



**Address by Public Protector Adv. Busisiwe Mkhwebane during an African Ombudsman and Mediators Association Executive Committee meeting gala dinner in Pretoria on Tuesday, September 05, 2017.**

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**Programme Director and Public Protector South Africa CEO, Mr Themba Dlamini;**  
**President of AOMA Chief Ombudsman of Ethiopia, Hon. Fozia Amin**  
**;**  
**First Vice President of AOMA Mediator Côte d'Ivoire, Hon. N'golo Coulibaly ;**  
**Acting General Secretary of AOMA**  
**Acting Chairperson of the Commission for Administrative Justice, Kenya, Hon. Dr. Regina Mwatha;**  
**Fellow Ombudsmen from all over the African continent;**  
**Judge President of the High Court of South Africa, Gauteng Province Division, Judge Dunstan Mlambo;**  
**Deputy Director-General: Global Governance & Continental Agenda at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, HE. Ambassador Mxolisi Nkosi;**  
**Former South African Public Protector and Executive Secretary of AOMA, Adv. Lawrence Mushwana;**  
**President of the African News Agency and former Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Prof. Arthur Mutambara;**  
**Director of the African Ombudsman Research Centre, Adv Arlene Brock**  
**Officials;**  
**Distinguished guests;**  
**Ladies and gentlemen;**

Good evening,

I am humbled to host you – my peers from other African countries – for the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association (AOMA) Executive Committee (EXCO) meeting and that of the board of the Association's Research Center, AORC.

I last saw some of you during last November's AOMA General Assembly in Durban. It is wonderful to see and engage with you once again. Most importantly, it is wonderful to take stock of the progress that we are making as African Ombudsmen in contributing towards the development of our home continent.

A lot of you will recall that I joined this esteemed team of Ombudsmen and Mediators almost a year ago following my appointment as South Africa's Public Protector and Board Chairperson of the AORC.

As I commenced my term of office, the Mo Ibrahim Foundations had just published the findings of the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG).

You already know that Mr. Mo Ibrahim is a respected, Sudanese-born philanthropist and telecommunications mogul, and regular contributor to discussions at African Union (AU) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) meetings.

In 2006, he set up the Mo Ibrahim Foundation to encourage better governance in Africa. Mr Ibrahim also founded the Mo Ibrahim Index to evaluate the performance of African nations, where matters of governance are concerned.

Last October, the month during which I assumed duty as South Africa's Public Protector, his foundation published a mixed bag of findings following a 10-year study of governance trends in the continent, the IIAG.

Established in 2007, the IIAG provides an annual assessment of the quality of governance in African countries.

The data collected, leading to the report, was an assessment of each of Africa's 54 countries against 95 indicators drawn from 34 independent sources.

Let us start with the positive. The study found that there was overall improvement in governance in 37 African countries, which are home to 70 percent of the continent's citizens. Among those that showed impressive improvement were Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Zimbabwe, Liberia and Rwanda.

According to the study, 78 percent of African citizens lived in countries that had made significant improvements in participation and human rights. Forty-three (43) countries registered improvements in human development while all 54 of the continent's countries showed progress in child mortality.

Also important to note is the fact that the study found that there was a general improvement in poverty alleviation, with 76 percent of African gross domestic product improving.

On the downside, 33 of the African countries, which account for two-thirds (2/3) of the continent's population experienced a decline in safety and rule of law since 2006. The decline in 15 of these countries was substantial.

Accountability was still scoring low and so was corruption, with up to 33 countries registering a deterioration. In addition, two-thirds (2/3) of the countries showed a deterioration in freedom of expression.

As can be gleaned from the findings, there is some good news, with an ample room for improvement. And as the Ombudsman community, we clearly have our work cut out.

You will recall that, during her tenure at the helm of the AU Commission, South Africa's Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma spearheaded a process to come up with a development blueprint for the continent titled Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

In terms of this vision, Africa aspires to achieve 7 things by the year 2063, which is about 46 years away. I am aware that I am preaching to the choir. But, for the record, these aspirations are as follows:

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
2. An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance;

3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
4. A peaceful and secure Africa;
5. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics;
6. An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children; and
7. Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner.

The institution of the Ombudsman in Africa has a great potential – which is largely yet to be tapped into – to make a significant contribution towards the realization of this ambitious dream.

One of the ways we can contribute towards efforts to turn this dream into a reality is if work hard to reverse the negatives that are cropping out of studies such as the IIAG while building on the positives.

Some of us may not live long enough to see the year 2063. And so, the time is now to put shoulder to the wheel, with a view to creating a better continent for our children and their descendants.

We need to use the borrowed time that live on to build Africa so that we bequeath to future generations a well-developed continent that can hold its own against its counterparts.

Essentially, this is why we have converged in Tshwane, the capital of South Africa, this week.

Today, we held fruitful discussions as the AOMA Executive Committee. Tomorrow, some among us will sit for the AORC board meeting.

All of these engagements and deliberations seek to advance the cause of good governance, respect for the rule of law and the upholding of human rights in the continent through the work of the institution of the Ombudsman.

We should work hard to ensure that, when the history of this continent is retold post 2063, its authors find it extremely difficult to ignore the key role that would have been played by the institution of the Ombudsman in turning the land mass that lies between Cape and Cairo into “The Africa We Want”.

In closing, it has been a privilege for the Public Protector team and I to host you. It is our hope that you have enjoyed our hospitality thus far and that you will enjoy the rest of your stay in the country of Nelson Mandela.

Should you find the time, do explore some of the important attractions in this province if not the city. These include the seat of the South African government, the majestic Union Buildings, which is perched prominently on the other side of the mountain behind us.

There is also Freedom Park, a memorial that was launched in June 2000 to honour those who sacrificed their lives for the freedom that we enjoy today.

Built atop a hill on the southern side of Tshwane, overlooking the heart of the city, it was established as the South African government's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, taking into account the public's need for a memorial to fittingly honour those that paid the ultimate prize for our democracy.

These are but a few attractions that you could consider visiting during your short stay here. I trust that you will enjoy the evening.

Thank you.

**Adv. Busisiwe Mkhwebane**  
**Public Protector of South Africa**