holding the Expo in future, possibly every three years. The organisers would need time to mobilise the necessary resources for the successful implementation of the event. To this end, we feel that it will be a good idea to rotate hosting it among Ombudsman regions. The International Ombud Expo Secretariat could also consider applying to be affiliated to the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) and the African Ombudsman Mediators Association (AOMA). Future events must endeavour to bring more institutions on board.

The publication of a dedicated newsletter to highlight what happened during the Expo should help to motivate the interest of those who did not participate at the inaugural event in Abuja.

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REFLECTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE EXPO



Hon. Aqal Badshah Khattak

Ombudsman of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

"I would support the holding of Ombud Expo every year, which should be organised on a rotation basis among the member countries/Ombudsman institutions, with the International Ombudsman Institute playing an active role."

The Provincial Ombudsman of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is currently located in Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Its main mandate is to investigate complaints arising out of maladministration against government functionaries. I came into this role with over 35 years' service in Provincial Administration and have previously held field postings as Additional Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and as Magistrate in various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. I have also been Additional Secretary (Legal Opinion) in the Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights Departments as well as Deputy Secretary in the Home Department and the Health Departments respectively.

Our office considered certain reasons when deciding to participate in the IOE 2019. Firstly, it was the first ever International-level Expo that was being organised with the collaboration of IOI and other sponsoring organisations. Secondly, it was organised in an African country (that is Nigeria), which we felt would give us an invaluable sharing opportunity with African Ombudsman institutions. Thirdly, we also felt that the Expo would expose us to African Ombudsman organisations as well as their workings and

mandates. Going by the outcome of the event, we believe our reasons were well vindicated.

The special expert sessions were excellent. It would have been good to conduct them together so that we could experience more. The Special Session on Women Leaders was impressive and I would like to single out Ms Martha Chizuma, Ombudsman of Malawi, who presented the subject as well as her institution with such good insight.

I am grateful to the organisers for inviting me to make a presentation on 'Human Rights in the Work of the Ombudsman – Issues, Challenges and Prospects' with reference to Chapter 1 of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. I was touched by the fact that many other Ombudsmen faced issues about how to implement Ombudsman decisions. I shared my efforts to empower my institution by securing implementation power and to this end I have submitted a draft Bill to the Provincial Assembly to expressly empower our Ombudsman institution. We hope to draw on the lessons learned at the Expo as we look forward to the outcome of this process.

"The Special Session on Women Leaders was impressive and I would like to single out Ms Martha Chizuma, Ombudsman of Malawi, who presented the subject as well as her institution with such good insight."



Hon. Augustine Makgonatsotlhe

Ombudsman of Botswana

“Our participation in the Expo offered an opportunity to interact and network with our counterparts from other Ombudsman offices across the world . . . I have been able to reach out to most of my counterparts in Africa and made a number of contacts that I believe will be beneficial for my operations back at home.”

The Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Botswana is located in the capital city Gaborone, Botswana. Its mandate, in accordance with Section 3(1) of the Ombudsman Act of 1995, is to receive and investigate complaints of maladministration by members of the public against government departments. I became Ombudsman on 1 June 2016, having been a legal practitioner and public servant in the field of international law and human rights. Before my appointment, I held senior positions in the public service, including Chief State Counsel in the Attorney General’s Office, and Secretary for Defence, Justice and Security.

The Office of the Ombudsman in Botswana has always been interested in the idea of bringing African Ombudsman offices with their counterparts in the rest of the world under one roof to share knowledge and experiences, including challenges and hardships they may be experiencing in dealing with powerful governments in their respective countries. I had an informal discussion about such a possibility with Dr Victor Ayeni in London in 2018, and enthusiastically welcomed his proposal a few months later on holding an Ombud Expo in Nigeria in 2019. I am pleased that he confirmed how useful our advice and support were in the months that followed.

Our participation in the Expo offered an opportunity to interact and network with our counterparts from other Ombudsman offices across the world. It also offered us a rare opportunity to expose our key officers to a wide range of perspectives from elsewhere. A key highlight of the Expo was the beaming of goodwill messages from high-ranking personalities across the world, including the United Nations Under Secretary-General and Special Advisor on Africa, the President of the International Ombudsman Institute, among others, as well as the special message from the Federal Government of Nigeria. All these go to show the support and encouragement from our stakeholders,

nationally and internationally, in the holding of this Expo on African soil. It really boosted our morale and confidence that the decision was justified to hold the first ever international expo in Africa, as shown by the interest and participation of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

The Expo provided a most exciting experience to be in the same room with our counterparts from across the world as issues that we confront on a daily basis were tabled. My officers gained new ideas, learned from other officers, and were able to benchmark with other Ombudsman offices on the conduct of their operations. We were also able to accumulate quite a considerable number of annual reports, pamphlets, CDs and other documents of the offices of other countries to enrich our library. Further to this, I have been able to reach out to most of my counterparts in Africa and made a number of contacts that I believe will be beneficial for my operations back at home.

The special event on women leaders was a noble and wonderful idea to showcase the contribution of women to the concept of Ombudsmanship. The special experts’ sessions were equally full of knowledge and insightful experiences, although the time available for presentations and discussions was limited. I suggest that more time should be allocated for these sessions in future events. I would, therefore, definitely encourage the holding of the IOE again, perhaps in another part of Africa. For the reason that the holding of such an event is complex, time-consuming and costly, I suggest that it be held at the interval of three to four years.

Finally, let me seize this opportunity to congratulate the Ombudsman of Nigeria, the Public Protector of South Africa and Dr Victor Ayeni for the splendid and successful staging of the IOE 2019. Congratulations also to the sponsors and all those who worked hard behind the scenes to ensure that this Expo became a reality.

REFLECTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE EXPO



Ms Alba M.T. Martijn

Director, Caribbean Region of the Institute of Latin-American Ombudsman

“One of the positives of the Expo for my region is that it advanced our understanding of the manner in which the role of the Ombudsman has grown and developed in other countries and continents.”

Founded in 1983, the core aim of the Institute of Latin-American Ombudsman (ILO) is to strengthen the instruments of representative democracy and invigorating institutions for complaints handling. Since 2007, it has registered more than 100 partners from 19 countries. ILO has also held annual assemblies in different Latin American cities, including Valparaiso, Mexico City, Cali, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Lima and El Salvador, as well as colloquiums, seminars and conferences in places such as Torino in Europe in 2016.

ILO publishes the magazine, *Eforos*, dedicated to studies on the Ombudsman and similar institutions around the world. ILO also carries out training courses and sponsors meetings around the roles and subject matter that is typical of the defenders of the people. Equally, it supports, to the best of its ability, the work of the Caribbean Ombudsman Association, and promotes the affiliation of Ombudsmen to the Vienna-based International Ombudsman Institute (IOI). ILO has also supported the Federation of Iber American's (FIO) projects and activities. One of ILO's greatest achievements has been the establishing of a chair for the study of the institution of the Ombudsman in the Law Faculty of the National University of Cordoba.

The ILO was genuinely impressed with its participation in the first IOE. Prior to the event, the ILO had little direct contact with the African Ombudsman movement. Hence, we were highly attracted to the opportunity the Expo offered to share experiences with our counterparts in Africa and elsewhere. The event was an experience I personally enjoyed very much. The presentations gave insight to the challenges faced by Ombudsmen across the world. It also offered the opportunity for Ombudsmen to learn from each other's experiences, to connect and socialise, and to fortify the commitment to continue their good work, notwithstanding the challenges that present themselves along the way.

The Expo programmes were really good and my choice of the key highlights included several lectures, the closing event,

and the guards of honour mounted by officials of the host organisation. The special expert sessions were very interesting and exposed the experiences by those who made presentations of the challenges they face in their various organisations. I also commend the secretariat of the IOE 2019 for the excellent support and assistance it provided. The hotel accommodation was good, the corporate rate affordable, and the staff were pleasant and very helpful. The rooms were clean and the restaurants very good.

Altogether, the Expo underscored the fact that all Ombudsmen face the same challenges: be it a large country or a small island. The attitude of governments is often similar and some are inclined to ignore the recommendations of the Ombudsman and use similar instruments to limit their influence. So, one of the positives of the Expo for my region is that it advanced our understanding of the manner in which the role of the Ombudsman has grown and developed in other countries and continents.

I would further recommend to the organisers to include more themes of contemporary human rights challenges in future events, which could be held every two years. For instance, should the Ombudsman have an active role in helping refugees? How can s/he assist? Should s/he have agreements with his country's government regarding the assistance his complaint officers can provide as soon as the refugees are detained? Lawyers are expensive and most of the time prevented from approaching the refugees within 24 hours after they are detained.

Though the Ombudsman does not charge for his services, he can play a significant role in the protection of refugee human rights by coming to a gentleman's agreement with the government regarding his role and presence within 24 hours of a refugee being detained. Where staffing is an issue, the role of complaint officers can be complemented by university law students, which will, in turn, contribute to the students' professional growth. The Ombudsman can collaborate with relevant local universities for this purpose.

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Hon. Edouard Nduwimana

Ombudsman of the Republic of Burundi

“True to our expectation, the Expo was enriching. We interacted with sister organisations in and outside Africa. The main exhibition was unique in the opportunity it afforded us to see first-hand and appreciate how others execute the Ombudsman and mediation function. We were able to benchmark with sister institutions and also [shown how] to take steps to improve our own operations.”

The office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Burundi is located in Bujumbura, Burundi. Before my appointment as Ombudsman, I was a Minister of Government and have also been the Vice-President of the National Assembly. My appointment is for a non-renewable six-year term. I have been driven by a strong desire to put the Office at par with international best practices, hence our Office was naturally attracted to participate in the first IOE in Abuja.

Burundi saw the Expo as an opportunity to learn from and share experiences with other offices and Ombudsmen. True to our expectation, the Expo was enriching as we interacted with sister organisations in and outside Africa.

Further, the Expo enlightened us on how to raise more awareness about our complaints handling and boost our public communication through improvements in the production of brochures. I can also better appreciate the scope for the harmonisation of the missions of mediators and Ombudsmen, especially in Africa. The special experts' sessions covered several

topical themes and proved to be a real capacity-building experience for my staff and I. By the same token, the special event on women leaders exposed the highly commendable contribution of women to the promotion of not just the Ombudsman but advancing good governance in public and private institutions around the world.

I would strongly support the holding of an Expo of this nature on a regular basis, possibly annually. To that end, I would recommend to the organisers the following: a) Establish a multinational team for the organisation of such events and endeavour to secure a substantial budget for its success; b) Strengthen the secretarial support of the event and make the necessary documents and reports available in all the official languages of the participants in the event; and c) Improve the quality of local transport for participants. I will close by congratulating the organisers of the Abuja Expo for a successful outcome.

"Burundi saw the Expo as an opportunity to learn from and share experiences with other offices and Ombudsmen. True to our expectation, the Expo was enriching as we interacted with sister organisations in and outside Africa."

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Hon. Martha Chizuma

Ombudsman of Malawi

“The special women event was highly informative on the immense contribution of women Ombudsmen from across the globe. It was enlightening to learn that there have been no less than 300 women who have led Ombudsman and other similar governance institutions across the globe over the last 200 years... By any assessment, the IOE was an amazing experience. Our organisation came out highly impressed.”

The Office of the Ombudsman of Malawi is an independent institution established by the 1994 Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (Chapter 10) and the Ombudsman Act, Act No. 10 of 1996. Its mandate is to investigate cases of alleged injustices suffered by any person. According to the Republic of Malawi Constitution Section 123 (1): “The Office of the Ombudsman may investigate any and all cases where it is alleged that a person has suffered injustice and it does not appear that there is any remedy reasonably available by way of proceedings in a court or by way of appeal from a court or where there is no other practicable remedy”.

Section 5(i) of the Ombudsman Act further states that: “Subject to the Constitution, the Ombudsman shall inquire into and investigate in accordance with the provision of this Act and take such actions or steps as may be prescribed by this Act on any request or complaint in any instance or matter laid before the Ombudsman in accordance with Section 7(1) or (2), and concerning any alleged instance or matter of abuse of power or unfair treatment of any person by an official in the employ of any organ of Government, or manifest injustice or conduct by such official, which would properly be regarded as oppressive or unfair in an open and democratic society.”

I was appointed as Malawi’s fourth Ombudsman for a renewable five-year term of office by the Public Appointments Committee in December 2015. My background is in International Law and World Economy with a Master of Laws Degree from the University of East London, United Kingdom and a Bachelor of Laws Degree from the Chancellor College, University of Malawi. As Ombudsman, I have focused on a number of key priorities aimed at strengthening the operations and independence of the institution in Malawi, which include, among others:

- Implementing a repositioning agenda that has seen the

Office fully utilising its unique legal mandate by investigating service delivery complaints as opposed to labour-related matters in the public service as well as monitoring public service delivery in public institutions

- Championing the introduction of the Hospital Ombudsman platform (a social accountability platform in health service delivery) with the aim of improving service delivery in public hospitals
- Introducing systemic and own motion investigations that have led to the release of six systemic investigations reports, which recommend some systemic changes to different ministries in order to improve service delivery in public offices

By virtue of being the Ombudsman, I am also a Commissioner of the Malawi Human Rights Commission according to section 131(b) of the Malawi Constitution, a Commissioner of the Police Service Commission according to section 157 (1)(d) of the Malawi Constitution, and a Member of the Prison Inspectorate according to section 170 of the Malawi Constitution. In March 2019, I was elected Treasurer of AOMA. I am also an African Regional Director of the International Ombudsman Institute.

This background has offered me a vantage view of developments in the Ombudsman institution worldwide. Thus, our office decided to participate in the IOE 2019 because we saw it as a unique platform that would expose us to best practices in complaints handling and enable us to interact with a wide range of Ombudsman institutions. The IOE also provided our office an opportunity to share its own work and experiences and receive input from other Ombudsman institutions on how it could further improve on these.

The wide range of information that we had access to through

REFLECTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE EXPO

the expert sessions, special women's event, exhibition and general interaction with participants was truly enlightening. The Expo provided a rich platform for sharpening the knowledge and skills of the officers who participated through the learning of best practices from other countries. Our Office also identified some key institutions it would like to further learn from as it continues to enhance its work.

The opportunity to share my experiences and insights as a keynote presenter was an honour indeed. It also enabled me to reflect on the work I have done so far and the challenges and issues that need to be addressed in order to continue being relevant to the needs of the people the Office serves. The keen interest other participants showed in the innovations introduced by the Malawi Ombudsman was most satisfying. Key among these are the following:

- Hospital Ombudsman Platform: Almost all institutions were amazed with the innovation and there were at least five offices that expressed an interest to visit us for further study
- The repositioning agenda as a whole was a point of interest for most of the institutions and three offices indicated that they would come to us for a benchmarking visit
- Mobile clinics: This is one of the means by which the Office enhances accessibility of its services at the grassroots level and raises public awareness to improve complaint uptake and implement instant investigation.

The special women event was highly informative about the immense contribution of women Ombudsman from across the globe and the role the institution has played over the years to advance the rights of women. It was enlightening to learn that there have been no less than 300 women who have led Ombudsman and other similar governance institutions across the globe over the last 200 years.

Since the event, our Office has benefitted through the boosting of its public profile and enhanced visibility, both locally and internationally. This has been shown by the media coverage our Office received locally on its participation in the expo and the interest in our work by Ombudsman institutions in other countries during and after the expo.

Taken together, I would sum up the key takeaways for our Office as:

- Lessons were learnt on grievance handling in universities and higher educational institutions elsewhere. We considered various issues arising from Malawian universities such as sexual assault, loan distribution, etc. The Malawi Ombudsman intends to work with public universities in Malawi to close the gaps in the internal complaints handling

system and consider how this can be strengthened to ensure that rights are protected and that there is effectiveness and efficiency.

- The experience of the Political Ombudsman of Jamaica was insightful. Looking at the political problems Malawi has and continues to go through, the Office will closely review the Jamaican experience and try to find ways in which we can initiate a discussion on the same issues with the relevant authorities in Malawi.
- The need to translate publications into major local languages was one of the major lessons learnt when visiting other booths. Currently, the Office only translates brochures and its service charter. There is a need to also look into the translation of all our reports (both systemic and annual) and other public documents the Office releases into the major local languages of the country. This will ensure that the general populace has access to information provided in these documents, ultimately enabling them to fully understand and utilise the Office better.

Going forward, I would definitely support an international expo of this nature, preferably once every three years. To that end, I would like to highlight a few areas for the consideration of future organisers, namely:

- Publicity should be more targeted to ensure better attendance of more participants from continents other than Africa
- Preferably, the booths should be set up the day before the exhibition commences as this will provide enough time for exhibitors to set up
- As much as participants may want to have a different cultural experience, the hotels selected for participants' accommodation should also be able to provide international meals
- There should be an improvement in communication to participants during the expo event itself
- The knowledge that has been generated and shared must be disseminated in the best way possible to participants and other stakeholders

In conclusion, the first ever International Ombudsman Expo was a huge success, an immense learning platform, and an excellent awareness-raising event on the work of the modern Ombudsman. The tireless efforts of the host and organisers, and in particular Professor Ayeni, who conceived and provided the lead, is greatly appreciated.

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Hon. Antónia Florbela de Jesus Rocha Araújo

Deputy Ombudsman of Angola

“...our participation was positive as it allowed for the exchange of experience with Ombudsmen from other countries and their representatives. Personally, the experience enriched my knowledge of the role of the Ombudsman institutions and their interconnection with government bodies for rapid resolution of citizens' problems.”

The official name of the Office is *Provedor de Justiça da República de Angola*. The current Provedor de Justiça or Ombudsman is Dr Carlos Alberto Ferreira Pinto, who was elected in December 2017 and took office in January 2018. I took office on the same date as Deputy Ombudsman and Provedor de Justiça Adjunto. I have a law degree and have, among other previous positions, been Advisor to the State Minister for Internal Policy; a Member of the National Assembly; and Chairman of the Commission for Constitutional and Legal Affairs of the National Assembly.

Angola's decision to attend IOE 2019 was motivated by our desire to gain more understanding of how the Ombudsman works in other jurisdictions towards improving the work that we do. In the same vein, our participation achieved the objective of informing other participants about the activities carried out by the Office of the Ombudsman of Angola. In addition to my presentation, I shared a summary of these activities in English and Portuguese, our publications as well as Angolan sculpture pieces and carvings. I learned about the role and challenges of Ombudsmen in various African countries in the defence of citizens' rights. Indeed, the expert sessions were insightful. I was struck by the fact that a senior political leader moderated one of these sessions, something that does not normally happen in our country.

I must single out the special event on women leaders for commendation. This brought together many influential women from different countries and exposed the impact of women in whatever capacity – be it as Ombudsmen, assistant Ombudsmen,

directors or even consultants – on the development of the Institution. Women come with a special gift in that they are very sensitive to the problems of human rights violations, and are persistent in their efforts in defending the aggrieved. It was emphasised that these contributions provide an inspiration for a future where women will have even more of a voice.

All told, the Angolan delegation came out of Abuja with a very positive view of its participation as it allowed for the exchange of experience with Ombudsmen from other countries and their representatives. Personally, the experience enriched my knowledge of the role of the Ombudsman institutions and their interconnection with government bodies for rapid resolution of citizens' problems. I have no doubt that our added knowledge about the role of the Institution and its interconnection with government bodies will further improve our ability to go beyond just supporting our Ombudsman, Dr Carlos Alberto Ferreira Pinto. Similarly, I believe that we have been exposed to ways we can establish better interactions with, among others, various government agencies, courts, the National Assembly, the military and security bodies, anti-corruption agencies such as the Inspectorate General of the State Administration, the Attorney General's Office as well as non-governmental organisations.

Going forward, I am open to supporting an Ombud Exhibition of this nature every one or two years but, of course, taking cognisance of the financial realities of the various African countries. Lastly, I congratulate the organisers of IOE 2019 for a most remarkable first event.



Advocate Dinkie Dube

Chief Director (Operations), Military Ombud of the Republic of South Africa

“I believe that the IOE was a resounding success... It has the potential to really strengthen and grow the ombud institutions. My key highlight was the exhibition hall [that] showcased a number of ombud bodies around the world... and the Special Event on Women Leaders was indeed a special moment...”

The South African Military Ombud is currently the only specialty military ombud in Africa. The Office was established in terms of the Military Ombud Act No. 5 of 2012 to investigate and resolve complaints from soldiers, both current and former members of the South African National Defence Force, regarding their services and those from members of the public who have complaints against the conduct of soldiers. The Military Ombud is also mandated to promote the respect for fundamental rights within the Defence Force. Lt. General (RET) V.K. Masondo, a retired general from the Defence Force is the incumbent and took over from Lt. General T.T. Matanzima, also a retired general, who was the first Military Ombud from when the office was established in 2012 until May 2019. South Africa’s Military Ombud serves for a non-renewable term of seven years.

As Africa’s first of its kind, we felt that it was highly essential that we participate in the IOE as it would offer an important platform to exhibit and raise awareness about what we do and also interact with other African and international ombud organisations to share knowledge and best practice. The Office also appreciated the opportunity to present a paper, delivered by the former Military Ombud, General T.T. Matanzima, which elaborated the benefits for the Defence Force to have an internal ombud to resolve soldiers’ complaints as opposed to litigating through the courts.

By our assessment, IOE 2019 was a resounding success. A key highlight was the exhibition hall, which showcased a number of Ombud bodies around the world, and also the partnerships of AOMA and IOI that helping to strengthen the relationships with fellow ombud bodies. The Special Experts’ sessions were equally revealing. A key outcome of this for me was the commitment

made by the Chairperson of the Ethics’ Committee of the Nigerian Senate to further discuss the idea of establishing a Military Ombud institution in Nigeria. The presentation by the ombuds from Malawi and Political Ombud of Jamaica were additional key highlights. The Special Event on Women Leaders was indeed a special moment, and as a woman, I fully endorsed it but it would, perhaps, have been better scheduled for the last day of the conference.

The significant takeaways of our participation are reflected in our better understanding of the key roles of the ombud institution, its focus on conciliatory and consensus building approach, and the need to have a cost-effective complaints resolution body like the SA Military Ombud to address soldiers’ grievances and complaints. In summary, our participation has allowed us:

- Knowledge sharing of best practice with fellow ombuds
- An opportunity to network and form strategic stakeholder partnerships
- An opportunity to sell the military ombud model to fellow African countries

Given the positive outcomes of the Expo, we would definitely appreciate the opportunity to participate in future events. We suggest that the organisers consider holding the same annually and rotate the host countries. We further suggest for consideration, moving the conference and plenary discussions to the first and second day while the Exhibition runs concurrently. Finally, we wish to thank Prof. Ayeni and the GMSI team for its organisation and coming up with this great initiative. It has the potential to really strengthen and grow the ombud institutions.

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Mr Leonard Ngaluma

Commission Secretary and Chief Executive Officer,
Commission on Administrative Justice of Kenya

“By participating in the IOE 2019, the Commission sought to strengthen its existing partnerships and establish new links with other players in the administration of justice for enhanced implementation of its mandate... which we achieved through the catalogue of resource materials collected, face-to-face interactions and thematic discussions on Ombudsman operations. Further, we benefitted from peer feedback and information sharing...”

The Commission of Administrative Justice of Kenya (CAJ) is proud to have actively participated in the first IOE in Abuja, Nigeria and sought to strengthen its existing partnerships and establish new links with other players in the administration of justice for enhanced implementation of its mandate. This participation was important for information sharing and fostering mutual support, which we achieved through the catalogue of resource materials collected, face-to-face interactions and thematic discussions on Ombudsman operations. Further, we benefitted from peer feedback and information sharing, thereby enhancing our knowledge base in Ombudsman practice for improved execution of our mandate.

The experts' sessions were very informative. They provided an opportunity to review Ombudsmanship from African and non-African perspectives. It is clear that the institution can now be better appreciated, not from a restrictive but an evolutionary perspective. This point was particularly evident in the discussion around whether the Ombudsman should have binding powers or not. The women's special session was not only an opportunity

to celebrate women in leadership but also a clear demonstration of how women, given the chance, can influence and contribute in conflict resolution hence helping in the realisation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) as well as peace and justice around the world. The conclusion is inescapable: the Ombudsman institution remains a key instrument in enhancing efficient and effective service delivery in the public sector, more so in Africa.

In the light of our experience, it is our opinion that the exhibition should be held once every two years to allow for the harnessing of new knowledge and development in the Ombudsman practice without much repetition of the same content as the previous exhibition. We would also suggest that rather than having a standalone Ombudsman exhibition, the organisers should leverage on activities in the global Ombudsman community such as the IOI World Conference or the AOMA General Assembly – to hold the exhibition alongside these events for maximum participation and utilisation of scarce resources.

"The Ombudsman institution remains a key instrument in enhancing efficient and effective service delivery in the public sector, more so in Africa."



Justice Florence N.M. Mumba

International Judge in the Supreme Court Chamber of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) and former Investigator-General, Zambia

"The invitation as a special guest provided the opportunity and occasion to review in person how far the Ombudsman movement has gone and the international platform provided by the Expo could not have been any [more] appropriate. It was an honour indeed for my services in this sector to be recognised by the Expo organisers."

I retired as a Judge in Zambia and am currently serving as an International Judge in the Supreme Court Chamber of the ECCC. I was Investigator-General in Zambia for eight years, from 1989 to 1997. I served as Director for the African region on the International Ombudsman Board. In that time, I also served as Vice-President on the Board of the International Ombudsman Institute from 1994 to 1996.

I have never been really far removed professionally from the cause of the Ombudsman, hence it was a privilege to support the first IOE. I appreciate the recognition of my services in the field of Ombudsmanship at the Expo.

The global process has demonstrated that the Ombudsman is indispensable to human progress and aspirations, which are universal. I was quite impressed by the programmes on offer at the Expo; they revealed how both men and women proved competent in their operations in various countries. The Special Experts' sessions really did provide an in-depth understanding

of the Ombudsman institution across the globe. The dedicated session on women leaders highlighted equality of responsibilities by both women and men in the realisation of the Ombudsman concept. It also demonstrated that women can equally excel. I came away from the Expo feeling reassured that successful leadership can be achieved and this is open to both genders. In the same vein, ensuring equitable value is essential to the promotion of good governance and political stability worldwide.

Given what the Expo achieved, I would support holding the Expo again to recognise excellence and promote universal values. It would be ideal, in my view, to hold the Expo once every three years in different continents and regions. However, it is essential that adequate notice is given to all, and expenses expected fully and timely explained. I also think that, in future, exhibition stands should be more open to the public as a way of reaching out and sharing the message of the Ombudsman more widely.

"I was quite impressed by the programmes on offer at the Expo; they revealed how both men and women proved competent in their operations in various countries."

Focus on the Celebration of Women Leaders



Dr Annie Devenish

Research Project Manager,
African Ombudsman Research Centre,
University of KwaZulu-Natal

“Although the history of women’s roles in building Ombudsman institutions had yet to be written, this Expo was with this panel laying the foundation stone.”

– Diane Welborn, First Vice-President,
International Ombudsman Institute (IOI)

On 30 November 2019, delegates of the first IOE gathered to celebrate the significant role that women have played in building the institution. It was an historic moment with speakers from across the globe, including Africa’s first woman Ombudsman and former Investigator-General of Zambia, Justice Florence N.M. Mumba, who was one of the special guests of the Expo.

The opening remarks came from a video message by Diane Welborn, the First Vice-President of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI). In her presentation titled, ‘Building a practice that is more collaborative, inclusive, tenacious and democratic’, Welborn reminded the audience that although the history of women’s roles in building Ombudsman institutions had yet to be written, the Expo was with this panel laying the foundation stone. She acknowledged the women who had been trailblazers in her own professional life: Bonny MacCaully – a founder of the American Ombudsman Association in 1977, and who in the ‘early days’ was instrumental in establishing Ombudsman institutions in other jurisdictions; Marie Ferguson; Barbara Finlay of ‘Sharpening your teeth’ fame, and Linda Reif – stressing that women have contributed not only as Ombudsman but also as assistants and deputies.

“When I first joined the IOI,” Diane observed, “I was told it was like a moribund boys club.” She recalled one of her first World conferences in Argentina where there were only two women on the panel. Luckily since then, much has changed. Welborn

went on to identify the distinctive contributions of women to the movement. These have included nurturing talent in Africa and Asia, such as the work done by Dame Beverly Wakeham, the style of collaborative leadership that women are able to bring to the table, and their tenacity and courage in exposing corruption, as in the case of former South African Public Protector Thuli Madonsela. She also noted the important role that female Ombudsmen have played in taking services to indigenous peoples. It was through these contributions that such women were able to inspire confidence in the future.

Arlene Henry, the Public Defender of Jamaica, who spoke next, said that visiting Nigeria for the Expo was like a homecoming. Speaking on the topic ‘Women and the Ombudsman Institution – Reflections on their Contributions and Impact’, Henry, reminded her audience that 99% of the ancestors of Jamaicans had come as enslaved peoples from Nigeria and Ghana. “We continue to accept [the] African continent as our mother country” with an “everlasting bond” that “cradles our ancestral DNA,” she added.

The Jamaican community had a strong tradition of female leadership, which celebrated women’s resistance to the system of domination even though there were many gaps in this history and much of it still had to be written. From the shopkeeper to the Partner women, who were informal money lenders, all the

way up to the female prime minister, women have played a significant role in community leadership. Historically, women were not just assistants to male social activists but they were advocates in their own right. Take for example, the historical figure of Queen Nanny of the Maroons, the leader of a tribe of runaway slaves. During the first Maroon war in Jamaica, she led runaway slaves in a protracted battle of resistance to British domination. Queen Nanny distinguished herself as a master strategist in this guerrilla war, but also a diplomat, playing a key role in the creation of a peace treaty. In this she was a symbol of what a true Ombudsman should be.

Arlene compared the modern Ombudsman to a woman who was the conscience and protector of the community. In rural communities, such women “were the carriers of knowledge and [the] conduct through which [the] ancestors’ voices flow”, like the *Warner Woman* who alerted the community against impending doom. “Untouched and uninfluenced, her figure bears a striking resemblance to the modern public defender.” Our job is to be sensitive to community, Arlene said. It is: to see the fire before it is lit; to keep the community in order and to protect it. “Our mandate as Ombudsmen is to learn from this legacy and to continue with these struggles started by our [forefathers and mothers],” she concluded.

The consequences of maladministration and human rights abuses have a double impact on women, who often suffer twice. “When Ombudsmen intervene in cases like this, it comes from a place of pain, of empathy,” emphasised Martha Chizuma, Ombudsman of Malawi. It is, therefore, not surprising that since taking office in 2015, Chizuma has focused her attention on making the office relevant to the needs of Malawi’s people – in her words, “restoring the social contract between Government and the people, especially following the political upheaval in Malawi since May 2019”.

To do so, the Ombudsman must first be infused with life, she added. It must be seen to intervene in issues that affect *real* people. “When I took over in 2015, the relevance of the institution was low. It dealt predominantly with maladministration in

employment for civil servants who constituted less than 2% of the population – becoming, in effect, a labour court. Yet the country was struggling with corruption and human rights abuses.” Chizuma explains how her office embarked on a repositioning agenda, shifting the focus away from individual complaints to systemic investigations to turn this situation around.

In the past four years, her office conducted six systemic investigations, exposing corruption in the government, through *Tractorgate*, which also resulted in clarifying the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman in-country. Other systemic investigations had tackled mental health services, and the abuse of pregnant women by health workers and hospital management. These investigations and their subsequent recommendations have led to the dismissal of health officials involved in abuses, the improved responsiveness of government departments to the Ombudsman, and ultimately improved health services in Malawi. Her office now reaches throughout the whole country with information and services.

The only time an Ombudsman is in the good books with a government is when the government is totally perfect, or the Ombudsman is totally useless. “This job is and shall never be easy – there is a need to acknowledge this,” she emphasised. “As Ombudsman, we have to be approachable to the public, and also have the guts to confront the powers that be and this is a difficult balance.”

Following on from the theme of the women Ombudsman and collaborative leadership, Antonia Florbela Rocha Araujo, Deputy Ombudsman of Angola, spoke about the importance of decentralised leadership. Her former career as a teacher had been of immense benefit to her in this regard. “I have always encouraged a system of decentralisation – a true leader does not concentrate the work but gives opportunities to others,” she stressed. At the same time, “a leader must always be a role model for their staff. Success requires a careful focus and balancing of interpersonal relationships, an area where women have a natural advantage.” Moreover, Araujo went on: “There must be constant staff motivation to get the most out of them. You must be fair to

"The consequences of maladministration and human rights abuses have a double impact on women, who often suffer twice."

"Africa has over 50 national Ombudsman institutions. A growing number of countries can also boast current or former female Ombudsmen, including Botswana, Lesotho, Burkina Faso, which has had three, South Africa has had two, Malawi two so far, while Tunisia, Mali, Madagascar and Seychelles have each appointed one. Ethiopia too has had one female Ombudsman."

all staff but you must also be prepared to delegate to your staff to get things done."

Araujo reminded the audience that since ancient times, women have played a key role in the development of societies, especially in the family. Building on the lessons of that natural role, she, like Ombudsman Chizuma of Malawi, spoke about the difficulty of working effectively in the face of limited resources. "Speed is important in an Ombudsman's work, as is informality." Getting this balance right has allowed her office to complete nearly 90% of complaints they have received as an institution. Ultimately, however, "You need to have confidence in yourself. And in this regard, we, as women, have been able to leverage the innate power that we have, to work for the greater social good," Araujo concluded.

Public Protector of Zambia, Caroline Sokoni focused on the connections between development, social justice and women's empowerment in her talk on 'The Role of the Ombudsman in Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering all Women and Girls'. Sokoni is the longest-serving female Ombudsman on the continent, having been in office since 2004. In 2019, her title changed from Ombudsman to Public Protector with the evolution of the

institution from Executive to Parliamentary Ombudsman. Sokoni played a key role in lobbying and facilitating this transformation, which has enhanced the independence of the institution.

"We are very ready to help our people on the continent but it is in the practical application that they get left behind," she said. Sokoni reminded her audience that Africa was, in fact "the champion of Ombudsmanship". The continent "was literally running to grab the concept of Ombudsman, Tanzania – even before UK". By 1974, three Ombudsman offices had already been established. Fast forward to 2019 and Africa has over 50 national Ombudsman institutions. A growing number of countries could also boast current or former female Ombudsmen, including Botswana, Lesotho, Burkina Faso, which has had three, South Africa has had two, Malawi two so far, while Tunisia, Mali, Madagascar and Seychelles have each appointed one. Ethiopia too has had one female Ombudsman.

With a robust and active institutional culture, the African Ombudsman was "creating jurisprudence in the area of Ombudsman like no other." Laws were being tested in South Africa, Malawi, Zambia, and Kenya where recommendations have been declared as binding. "The books should be written here, the training conducted here. We don't have to look to Europe for direction", she emphasised. The Ombudsman has helped to bring about a strong culture of representation of both men and women. But has this, in turn, led to gains for female empowerment on the ground, such as enhanced safety, respect, economic advancement and political representation, she asked? Much legislation has been put in place towards this goal yet the laws that exist to achieve this remained underutilised. So how can Ombudsmen facilitate access to justice for women to achieve this goal? The answer lay in the Ombudsman's office using its powers to investigate issues related to SDG 5, and to encouraging the development of legal frameworks – through their recommendations – that would impact upon SDG 5, she emphasised.

After questions and a lively discussion, the panel concluded with a clear recognition that this was just the beginning. With women on board, in the words of Diane Welborn, the institution of the Ombudsman looked "forward to a practice that is more collaborative, inclusive, tenacious and democratic". The special session concluded with a pictorial presentation compiled by GMSI of 350 women leaders who have held positions as Ombudsman, deputy Ombudsman or equivalent positions in over 100 countries over the last 200-year history of the institution.

Meet the Chief Host of IOE 2019



Hon. Chille Wagner Igbawua

Chief Commissioner of the
Public Complaints Commission and
Ombudsman of the Federal Republic
of Nigeria

The first IOE 2019 was hosted by the Chief Commissioner of the Public Complaints Commission of Nigeria, Honourable Chille Igbawua. The Editorial Team of *African Ombudsman Today* interviewed him on his views of this seminal experience.

Q: Please tell us a little about yourself: Who is Chille Igbawua and what were your personal milestones on your path to becoming Chief Public Complaints Commissioner and Ombudsman of Nigeria?

A: I would describe myself as a lawyer, technocrat, administrator, mediator and parliamentarian. I hold a master's degree in Law with bias in Constitutional Law (LLM), and am a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Administrators of London and Wales (FCIPA) as well as of the Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (FICMC). I spent a good part of my career in the Benue State Civil Service and retired at the highest level as a Permanent Secretary. During that time, I served as the Secretary, Public Service Negotiating Council and was also the Chief Negotiator on Industrial Relations for the Government of Benue State Nigeria. After my voluntary retirement, I contested an elective office as a Member of the Federal House of Representatives in the 6th Assembly (2007-2011). From 2011 to 2015, I was Deputy Chief of Staff and Special Adviser on Legal and Legislative Matters to the Rt. Hon. Speaker of Nigeria's National Assembly Aminu Waziri Tambuwal. Thereafter, I became the Special Adviser on Legal and Legislative Matters to the Rt. Hon. Speaker Yakubu Dogara of Nigeria's National Assembly, from where I was appointed as the Chief Commissioner of the Public Complaints Commission in May, 2018. I am just about 20 months on the job as the Chief Ombudsman of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Q: What is the role and mandate of the Public Complaints Commission? What does the Chief Commissioner do?

A: The Public Complaints Commission is Nigeria's Ombudsman Institution, as recognised globally. Its role

and mandate is to investigate and resolve all manner of administrative injustice or corruption and to ensure that good governance is enthroned in federal, state and local government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), the administrative actions of the judiciary as well as private companies that are registered under the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) of Nigeria.

According to our Act, the Chief Commissioner is responsible for coordinating the work of all other commissioners (Ombudsmen) at the sub-national strata in the 36 states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Aside from this, he investigates and presides over case conferences at headquarters. The Chief Commissioner is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Ombudsman institution, including the full personnel function as well as its financial management, with a duty to submit annual reports of the institution to Parliament. Briefly put, the Chief Commissioner is the Chief Executive of the Nigerian Ombudsman institution.

Q: How would you describe the performance of the PCC since your assumption of office? What have been the main challenges?

A: On my assumption of office, I was confronted with the challenge of low staff morale as a result of lack of incentives, training and welfare. The Office was largely unknown to the public, notwithstanding the fact that it had been in existence for over 43 years. However, I and the other federal commissioners have, to a reasonable extent, been able to turn things around positively. Through our aggressive publicity, I would estimate that at least 50% of Nigerians now know that an important office like the Public Complaints Commission exists. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number and variety of cases received by the Commission.

Since assuming duty, the 37 Federal Commissioners and I have reviewed management processes, resulting in the introduction of several innovations, which have led to the improvement in the pace and quality of the operations of the Commission. We now have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in place, which was non-existent from the establishment of the Commission. This document is similar to the Rules of Court and the PCC Act required the Chief Commissioner to put this in place from 1975. The impact of the new operational rules is the institution of clear timelines and precision in every process of investigation. This is a marked departure from the previous situation where cases took over 15 years to resolve, to the frustration of parties. This new approach is gradually restoring public faith and confidence in the Ombudsman.

To strengthen this, there have been deliberate collaborative efforts with the public and private sectors, which have been yielding the desired positive results in the areas of operational synergy and capacity building for the Commission. One other point worth mentioning is that a comprehensive welfare scheme encompassing remunerations and manpower development has been worked out for the management and staff awaiting ratification. The objective is to grow a highly motivated workforce for the Institution.

As you witnessed with our hosting of the IOE, we have worked on reinstating the Commission to the International Ombudsman scene where it had been absent for over a decade. In 2018, I was elected the Regional Coordinator for West Africa at the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association (AOMA) General Congress in Kigali, Rwanda. Of note, too, was the hosting of the Continental Executive Committee of AOMA in Abuja, which was another first. As a spin off from the success of the Ombud Expo and, I believe, the growing confidence in our office, my colleagues in the African region also nominated the Commission to be a member of the Board of Directors of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI). In December 2019, I was conferred with Fellow of Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (FICMC).

I will list my major challenges as the following: Gross underfunding, weak capacity-building policies and practices, inadequate working tools and facilities, a weak ICT base, inadequate operational vehicles for staff as well as commissioners, (Ombudsmen at the sub-national level), and poor publicity and public awareness of the Institution. All these have combined to slow down our operations and hamper the implementation of the new initiatives being introduced.

Q: How and why did you become involved as Chief Host of the IOE?

A: Succinctly put, I have to appreciate Prof. Victor Ayeni of the GMSI who conceived this vision and proposed that the Chief Ombudsman of Nigeria be the host of the first ever IOE. Prof Ayeni, I later discovered, had shown keen interest in the development of the Nigerian Ombudsman institution for many years just as he has in the ombud institution globally. Early in my assumption of duties as the Chief Ombudsman of Nigeria, he flew into Abuja and discussed extensively with me his disappointment with the slow pace at the PCC, Nigeria and its self-imposed isolation from the global body. He offered me a fully paid one-week course in the United Kingdom to aid my work. Even though I could not take

him up on the opportunity, I, nonetheless, took to heart his counsel as I commenced the introduction of new initiatives to turn the place around. Given this relation and the marginal successes achieved, I confidently accepted his offer to host the IOE when he visited again in early 2019 with the vision.

Q: How would you describe your experience as Chief Host? How challenging was it to host such a major international event?

A: I saw it as an opportunity to showcase the PPC and my country, Nigeria, to the whole world and also to improve the awareness of the citizenry about the Ombudsman as a global concept. Being the first ever expo in the history of the Ombudsman institution, the experience was quite rich with its attendant challenges. I perceived that the expectations from the entire world were very high and that we needed to justify the confidence placed in us.

I must admit that it was the first of such an undertaking for the Commission and thus there was neither knowledge nor institutional memory to fall back on. This was compounded by the fact that being a totally novel idea, I could also not turn to my colleagues elsewhere around the globe. We had to rely principally on the basic knowledge of hosting an international event.

The most critical challenge, of course, was funding and logistics, including the mobility and security of delegations. For an event of this magnitude, a special funding arrangement was imperative, which, unfortunately, was not forthcoming and we, therefore, had to quickly think outside the box. Perhaps what we couldn't access through direct funding, came our way through inter-agency collaboration with sister agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and very specially the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory Administration (MFCT) – the administrators of the host city, Abuja. I am highly indebted to these agencies for the success of the IOE, Abuja 2019.

In this regard, I highly commend the co-operation and tenacity of my colleagues – the 37 Federal commissioners, management and staff, and the local organising committee led by Barrister Ewa Udu, Director (Public Relations, Foreign and Inter Agency Collaboration), and his wonderful team who despite the challenges made lots of sacrifices for the success of the event.

Q: Could you share your thoughts on key aspects of the event in Abuja?

A: The exhibition was the main attraction. As ombud organisations prepared to exhibit, they also began anticipating what others would put on show and the prospects of learning from others was a thrill, I think, we all shared. For the first time, the world saw different ombud types and their operations gathered under one roof. They all had their exhibition stands. It is interesting to note that other related grievance handling agencies in Nigeria like the Kano State Public Complaints and Anti-Corruption Agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) had exhibition stands as well. Books, pamphlets and other important literature on Ombudsman activities and modus operandi were all on display and given out free of charge.

The special sessions by experts were the learning curve of the Expo. They were very educative and exciting, especially as the language interpreters were on hand to make it easy for speakers of different languages among the participants. The papers were enriching and delivered by experts in various fields. I suggest that the GSMI puts together a compendium of the papers delivered for the benefit of the participants and Ombudsman institutions globally.

Very few would have anticipated the focus on women leaders of the ombud institution. It was such a thrill seeing a compilation and display of women leaders, especially the retired and serving Ombudsmen and other grievance handling institution leaders across the globe. The documentary is unquestionably a masterpiece. For the first time, the women in this sector have been given their rightful place in the history of the ombud institution.

Q: Overall, was the Expo in Abuja a success? Was it worth it?

A: It certainly was a huge success. Looking back at the event and all that it achieved, I can state emphatically that it was worth it because the PCC is beginning to reap the benefits of hosting the event. I have no doubt that the event has also awakened the various governments the world over of the imperatives of good governance in the various strata of government.

Given the resounding success of the Expo, several lessons can be drawn, some that will manifest with time. These include but are not limited to:

- The world is awakened to the indispensability of the Ombudsman institutions for good governance
- There is now greater awareness of the existence and activities of the ombud institution in Nigeria
- Nigeria is now an active participant in the international Ombudsman arena
- The PCC has strengthened its links with ombud institutions globally
- Some of the challenges facing the PCC in Nigeria are not different from those facing other ombud institutions in other jurisdictions and this has truly become a source of strength
- Peer review is critical to institutional growth

Q: *The Expo included a dedicated session on Nigeria. How do you see the hosting of the event in Nigeria impacting the work of the PCC and other grievance-handling bodies in the country?*

A: The hosting of the event has positively impacted the work of the PCC and other grievance-handling bodies that participated. From 2020, for instance, the Commission will take on more systemic investigation rather than concentrate on just reactive investigation. This is one of the take-aways of the event. The PCC has also emerged as a citadel of learning on the application of alternative dispute resolution in resolving complaints. Groups that have visited us so far are impressed with the expertise and professionalism applied in cases investigated, resolved and concluded.

Q: *Beyond, Nigeria, how do you see the Expo experience benefiting Ombudsman and oversight institutions in Africa and world-wide?*

A: From the excitement of the participants, especially from African countries where Ombudsman institution has not been comparably, deeply entrenched, it is a welcome development. The activities of the Ombudsman in these various countries will never remain the same. This means that the relevance of the Ombudsman, especially in the area of good governance in every government business in Africa and worldwide, has received a momentous boost.

Q: *Would you support the holding of the IOE again? If so, how frequently should this be?*

A: Yes, I wholeheartedly support it – once every two years would be ideal in my opinion.



For a detailed record of the first IOE, follow the links to the event summary, pictures and video content:

- <https://www.internationalombudexpo.com/summary-of-outcome/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3PwJV9uqtTAi7I9pQ1qGxA/>
- <https://www.internationalombudexpo.com/gallery/>

Q: *What are your recommendations to future organisers?*

A: Being the first event, I believe we all learnt lots of lessons about its organisation. Therefore, I recommend proper co-ordination between the host Ombudsman and the organisers. I further recommend that there should be an MOU between the host and the organisers for proper understanding of the role by each party. Furthermore, the timelines set for every activity should be strictly monitored and enforced to avoid last-minute hitches and flaws.

Q: *Any final thoughts?*

A: In view of the immense derivable benefits, I humbly suggest that the IOE should be adopted as an item on the IOI agenda in the forthcoming World Conference in Dublin, Ireland in May 2020.

AOMA

a. EXCO in Nigeria

17th Executive Committee Meeting

The Executive Committee (EXCO) of the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association (AOMA) held its 17th meeting on the sidelines of the IOE in Abuja, Nigeria on 28 October 2019.

Among the key decisions taken at the meeting, EXCO resolved to appoint the Ombudsman of Libya, Hon. Sulayman Alshanti, to the position of second Vice-President, which was left vacant following the departure of Sudanese Ombudsman, Hon. Ahmed Abuzaid, in July 2019. Until his appointment, Hon. Alshanti served as Regional Coordinator of AOMA's North African region.

In terms of the AOMA Constitution, an office-bearer vacancy may be filled by the EXCO from among its members for the remainder of the term until the next General Assembly.

Hon. Alshanti's appointment left the position of North Africa Regional Coordinator vacant. A meeting of members in that region will, in terms of the Constitution, have to elect a

Coordinator from among themselves. They will communicate their decision to the secretariat by the end of November 2019.

Empowered by Article 9(5) (a) (iv) of the AOMA Constitution, EXCO also resolved to request the Ombudsman of the Central African Republic, Hon. Dr Jacques Mbosso, to resign his position as Deputy Treasurer on the grounds that he also held the position of Regional Coordinator for the Central African region.

As a result, the Ombudsman of Burundi and former AOMA President H.E. Edouard Nduwimana has been appointed Deputy Treasurer of AOMA in accordance with Article 9 (5) (b) (iii) of the Constitution.

EXCO further resolved to raise the membership fee from USD 1 000 to USD 2 000 for ordinary members and from USD 500 to USD 1 000 for associate members. Related to this was a decision to move a motion for the withdrawal of membership for Ombudsman institutions, whose

Ombudsmen with Guest of Honour at 17th Executive Committee Meeting.



membership contributions are in arrears, at the next General Assembly, which will likely take place in either the North Africa and Oceanic regions in November 2020. The regions are to be consulted on this.

In addition, EXCO resolved that a consultant be hired by February 2020 for a period of up to six months for the purpose of facilitating the transition of the AOMA Secretariat from Nairobi, Kenya to the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) in Durban, South Africa. This, as the AORC, which has not had an Executive Director since the resignation of Ms Arlene Brock, was deemed to have inadequate capacity to ensure a seamless transition.



Host addressing opening of AOMA ExCo meeting.

b. AOMA East Africa Regional Meeting

The first regional meeting of AOMA East Africa took place in Kigali, Rwanda, on 13 September 2019 under the stewardship of Hon. Anastase Murekezi, Ombudsman of Rwanda, who was elected Regional Coordinator of AOMA East Africa at the general Assembly in November 2018. Top on the meeting agenda was consideration of activity reports of the Ombudsman institutions that are members of the East Africa region, benchmarking and experience sharing, as well as tracking the implementation of resolutions of the executive Committee for the region. At the end of the meeting, the region came up with resolutions, among them:

- AOMA East Africa region joined the larger AOMA fraternity in condemning xenophobic violence that had

been reported in South Africa in September 2019. AOMA East Africa endorsed and adopted the statement issued by the Secretary General of the Association against the said violence on 5 September 2019.

- Subsequent regional meetings will be held on a rotational basis, with the next meeting tentatively scheduled for Tanzania in July/August 2020.

In attendance were the Ombudsman of Kenya and Secretary General of AOMA, the representative of the Ombudsman of Tanzania, and the host Ombudsman, Rwanda. The Ombudsman institutions of Uganda and Ethiopia were absent with apology.

AOMA East Africa Region Meeting – Kigali, Rwanda.



IOI Africa Corner (Update on Activities)

IOI Africa Regional Elections

The IOI Africa regional elections were conducted pursuant to Article 11.1(c) of the IOI by-laws. The number of regional directors from Africa currently stands at 30 voting members, translating into => four Directors on the Board. The elections were initially scheduled to be conducted on the sidelines of the IOE in Abuja, Nigeria. However, the election did not take place, due to the fact that quorum was not formed. Prior to this, the IOI Africa regional President had circulated a notice calling for the filling in of nominations for the four positions of regional director. The deadline was 14 November 2019. However, only four members successfully filed in nominations, namely:

Nigeria	Chief Ombudsman	Adv. Chile Wanger Igbawua
South Africa	Public Protector	Adv. Busisiwe Mkwebane
Malawi	Ombudsman	Adv. Martha Mwangonde Chizuma
Zambia	Public Protector	Adv. Caroline C.Z. Sokoni

The four members were eventually elected to the IOI Board of Directors. The second phase of the election was for the IOI Executive Committee Members (Excom). The incumbent IOI Africa regional President Mrs Caroline CZ Sokoni was nominated for the Position of IOI Treasurer, which went through unopposed. All the newly elected members of the IOI Board of Directors and the Excom will officially be ratified during the 12th IOI General Assembly in Dublin schedule for 17-22 May 2020. We congratulate the four regional directors on their election and we wish them good luck as they continue building on the foundation and successes of the previous re-gional directors. We further congratulate Mrs Caroline C.Z. Sokoni on her election to the IOI Excom as Treasurer.

Upcoming Events

a. 4-7 May: AORC Training/AOMA Meetings

Venue: *Antananarivo, Madagascar*

To be confirmed

b. June: Round Table discussion on Ombudsman and Gender-based Violence

Venue: *To be confirmed*



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Centre de Recherche des Ombudsman Africains

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Association des Ombudsman et Mediateurs Africains

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