

## **AFRICA: “Sharpening Your Teeth” training brings together English- and French-speaking ombudsmen, mediators and investigators from 22 countries**

More than 80 people, representing dozens of ombudsmen, mediators and “watchdog” agencies from more than 20 countries across Africa, participated in the Ontario Ombudsman’s “Sharpening Your Teeth” training course in Lusaka, Zambia, from November 11 to 16, 2013.

For the first time, at the invitation of the IOI and the AOMA, Ontario Ombudsman André Marin – accompanied by two of his senior staff – delivered his training course in how to conduct systemic investigations in back-to-back sessions, first in French, then in English. There were about 20 participants in the French course (most of whom stayed on in Lusaka for further training conducted by the African Ombudsman Research Centre), and more than 60 in the English course, including several from Zambian government oversight agencies.

Hosted by the Commission for Investigations in Zambia (Zambia’s Ombudsman) and sponsored by the IOI, AOMA and the African Ombudsman Research Centre, the training detailed the Ontario Ombudsman’s methods for planning, executing and publicizing a major systemic investigation. Zambian Ombudsman Caroline Sokoni also hosted a joint dinner for all participants, highlighted by a panel discussion featuring the ombudsmen of Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Namibia, Ontario and South Africa. Dignitaries who spoke at the training included the Acting Chief Justice of Zambia, the Deputy Minister of Justice of Zambia, and France’s ambassador to Zambia.

Countries represented at the training included: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia.

### **Comments:**

**Caroline Sokoni, Ombudsman of Zambia:** “When you work in an ombudsman office, your teeth can sometimes get blunt. Training like this reminds us that we need to review our practices and sharpen our teeth. A watchdog without teeth is not very good security.”

**John Walters, Ombudsman of Namibia:** “All Ombudsmen in Africa are indebted to Zambian Ombudsman Caroline Sokoni for her vision for this training, and to Ontario Ombudsman André Marin for his willingness to help us sharpen our teeth.”

**Alima Traore, Ombudsman (Médiateur) of Burkina Faso:** “The African continent is one – we have broken the language barrier and we are convinced that this training will not end here. Mr. Marin’s program will be very useful to us when we handle recurring problems.”

Photos:



Group picture of French-speaking participants and dignitaries at opening of “Sharpening Your Teeth/Aiguisez-vous les dents” training – Lusaka, November 11.



Group picture of English-speaking participants and dignitaries at opening of English session of “Sharpening Your Teeth” training – Lusaka, November 14.



Ontario Ombudsman André Marin speaks to participants in the French training session – Lusaka, November 12.



Wendy Ray, Senior Counsel for the Ontario Ombudsman, speaks to participants in the English session – Lusaka, November 15.



Panel discussion at joint dinner for participants – Lusaka, November 14: Pictured (moving right from the moderator at far left) are: Mrs. Festina Bakwena, Ombudsman of Botswana; Mrs. Alima Traore, Ombudsman (médiateur) of Burkina Faso; Mr. André Marin, Ombudsman of Ontario; Mr. Otiende Amollo, Ombudsman of Kenya; Mrs. Thuli Madonsela, Public Protector of South Africa.



(Left) Ontario Ombudsman André Marin (centre) with participants in the English training course. (Right) Office of the Ontario Ombudsman Communications Director Linda Williamson (left) and Senior Counsel Wendy Ray (centre) with participants in the English training course – Lusaka, November 15.



Mrs. Caroline Sokoni, Ombudsman of Zambia, thanks Ontario Ombudsman André Marin for the training as a participant from Nigeria takes photos – Lusaka, November 15.