

# **African Ombudsman Association**

**Strategic Plan**  
2003-2006

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## **Introduction by Executive Secretary**

This strategic planning workshop was initiated as a result of the decision to establish the African Ombudsman Association and we embarked on this process with the following questions in mind: why the organisation should exist, what its purpose should be, where it should be going and how it would get there?

This strategic planning workshop was a first for African ombudsman institutions and provided a valuable opportunity to review the past and map out the future. We also took note of the opportunities provided by the establishment of the African Union and NEPAD.

Three days were spent in examining in detail both the Africa Ombudsman Centre and the African Ombudsman Association which culminated in the production of two important documents: the Constitution and the Strategic Plan.

The Constitution provides the overall framework within we acknowledge the diversity of African ombudsman institutions but also recognise our common purpose.

The Strategic Plan covers a period of three years and serves as a defined tool for implementing the crucial issues which we have identified within a clearly defined time frame.

We were guided by the vision that the AOA must serve the bigger picture of good governance and having regard to the socio-economic developments within Africa.

With the mission statement as a path, the vision statement as a destination, and achievable goals along the way, this African Ombudsman Association, with an African plan, can begin its journey for the benefit of all African peoples.

## 2. Executive Summary

The African Ombudsman Centre (AOC) Board of Trustees came together in Windhoek, Namibia from 13 to 15 November 2002 to bring to fruition the 2001 Seychelles Regional Conference resolution calling for the creation of an African Ombudsman Association (AOA). At that Regional Conference, the Ombudswoman of Namibia, Adv. Bience Gawanas, was named the Executive Secretary of the Association and tasked to establish the AOA. Together with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the Executive Secretary called the AOC Trustees to Windhoek for a workshop to define the way forward for the AOA.

The goal of the workshop was to develop a 3-year Strategic Plan to help strengthen the ability of the AOA to act as a cohesive body with a defined mission and goals. A strategic plan is essentially a written set of decisions about what to do, why to do it, and how to do it. The implementation of this Strategic Plan will increase the AOA's capacity to assist member offices in responding to administrative and political challenges.

The first step was to define an AOA Mission Statement. A mission statement expresses the purpose, business, and values of an organization. Subsequent analysis and goal setting all spring from and are supported by the mission statement. The following mission statement was adopted:

### **Mission Statement**

**The AOA works to support and protect the independence and development of African Ombudsman Institutions by promoting information exchanges and best practices for the advancement of good governance and human rights in Africa.**

A vision statement was adopted next. A vision statement presents an image of what success will look like and provides a guide to action. The vision statement is:

### **AOA Vision Statement**

**To be a respected and professional association for the promotion of open, accountable and democratic governance.**

A situational analysis of the AOA was also conducted. This included identifying the AOA's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. With these identified, an in depth discussion of the AOA's critical issues and strategies to address these issues was possible. The critical issues discussed included the Constitution, structure, management, languages, and financial capacity of the AOA.

These discussions provided a foundation for the review of a draft AOA Constitution for presentation to the next General Assembly in Burkina Faso

and the adoption of an interim management structure. The draft Constitution defines the AOA objectives which rise from the mission statement and look ahead to the vision statement. The Interim AOA Executive Committee consists of the AOC Board of Trustees President, Vice President, Executive Secretary and two other AOC Trustees.

The final step in the strategic planning process was goal setting. Each identified goal is specific and steps to achieve it are detailed and timed. The goals are to:

- 1. Establish the presence of the AOA;**
- 2. Increase AOA membership;**
- 3. Increase capacity;**
- 4. Improve communication and Information Dissemination;**
- 5. Adopt AOA Constitution;**
- 6. Establish AOA office in Namibia; and**
- 7. Mobilize resources.**

### 3. Organizational Profile and History

Since 1990 African Ombudsmen have come together for Regional Conferences every second year. These Conferences have been held across the African continent:

1990	Kampala, Uganda
1991	Lusaka, Zambia
1993	Abuja, Nigeria
1995	Khartoum, Sudan
1997	Accra, Ghana
1999	Windhoek, Namibia
2001	Victoria, Seychelles

The Khartoum Regional Conference resolved to create the African Ombudsman Centre (AOC) as a regional structure for ombudsman offices. Membership was open to any of the 23 African countries with a recognized ombudsman office and to any newly recognized ombudsman office. The AOC was located, and incorporated as a trust, in Tanzania in association with the University of Dar Es Salaam and managed by a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees represented the six<sup>1</sup> African sub regions (Southern Africa, West Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Central Africa, and Indian Ocean).

The objectives of the AOC are:

1. To encourage the establishment, development and promotion of the Ombudsman Institution in Africa;
2. To promote the study of the activities, obligations and problems of Ombudsman Offices in Africa;
3. To mobilize funds for the achievements of the objectives of the Centre;
4. To promote respect for, and observance of Human Rights;
5. To be the secretariat of the African Regional and Sub regional Ombudsman Conferences;
6. To foster affiliation and maintain liaison with other Ombudsman Offices, international bodies and organizations interested in the progress of Ombudsman activities and Human Rights; and
7. To identify and carry out any other relevant duties which members may deem appropriate.

The first AOC Board of Trustees was elected in 1997 and held their first meeting in Dar Es Salaam in 1998. At this meeting, the Board of Trustees resolved due to financial constraints that the appointment of an AOC Executive Secretary be delayed and that the Tanzania Ombudsman and the Commission on Human Rights and Good Governance (then known as the

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<sup>1</sup> A proposal was put forward and approved at the 7<sup>th</sup> African Ombudsman Regional Conference, subject to a constitutional amendment, that a sub region for the Indian Ocean be established consisting of Seychelles, Mauritius, Comoros, and Madagascar. The Ombudsman of Seychelles was recognized as the interim sub region director.

Permanent Commission of Enquiry) serve as the AOC interim secretariat. That remained the situation until 2001.

In 2001 in Seychelles, the Board of Trustees observed that no AOC secretariat had been established. As a result, the Board appointed the Ombudswoman of Namibia as the AOC Executive Secretary. The Board further resolved that the AOC assets and property were to be transferred to the Executive Secretary.

The Board's decision in Seychelles was complimented by a Regional Conference resolution tasking the Executive Secretary with the creation of an African Ombudsman Association. The AOC was to remain as a resource and archive centre.

The Board met in Namibia from 13 to 15 November 2002 to engage in a strategic planning workshop with the assistance of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). This plan was developed from that workshop.

## **4. Vision and Mission Statements**

The following vision and mission statements were adopted:

### **4.1 Vision Statement**

To be a respected and professional association for the promotion of open, accountable and democratic governance.

### **4.2 Mission Statement**

The AOA works to support and protect the independence and development of African Ombudsman Institutions by promoting information exchanges and best practices for the advancement of good governance and human rights in Africa.



## 5. Critical Issues and Strategies

### 5.1 Constitution

A draft Constitution was reviewed in detail. Critical issues include: location of the Association, its objectives, membership, powers and duties of the various structures, sub regions, and adoption.

#### Location

Being a regional institution, it is important that the institution must be dynamic and flexible in terms of its location. It was agreed, however, that the AOA must have a “home base” somewhere for a variety of reasons. Therefore, the AOA shall be located in Windhoek, Namibia until such time as the Executive Committee or General Assembly otherwise determine. It is not anticipated that the AOA will move location for many years, if at all.

#### Objectives

A key part of the draft Constitution is Article 4 which defines the AOA objectives as follows:

The objectives of the Association shall be:

- (a) To encourage the establishment, development and promotion of African Ombudsman institutions;
- (b) To further mutual support, co-operation and joint activities through information sharing, training, and development of Ombudsman and staff;
- (c) To promote good governance including the observance of human rights, transparency and administrative justice;
- (d) To support and promote the autonomy and independence of Ombudsman offices;
- (e) To foster affiliation and maintaining liaisons with other Ombudsman offices and institutes and associations, international bodies, and organizations interested in the progress of Ombudsman activities and human rights;
- (f) To identify and implement any other relevant activities that the members deem appropriate.

The objectives build on the mission and vision statements while narrowing the focus to the people served by the AOA. These objectives, in turn, provide the framework for setting the program and management goals.

#### Duties and powers

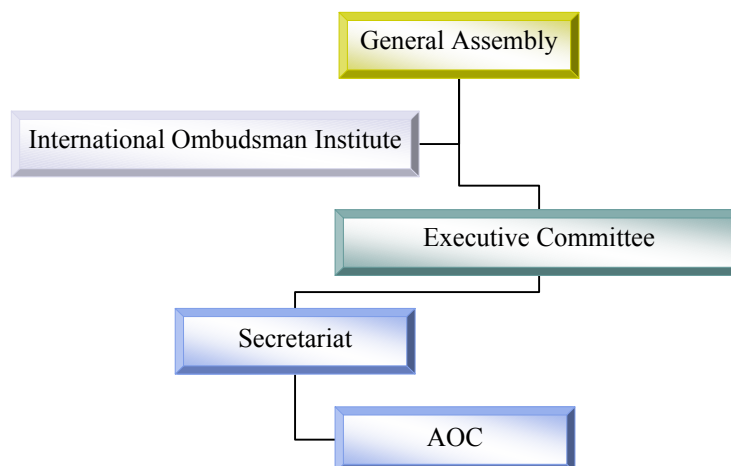
The draft AOA Constitution provides more responsibility and authority to the Executive Committee--particularly to the Executive Secretary. This is necessary as the General Assembly meets only once every two years. The Executive Committee and Executive Secretary must have authority to take timely decisions (both programmatic and financial) if the AOA is to be a dynamic and responsive organization. Election of the Executive Committee rests with the sub regions and the General Assembly.

#### Adoption of an interim Constitution

On 14 November 2002, the AOC Board of Trustees created the AOA Interim Executive Committee and adopted the draft AOA Constitution. The AOA Constitution will be presented for ratification to the General Assembly currently scheduled for December 2003 in Burkina Faso.

## 5.2 Structure

The AOA organizational chart is:



The General Assembly sits at the top as the primary AOA body. The General Assembly consists of the total AOA membership which meets every second year.

Though not responsible to the General Assembly, the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) is linked to the organizational chart as a closely affiliated and relevant body. Likewise, the Executive Committee is not responsible to the IOI, but does retain ex officio members from the IOI.

The Executive Committee consists of nine voting members including a President, Vice President, and an Executive Secretary elected at the General Assembly and one regional coordinator elected from each of the six sub regions. The three IOI Directors and the outgoing AOA President serve as ex-officio Executive Committee members.

Executive Committee members serve for four years. Quorum for the Executive Committee consists of five voting members.

Emphasis is placed on sub regions in the draft AOA Constitution. The sub regions will have responsibility for the election of their representative to the Executive Committee, implementing decentralized activities, and AOA promotion within the sub region.

The Secretariat serves the needs of the Executive Committee and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the AOA. The Secretariat will be located with the Executive Secretary. The size and capabilities of the Secretariat will necessarily be determined by available funding.

The African Ombudsman Centre serves as a resource and archive centre.

### **5.3 Management**

The establishment of an AOA Secretariat is essential to prevent AOA management from overtaxing the human resources and financial resources of the Executive Secretary's individual Ombudsman office. Once AOA funds are transferred from Tanzania to Namibia, an Office Manager can be hired to manage AOA affairs. Until such time, the Executive Secretary remains responsible for the AOA day-to-day operations. The size and capacity of the Secretariat will vary depending on resource mobilization efforts.

### **5.4 Language**

The AOA will make a concerted effort to include four language groups—English, French, Arabic and Portuguese. This crosscutting effort will permeate all programming. The AOA will initially focus on English and French and gradually expand to Arabic and Portuguese as capacity, funding and need increases. Though not set out as an individual goal below because of its crosscutting nature, this initiative is the Executive Committee's highest priority.

### **5.5 Financial Capacity/Resource Mobilization**

The AOA's financial capacity is modest. Although there are funds in the Tanzanian account to be transferred to Namibia, it is unclear what impact the transfer will have on existing funds. Entrance fees and subscription fees, even when consistently remanded, provide minimal funding necessary. This is one reality in which the AOA must operate.

Another potential and hopeful reality would involve supplemental funding provided by an international donor/s. Such funding would allow for more in-depth and timely programming efforts. However, successful resource mobilization in the form of international development cannot be presumed.

As a result, when forming goals, the Executive Committee considered efforts that could be undertaken with minimal costs to the association through 'do it yourself efforts' (i.e. using the multilingual capacity of the Executive Committee in translation of documents), or could be undertaken by decentralizing costs (i.e. regional training workshops undertaken by a single Ombudsman office and made available to offices in the sub region).

A multi-pronged effort to seek funding for the implementation of this Strategic Plan will be mounted once the Plan is finalized, a proposal is written, and budget is formulated. This is particularly important to goals such as establishing an AOA website, conducting a baseline capacity assessment of African Ombudsman offices, and promotional visits.

## 6. Goals

Goals were developed based on the mission and vision statements, the situational analysis, and the discussion of critical issues and strategies. Deadlines were set for each step required to achieve a goal and responsibility was assigned to specific actors. Each goal is linked to the AOA objectives stated in Article 4 of the draft Constitution and to the mission and vision statements. The objective was to set SMART goals for the AOA--goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and relevant, and Timed.

### 6.1 Program Goals

#### (a) Establish Presence

The first program goal is to establish the presence of the AOA. By presence, the Executive Committee means developing the AOA's reputation and marketing that reputation across the African continent. This goal includes subcomponents of awareness raising, promotion, and outreach. In a nutshell, this means making the AOA relevant to its stakeholders including ombudsman institutions, complementary international organizations, governments, and non-governmental organizations. By developing a presence, the AOA can have a continental voice that it can use when liaising with global and African initiatives like the African Union and NEPAD.

<b>ESTABLISH PRESENCE</b>		
<b>Steps to achieve goal</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Create logo for AOA	March 2003	Hon. Mushwana Exec. Sec.
Adopt AOA logo	June 2003	Int. Exec. Comm.
Design Brochure (English and French)	June 2003	Hon. Farouk
Distribute Brochure (English and French)	January 2004	Exec. Sec. Office Manager
Promotional Visits	Ongoing	Exec. Comm.
Publish Membership Directory	January 2004	Exec. Sec. Office Manager
Harmonize relationship/rules with IOI	January 2005	Hon. Farouk Hon Mushwana Hon. Sy

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#### (b) Increase Membership

The second program goal is to increase membership. As a starting point, the Regional Coordinators are to gather information on the status of ombudsman institutions in their regions to identify and liaise with potential members with existing institutions and to identify where assistance is needed bringing

enabling legislation to fruition (i.e. Angola and Morocco have approved the creation of the office but have not yet implemented it). Advocacy efforts can then be mounted in those countries on the cusp. Other efforts such as workshops, visits and collaborative ventures can be utilized to promote the creation of an ombudsman institution in countries without one. Finally, non-governmental organizations with similar missions and goals can be recruited as associate members as they are identified.

<b>INCREASE MEMBERSHIP</b>		
<b>Steps to achieve goal</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Research status of ombudsman institutions—members, non-members, and non-governmental organizations	January 2004	Regional Coordinators
Advocacy initiatives in countries where enabling mechanism exists but office has not yet been instituted	January 2005	Regional Coordinators Exec. Comm.
Implement workshops, conduct visits, and research opportunities for collaborations in countries where an ombudsman institution does not exist	Ongoing	Exec. Comm.
Recruitment of non-governmental organizations and individuals	Ongoing	Exec. Comm.

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### **(c) Increase Capacity**

The third program goal focuses on increasing capacity of African ombudsman offices to do their work. Many ombudsman offices have broad mandates including human rights, anti-corruption, environmental protection and administrative justice. The AOA will strive to meet the capacity building needs of individual offices during and following a baseline survey to determine where individual offices currently stand. Funding allowing, this capacity building can include services such as research, model legislation, enabling legislation review, advocacy training, and management training. Capacity building will include IT capacity to ensure the usefulness of the AOA website. It is anticipated that capacity building will spur the spread of the ombudsman institution as countries without such an institution seek to model efficient and effective institutions in neighbouring countries.

<b>INCREASE CAPACITY</b> to address human rights, anti-corruption, environmental protection, administrative justice mandates and internet technology.		
<b>Steps to achieve goal</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Baseline Survey	January 2004	Exec. Sec. Office Manager
Decentralized Training conducted by Regional Officers and Individual Offices	Ongoing through January 2006	Regional Coordinator Exec. Sec. Office Manager
Technical Advice including: Research Model legislation Enabling legislation review Advocacy training Management training	ongoing through January 2006	AOA Secretariat (funding permitting)
Member Offices equipped with IT capacity including: Computer Internet access Email access Capacity to use internet and email	January 2005	Exec. Comm. Exec. Sec. Office Manager

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**(d) Improve Communication and Information Dissemination**

The fourth program goal addresses effective communication and information dissemination which is vital to any association. Without it an association lacks the unity and cohesiveness required to effectively speak with one voice. Central to this effort is a website. An interactive website with capability serve as an information transfer point can serve as a vehicle to unify and assist AOA members and educate the populous. This website will be complemented by the institution of a “communication tree” where information is disseminated to members via telephone, fax, courier or mail. This “communication tree” will be the responsibility of the Executive Committee Regional Coordinators and therefore also allow for the decentralization of costs.

<b>IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION</b>		
<b>Steps to achieve goal</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Create Website (English and French) including: Newsletter (downloadable) Pamphlet (downloadable) Shared documents (downloadable) Shared calendars Consultant database Resource materials database Case law database Membership List and Contact Information Discussion threads	June 2005	President Vice President Exec. Sec. Office Manager
Formalize "Communication Tree"/Define and formalize role of Regional Coordinators	June 2003	Exec. Sec. Exec. Comm.
All important documents in English and French	January 2005	Exec. Sec. Office Manager Multilingual Exec. Comm. members
All important documents in French, English, Arabic, and Portuguese	January 2006	Exec. Sec. Office Manager Multilingual Exec. Comm. members



## 6.2 Management Goals

### (a) Adoption of AOA Constitution

The first AOA management goal is to adopt the Constitution at the General Assembly in Burkina Faso. Prior to the General Assembly, the AOA will disseminate translated Constitutions to members.

<b>ADOPTION OF AOA CONSTITUTION</b>		
<b>Steps to achieve goal</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
French Translation of AOA Constitution	March 2003	Hon. Farouk
Arabic Translation of AOA Constitution	March 2003	Hon. Judge Abuzeid
Circulation of AOA Constitution prior to General Assembly	April 2003	Exec. Sec. in conjunction with Regional Coordinators

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### (b) Establish AOA Office in Namibia

The second management goal begins the establishment of an AOA Secretariat to prevent AOA management from overtaxing the human resources and financial resources of the Executive Secretary's individual Ombudsman office.

<b>ESTABLISH AOA OFFICE IN NAMIBIA</b>		
<b>Steps to achieve goal</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Transfer funds from Tanzania to Namibia	June 2003	President Exec. Sec. Hon. Justice Kisanga
Employ AOA Office Manager	June 2003	President Exec. Sec.
Equip AOA Office with appropriate infrastructure	June 2003	Exec. Sec.
Register AOA	June 2003	President Exec. Sec. AOA Office Manager

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### (c) Mobilize Resources

The third management goal is to address the AOA's financial capacity. The primary goals are to secure resources for a complete and effective implementation of the Strategic Plan and fix a system for the efficient collection of entrance and subscription fees.

<b>MOBILIZE RESOURCES</b>		
<b>Steps to achieve goal</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Finalize and Distribute AOA Strategic Plan to AOC Board of Trustees	January 2003	Exec. Sec.
Draft proposal based on AOA Strategic Plan	February 2003	Int. Exec. Comm.
Secure Resources for implementation of Strategic Plan	June 2003	President Int. Exec. Comm.
Establish a membership fees and subscriptions accounts payable system	June 2003	Exec. Sec. Office Manager

## 7. Appendices

## **Appendix A**

### **AOA Interim Executive Committee**

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