



**Address by Public Protector Adv Thuli Madonsela on the occasion of a
welcome ceremony for the Ethiopian Institution of Ombudsman
delegation held at Woodhill Country Club in Pretoria.**

Monday, 19 April 2010

**Chief Ombudsman of the Ethiopian Institution of Ombudsman (EIO), Mrs Fozia Amin Aliye;
Ethiopian Ambassador to South Africa, His Excellency Mr Ato M M Marasso
Chairperson of the SAHRC, Adv Lawrence Mushwana;
Deputy Chairperson of the IEC, Commissioner Thoko Mpumlwana;
Heads of other Chapter Nine Institutions present;
Deputy Public Protector, Adv Mamiki Shai;
Head of Investigations at the EIO, Mr Kenea Sonna;
Investigators from the EIO;
Chief Executive Officer of the Public Protector, Mr Themba Mthethwa;
The Public Protector Management Team;
Ladies and gentlemen;**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this beautiful part of the world tonight. I understand that you arrived in the country yesterday. Some of you, specifically the Chief Ombudsman, I already met at the African Ombudsman and Mediators' (AOMA) third General Assembly in Angola. I hope you have, thus far, been enjoying every moment of your stay here in the capital city, Pretoria (Tshwane). I know. Of course, that we cannot beat what you just experienced in Angola.

Your visit comes at the time when the whole world has its eyes set on South Africa. As you know, this country will be hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup, a soccer spectacle that will be held for the first time on mother Africa's soil from June 11 to July 11.

Two days from now, it will be exactly 50 days before the first whistle is blown to get the opening match between South Africa and Mexico underway at the Soccer City in Johannesburg.

The level of excitement that is increasingly engulfing our country as local soccer fanatics and the rest of the citizens alike prepare to welcome the world is electrifying, to say the least. As I receive you this evening in one of the nine host cities of these games, I would like to say to you: "FEEL IT, IT IS HERE! KE NAKO – CELEBRATE AFRICA'S HUMANITY!" That's the slogan of this massive sporting event.

Let me, at this juncture; shift my attention to the issues that have brought you down south. Your visit to the Public Protector could not have come at a better time. As you are aware, I have just returned from Angola, where the General Assembly of the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association –attended by 30 member states- was held and new leadership elected. This leadership includes the Executive Secretary position to which I was elected.

Those of you that attended will recall the emphasis that was placed on building partnerships between our various institutions and sharing experiences in the process. The promotion of information exchanges and best practices between ombudsman institutions across the Africa is important for the advancement of good governance and human rights in the continent.

It is against this background that I see the timing of your visit as very significant.

Our institution, the Public Protector, has been in existence for 15 years and I believe our experiences over the past decade and a half will add value to your capacity building programme as per your 2006-2011 strategic plan. I also believe that in the process we will also learn something from you even though your institution has only been in existence for four years.

This institution was established by the renowned Constitution of the Republic of South Africa to receive and resolves complaints about the services and conduct of organs of state. Alleged and suspected corruption and other forms of maladministration in the public sector can also be investigated by the Public Protector.

The Constitution empowers me to investigate, mediate, negotiate, conciliate and take remedial action to ensure that all components of the state are characterised by integrity and are accountable and responsive to the needs of all. There are several pieces of legislation that enable us to perform these functions and I am sure you will hear all about them during the course of this week.

Another important fact is that, as the Public Protector, I am independent of government and political parties and therefore carry out my responsibilities impartially without fear, favour or prejudice. I am appointed on the basis of a parliamentary vote and can only be removed on a two thirds majority vote by the National Assembly following a disciplinary process.

A quick glance at your powers and duties, as provided for by Article 55 of the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution and the enabling legislation passed in 2000, show that the EIO, as one of the democratic institutions in Ethiopia, is not really different from the Public Protector. I also noticed a range of similarities between our and your mission and core values.

During my interaction with the Chief Ombudsman, I learnt a lot about your institution. The next few days will provide an opportunity to learn more about each other's institutions and operational circumstances. The CEO and Business Units' managers will take you through our way of doing things, which, as I have already mentioned, is quite similar to yours.

Closest to my heart is our recently revised vision and strategic priorities. I alluded to these in the paper I delivered at the AOMA conference in Angola. The strategic thrust for us includes accessibility to all persons and communities, an emphasis on swift resolution of complaints with remedial action and the systemic promotion of good governance. You will receive a presentation on our Vision 2020 and our medium term strategic plan in the next few days.

As I draw towards the conclusion of my address, let me emphasise the point that I do not wish for our engagements this week to be a one-way traffic.

As much as we will be imparting the little knowledge that we amassed over the past 15 years, we also look forward to learn as much as possible from you.

I believe that for these kinds of working visits to be effective, both parties have got to give each other an ear in order to realise a real exchange of important information that will take the continent of Africa forward in terms of development.

I am informed that in between our formal interactions this week, you will visits historic sites such as the Constitutional Hill in Johannesburg, where the Constitutional Court is located and the Mandela House along the famous Vilakazi street in Soweto.

Visits to other important institutions including the South African Law Reform Commission and the South African Human Rights Commission are also on the cards.

Do enjoy your stay in our country and hopefully when you jet off back to Addis Ababa on Friday, you will be leaving these shores with a wealth of knowledge that will make a positive difference in your operations back home.

I must say though that I hope to see you back for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, which kicks off on 11 June 2010.

Thank you.

Adv TN Madonsela