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The Ombudsman

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Sierra Leone



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OMBUDSMAN OPENS NORTH-WEST REGIONAL OFFICE



The Ombudsman, Melron Nicol-Wilson Esq., on Friday 5th May 2018, officially opened the Office of the Ombudsman North-West Regional Office, in Port Loko.

During the opening ceremony, the Ombudsman, Melron Nicol-Wilson, gave a brief background about the Office of the Ombudsman. He said that, the Office is directly under the Office of the President, and that, the work of the Ombudsman is to receive and resolve complaints against Ministries, Department, Agencies and Institutions of Higher Learning. He also informed the gathering that, the Office is independent, and so, is able to deliver fair judgement, when it comes to mediation, investigation and resolving disputes.

He requested that, if any member in the audience had a complaint against individuals working for any Ministries, Department and Agencies, they should not be afraid to make their complaints to the newly established office. He maintained that, some complaints can be resolved through mediation, whilst others have to go through investigation. He noted that, the job of the Office of the Ombudsman saves costs, as the services are rendered free of charge. The Ombudsman said, after the creation of the North-West Province, he thought it prudent to open the new office, thereby taking the work of the Ombudsman to the people. He revealed that, the Office will cover Port Loko, Karene and Kambia Districts.

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He promised to recruit the remaining staff of the Office from the community; in line with the 'Local Content Policy'.

Delivering a statement on behalf of Paramount Chief, Adikali Mella II, the Chieftom Speaker of Beke-Loko, Malapi M. A. Tarawally said that, the Paramount Chief is pleased and happy that the Office of the Ombudsman has been opened within his chieftom. He expressed appreciation to government and the Office, for taking the bold step in opening the office, soon after the establishment of the North-West Province. He reminded the Ombudsman that, as he has made a commitment to comply with the 'Local Content Policy', they would be happy to see it being implemented.



Ombudsman addressing the audience

He appealed to the government, through the Ombudsman, to upgrade the 'Decentralization Process', so that there will be competition with other districts, for the job market. He maintained that, the opening of the Office has brought relief to the Chiefs, due to the number and kinds of complaints that they cannot handle, as they relate to MDA's. He noted that, there are a lot of administrative injustice meted against their brothers, but they do not have the means to resolve them. The then Regent Chief of Maforki Chieftom - Pa Limamy Kehkorr Kamara, therefore, also expressed gratitude to the Ombudsman, for the opening of the Office within Port Loko, as they will now be able to seek redress in the Office.

Recognising the importance of the Office, the then Regent Chief, Pa Limamy Kehkorr Kamara furthered that, the people of Port Loko, Kerene and Kambia Districts would be much happy to welcome and support the Office of the Ombudsman of the



Ombudsman Unveiling the building

North-West regional headquarter in Port Loko.



Pa Alimamy Kehkorr Kamara noted that, the political interference within the chieftaincy circle has disrupted the Rule of Law within the community, as Chiefs can now be sacked, if they do not support the party in power. He, however, expressed hope that, the Office of the Ombudsman would protect them from going through such redundancies, in order to foster development in their respective chieftoms.



A representative of the Mayor of Port Loko City Council said that, they are happy that the Office of the Ombudsman has been established within their new city. He assured the Ombudsman that they would give their fullest support to the Office.

OMBUDSMAN TRAINS STAFF ON COMPLAINTS HANDLING

The Office of the Ombudsman has concluded a two-day training of its staff, on Complaints Handling and Investigation. The training which involved all the Complaints Handling Officers in the Head Office, as well as, those in the provincial offices, was held at the National Pastoral Centre, in Kenema, on Thursday 17th and Friday 18th May, 2018.

The training was geared towards actualising Goal 1 of the Ombudsman Strategic Plan for 2018 - 2023, which is to have *'a technically competent, internal cohesive, efficient and effective institution.'*



Ombudsman giving a lecture

Also, as part of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the Office recently recruited twenty (20) staff, most of whom are deployed to the provincial offices to handle complaints.

Few months ago, the Ombudsman, Melron Nicol-Wilson, also adopted a new Complaints Handling Manual, which he developed together with other senior officers in the Office. The training was, therefore, meant to abreast the Complaints Handling Officers, especially the new staff, with the provisions of the manual.

As such, the training was facilitated by the Ombudsman himself, Mr. Melron Nicol-Wilson, and was ably assisted by Mr. Alhaji Mansaray – Principal Investigations Officer, together with the Programme Manager in the Office - Mr. Ajan Fofanah.

The participants were taken through the Constitutional and Legal Framework of the Ombudsman, the Practical Steps in Handling Complaints, Communica-



Staff displaying their certificates

tion skills, Investigation Techniques, Role of Intake Clerks and Case Studies.

The training session was climaxed by certification of the participants.

OMBUDSMAN RELEASES LISTS OF MINISTERIES, DEPARTMENT AND AGENCIES THAT THEY CAN INVESTIGATE

The office of the Ombudsman has issued a list of 24 Ministries, 15 Departments, 30 Agencies, 7 City Councils, 12 District Councils that the Office has a mandate to receive and resolve complaints against. These are:-

MINISTRIES

- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Energy
- Ministry of Information and Communications
- Ministry of Marine Resources
- Ministry of Labour
- Ministry of Water Resources
- Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender & Children's Affairs
- Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation
- Ministry of Economic Development
- Ministry of Technical and Higher Education
- Ministry of Works and Public Assets
- Ministry of Trade and Industry
- Ministry of Transport and Aviation
- Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources

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Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment
 Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Food Security
 Ministry of Youth Affairs
 Ministry of Local Government and Rural
 Development
 Ministry of Tourism and Culture
 Ministry of Political and Public Affairs
 Ministry of Sports

DEPARTMENTS

Accountant-Generals Department
 Administrator and Registrar-Generals
 Department
 Attitudinal and Behavioural Change Secretariat
 Audit Service
 Civil Aviation Authority
 Government Printing
 Immigration Department
 National Fire Force
 National Museum
 National Civil Registration Authority
 National Sports Council
 National Stadium
 Sierra Leone Correctional Service
 Sierra Leone Police
 University of Sierra Leone

AGENCIES/COMMISSIONS:-

Anti-Corruption Commission
 Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority
 (EDSA)
 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
 Guma Valley Water Company
 Law Reform Commission
 Monuments and Relics Commission
 National Commission for Democracy
 National Commission for Privatisation
 National Minerals Agency
 National Public Procurement Authority
 National Revenue Authority
 National Social Security and Insurance Trust
 (NASSIT)
 National Telecommunication Commission
 National Tourist Board
 Petroleum Regulatory Agency
 Political Parties Registration Commission
 Public Service Commission
 Road Maintenance Fund Administration

Sierra Leone Airports Authority
 Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
 Sierra Leone Investment Export Promotion Agency
 Sierra Leone Library Board
 Sierra Leone Postal Services
 Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority
 Sierra Leone Road Transport Corporation
 Sierra Leone Roads Authority
 Sierra Leone Small Arms Commission
 Sierra Leone Standards Bureau
 Sierra Leone State Lottery (LOTTO)
 Tertiary Education Commission
 Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection
 Authority.

DISTRICTS AND CITY COUNCILS:-

ALL CITY COUNCILS

Freetown City Council
 Bo City Council
 Bonthe Municipal Council
 Kenema City Council
 Makeni City Council
 Port Loko City Council
 Koidu New Sembahun City Council

ALL DISTRICT COUNCILS

Bo District Council
 Bonthe District Council
 Kenema District Council
 Pujehun District Council
 Moyamba District Council
 Bombali District Council
 Tonkolili District Council
 Port Loko District Council
 Kambia District Council
 Kono District Council
 Kailahun District Council
 Koinadugu District Council

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING:-

All Institutions of Higher Learning or Education
 (Tertiary Institutions) set up entirely or partly out of
 public funds.

OMBUDSMAN MEETS UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO SIERRA LEONE

On Thursday 17th May 2018, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Sierra Leone met Her Excellency Maria E. Brewer, the Ambassador of the United States of America, to Sierra Leone



Ombudsman talking to the US Ambassador

Both Officials discussed collaborations and partnership in promoting Administrative Justice and in improving the performance of Government at National, District and Regional Levels.

Also present at the meeting was the Head of the Political Affairs Section of the United States Embassy, in Freetown.

OMBUDSMAN APPOINTS HEAD OF NORTH - WEST REGIONAL OFFICE

The Ombudsman, Melron Nicol-Wilson, has appointed Mr. Idrissa A. P Kargbo Esq, as Head of the Newly established North-West Regional Office of the Ombudsman. Before his appointment Mr. Kargbo was a Legal Officer at the Office of the Ombudsman Head Office, in Freetown.

As Legal Officer, Mr. Kargbo brings into the Office of the Ombudsman 15 years of Administrative and Legal experience, from different institutions in the country.

He was a former CEO for the Central Educational Centre International, a Charity Organisation based in Sierra Leone.

He also served the Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA), Freetown Branch Management Team

as Executive Secretary, for a period of nine years; and a Trainer and Supervisor for SLADEA Ebola Project; and is currently an Adviser to SLADEA Freetown Branch Executive. He is the Former Su-



Head of Office, North- West Region

pervisor and Administrator for Providence International High School; Founding Administrative Member of the John F. Kennedy International Academy; Founding Administrative Member of Apex International School; Focal Person for 'Action for Large-Scale Land Acquisition Transparency Western Urban and Rural Area'; and a Former teacher of English, Literature, Government, CRK and History.

Mr. Kargbo has attended several Workshops, Conferences and Seminars on Legal, Human Rights and Business, Administration, Environmental Protection, Financial Management, and Administrative Financial Principles and Procedures. He is also trained in Project Proposal Writing and Project Management, by CARE International.

In addition to being the Head of the North-West Regional Office, in Port Loko, Mr. Kargbo continues to function as Legal Officer in the Office of the Ombudsman, and is in charge of legal matters at the Regional Offices of the Ombudsman.

He is currently the Focal Person for the Office of the Ombudsman in the 'Steering Committee for the Universal Periodic Review Implementation Programme' of the Government of Sierra Leone.

A VISIT TO THE PORT LOKO CORRECTIONAL CENTRE BY THE NORTH-WEST REGIONAL OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

A tour of the facilities of the Port Loko Correctional Centre, which is hosting 82 inmates, was undertaken by the Head of the North-West Regional Office — Idrissa A.P Kargbo. He was accompanied by the Second-in-Command of the Center, Mr. Abu Bakarr Kamara (ASP), who took him to the various blocks.

Firstly, he visited the Male Block, where he interviewed over 70 inmates and was told that, they had been brought there for over one to three years, but without indictment; and that it appears as if they have been abandoned and their rights violated.

After the tour of the Male Block, Mr. Kargbo was taken to the Female Block, where he met five inmates who have been there for over one year now.

Out of the 82 inmates he spoke with, only 6 had been indicted. The offences of the inmates ranged from Conspiracy to Commit a Felony, Larceny of Cattle, Assault with intent to Ravish, House Breaking and Larceny, Murder, Conspiracy, Child Stealing, Sexual Penetration and Robbery.

After the tour, Mr. Kargbo discovered that, the male cells were congested with over 77 inmates, languishing without indictment and no water facilities, as the water-wells have dried up. Therefore, the prisoners are usually taken out, over two miles, to fetch water, either with a vehicle or on bare foot.

It is emphasised that, the size of the compound is too small; thereby making it impossible for the inmates to do recreational activities.

Due to the workload of the State Counsel, as he oversees cases from Makeni, Lunsar, Rogbere, Masiaka, Port Loko and Kambia, it will reportedly take him time to adjudicate on cases coming from Port Loko. What makes matters worse is that, the High Court sits in Makeni; and this makes it difficult for the families of the offenders.

Mr. Kargbo was not able to ascertain whether cases were being prepared to be committed to the High Court, or whether offenders have already been com-

mitted for trial, especially for those who have been indicted since 2013 - 14.

It was also noted that, even if the offenders were to serve concurrently, they could have been freed by now, as this is already 2018. In principle, those who came in 2013, without indictments must have suffered already for the crimes committed, and so they must be freed too.

For some of the cases, the Complainants are not coming to court, when these cases are called; and for



Correctional Center in Port Loko

some, there are no witnesses to testify. In retrospect, some of the offenders have been detained beyond their sentences, even if they had been found guilty.

The Ombudsman initiated and instructed Mr. Kargbo to embark on the Correctional Centre visit, to ensure that maladministration is not the reason for offenders to be in prison, without indictment; as that had caused them to have already suffered for the crimes committed. More so, some of the crimes committed would have only warranted months, a year or two, and/or a maximum sentence of five years.

Maladministration on the part of the court could mean that, they failed to provide justice in time to the offenders, causing undue hardship on them and their families members. Hence "Justice delayed is justice denied."

OMBUDSMAN SENSITISES POLICE DIVISIONS IN FREETOWN

The office of the ombudsman conducted a week-long sensitisation of various Police Divisions in Freetown. The exercise emanated from the

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number of complaints received by the Ombudsman, from the institution.

Section 9 (2) of the Ombudsman Act of 1997 provides that:

'A person who is detained in custody is entitled, upon making a request to the detaining authorities, -

(a) to be provided with facilities for preparing a complaint under this Act and for the enclosing of that complaint in a sealed envelope; and

(b) to have the complaint addressed and forwarded, in the sealed envelope, to the Ombudsman, without undue delay, and delivered by the person in whose custody he is detained.

Pursuant to the above provisions, a team of Mediation and Communication Officers from the Office of the Ombudsman has been visiting the various Police Divisions in Freetown to sensitise the officers and the detainees about the rights of persons held in detention, to lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman.

The sensitisation drive, which began on Monday 27th May 2018, targeted various Police Divisions in the Western Area, including the Central, Congo Cross, Aberdeen, Lumley, Goderich, Mountain Cut, Eastern Police, Ross Road, Kissy Old Road, and the Waterloo Police Division.

During the sensitisation period, the team from the Office of the Ombudsman visited and spoke to the detainees in the cells of the various divisions and was pleased with responses from them; as none of them had spent more than the required 72 hours or 10 days for felonious crimes. However, some detainees said that, they do not have regular meals.



Central Division

According to the various Divisional Heads and Support Staff, they lack logistics like vehicles and stationery, which hamper their work. Also, the poor planning of some terrain, especially the hill-side,

makes it impossible to effectively patrol their respective areas.



Congo Cross Division



Team from the Office of the Ombudsman

SOME MEDIATED CASES

REPORT NO. KOMB2018 010

The Complainant was the spouse of one late Mr. Allieu Swarray, who died leaving an estate in the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank.

The Complainant, on behalf of the family, took the necessary steps through the Office of the Administrator and Registrar General, to access the deceased's estate. The process was delayed beyond the limit of the patience of the Complainant.

FINDINGS AND REMEDIAL ACTIONS

We acknowledged receipt of the complaint and notified the Office of the Administrator and Registrar General of the complaint against their institution, for their response. They failed to respond within the

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We invited both the Complainant and Respondent to a tripartite meeting that was held on 16th April, 2018 at our Supui Street office, in Kenema, to mediate the complaint. The Complainant explained that, she is a widow and had school-going children to fend for, and that she needed the estate to cushion her burden.

The Administrator and Registrar General's Office representative informed us that, they had done all the necessary processes and sent the file to their Head Office, in Freetown, for the estate to be paid, but they failed to communicate it to the Complainant. The Complainant was entreated to sustain her patience further, while we urged the Administrator and Registrar General's Office to step up in their efforts to ensure the payment of the estate. It was resolved that, a staff of theirs was to travel down to Freetown to follow up on the matter.

In another follow up call, made on the 19th April, 2018 for an update on the matter, we were informed that, the estate had been paid through one Lawyer Bawoh, Esq., and that, the Complainant would receive her money on 23rd April, 2018. We called and informed the Complainant.

STATUS

The Office of the Administrator and Registrar General called to inform us that, the Complainant had received the money, on behalf of the family. The Complainant was contacted and she confirmed the payment.

The file was closed.

COMPLAINT: UNLAWFUL DISMISSAL FILE NO. OMB.MAK. 18/011

On the 15th March 2018, a complaint of unlawful dismissal was received from Mr. Festus Boyez Thomas, Mines Monitoring Officer of the National Minerals Agency, against Mr. Lebbie, the Regional Manager of the said office.

He alleged that, he was verbally dismissed from his job by Mr. Lebbie, without any valid reason. Upon receipt of the complaint, a statement was obtained from the Complainant and a Letter of Notification was sent to the Regional Manager, National Minerals Agency.

In response, the Manager acknowledged receipt of the

letter we sent to him. He also explained to us that, Mr. Thomas requested for a transfer from Bumbuna to Kamakwie, on the ground that he was not comfortable with his old station. This was granted to him. Since his transfer to Kamakwie in October 2017, the Complainant refused to report for work at his duty station.

He also informed us that, he did not dismiss the Complainant, but asked him to leave the Makeni Office premises and report to his duty station, where he was assigned.

A mediation meeting was called, where witnesses from both parties were present. During the meeting, statements were obtained from the witnesses, to help in the process. All the witnesses confirmed to us that, Mr. Thomas was transferred to Kamakwie, but he was always seen in the Makeni Office vicinity. They also confirmed that, the Manager asked him to leave the office and instructed the security not to allow Mr. Thomas in the office premises, since he was refusing to report for duty at his station.

According to our findings, it was proved that Mr. Festus Boyeze Thomas was transferred to Kamakwie, but he did not report for duty. We also gathered that, he was not dismissed, as he was still receiving salary and that his job was secure. We, then, advised Mr. Thomas to report to his duty station, with immediate effect.

OMBUDSMAN CELEBRATES 1 YEAR OF PROMOTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE

The erudite Legal Luminary, Mr. Melron C. Nicol-Wilson Esq., was constitutionally appointed as Ombudsman of the Republic of Sierra Leone, in March 2017.

The appointment of Lawyer Melron Nicol-Wilson, as Ombudsman, was perceived by different walks of life, including the Judiciary, as a very prudent constitutional decision, as well as, an indication of government's commitment to the development and promotion of administrative justice, in Sierra Leone. By virtue of his sound academic credentials and wealth of experience in the justice sector, Mr. Melron Nicol-

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Wilson was unanimously approved as Ombudsman, by Parliament, in April 2017; to succeed the erstwhile Ombudsman – Late Hon. Justice Edmond K. Cowan.

Upon his approval as Ombudsman, Mr. Nicol-Wilson pledged to execute his obligation with his fullest capacity, in order to make a significant impact on protecting and serving humanity; promote good governance; as well as, to champion administrative justice. His main ambition has been to give a new strategic direction to the Office of the Ombudsman. Mr. Nicol Wilson assumed duty in May 2017 and has made remarkable accomplishments, within his first 12 months' stewardship; which are highlighted below:

Institutional Assessment

After assuming Office, the proactive Lawyer Nicol-Wilson, though it expedient to find out about the capacity and deficiencies of his institution. He, therefore, conducted an Institutional Assessment, during which he visited his provincial offices in Kenema, Bo and Makeni. During the institutional assessment, the Ombudsman met with key stakeholders and staff of his respective offices, for the first time, to elicit first-hand information about the state of affairs of the various offices of the Ombudsman. In particular, He held extensive discussions with the staffs, on the status of complaints; and issues that required urgent action, to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency. That institutional assessment formed the basis for a 100-Day Action Plan.

The Ombudsman 100-Day Action Plan

The 100-Day Action Plan was designed, by Ombudsman Nicol-Wilson, to seek the power of enforcement and to empower his Office to deliver administrative justice and safeguard human rights, in Sierra Leone. The focus of the plan was to enhance public confidence, accountability, fairness and to create a new strategic direction, for the Office of the Ombudsman.

Resolution of cases

When Mr. Nicol-Wilson took up Office in May 2017, he inherited over 300 backlog cases, and needed to be dealing with many emerging cases. He, therefore, decided to prioritise the employment of additional staff to resolve complaints. He also introduced a new cadre of staff, called Intake Clerks, to serve as the 'first point of contact', and to assist Mediators and

Investigators in resolving cases. Within a period of six months, under his stewardship, the Office of the Ombudsman was able to resolve about 200 backlog cases. Emerging cases were also being dealt with within the time prescribed by the Ombudsman Service Standards. This remarkably achievement accomplishes his parliamentary oath – **"To deal with cases speedily, and with the highest level of integrity and professionalism"**.

Media Engagement

Melron Nicol-Wilson is a house-hold name, not only in the public domain, but especially in the Media. He has built an enduring working relationship with the Media, since he commenced legal practice, and also during his days at the LAWCLA; offering legal assistance to the disadvantaged. As a result of his engagement, all activities of the Office are now being published and/or broadcasted by the Media.

A New Strategic Plan

Mr. Melron Nicol-Wilson met an obsolete strategic Plan, at the Office of the Ombudsman. With technical and financial support from the United Nations Development Programs Office, in Freetown, the Office now has a new strategic Plan, for 2018 – 2022. The Plan outlines the strategies, goals and vision of the new Ombudsman; in his pursuit of administrative justice for all Sierra Leoneans, over the next five years.

Introduction of Newsletter

Not much was known about the Ombudsman, before Melron Nicol-Wilson's appointment. Mr. Nicol-Wilson, therefore, decided to introduce a Quarterly Newsletter, called **'The Ombudsman'**, with the aim of informing the public about the activities of his Office. To date, the Office has now published four newsletters, which have been widely circulated across the country.

New divisions, staffing and organogram

Shortly after assuming Office, Mr. Melron Nicol-Wilson foresaw that, the Office of the Ombudsman will function better in specialised divisions and units. To enhance his new strategic direction, Mr. Nicol-Wilson, has administratively structured the Office into three main divisions and seven units. The Office has also increased its staff complement, with a new organogram.

Gender empowerment

Melron Nicol-Wilson's passion for gender empowerment goes beyond the normal, as he seeks to achieve a high level of success within the Office's Mediation Unit. Since his appointment, he has already recruited up to five female Mediators, and also a female Director of Finance and Internal Audit.

New Staff Rules and Regulations

Staff of the Ombudsman need to demonstrate best practice, by having judicious and contemporary rules and regulations that will guide their operations, conduct and performance. Therefore, when he assumed Office, the Ombudsman embarked on revising and adopting new Staff Rules and Regulations for the Office of the Ombudsman, for 2018 - 2022.

Complaints Handling Manual

When the Ombudsman assumed Office, the Office of the Ombudsman had no standard and/or consistent procedure for handling complaints; causing difficulty in case management and complaints referrals. In addition to signing MoUs with similar institutions, the Office now has a Complaints Handling Manual, which dictates the procedures for handling complaints and harmonises the process across his respective offices.

Internship programme

The Labour market cannot necessarily provide enough employment opportunities to meet the demands of job-seekers. As a gesture of good will, Mr. Nicol-Wilson has introduced an '**Internship Programme**', to provide an opportunity for students and new graduates, who are unable to find remunerated work/job, to gain valuable experiences, recommendations and even future job placements and employment opportunities, within meaningful institutions. According to Mr. Nicol-Wilson, this is to contribute to sustainable development.

Conducive work environment

From his institutional assessment, Melron Nicol Wilson noted that, the premises of the Office of the Ombudsman were unsuitable for work; thereby negatively impacting on efficiency and staff performance. He has, therefore, relocated the Head Office of the Ombudsman to 26 Charlotte Street - a four-storey building, which is safer, well refurbished

and fit for purpose.

Introduction of Support Staff Uniform

Melron Nicol-Wilson has considerably boosted teamwork and the morale of his Support Staff, through the introduction of uniforms. This provision has not only helped to rebrand and differentiate his institution, but has also improved the visibility and accessibility of the Ombudsman, to the public.

Information technology

In line with modern technological trend, Melron Nicol-Wilson has ensured that, his staff now have adequate access to computers, with better internet connections. There is also a CCTV monitor, an intercom system and a biometric signing-in system. The Office website has also been redesigned into a more informative and user-friendly version, not only for staff, but especially for the general public. Now, persons that are aggrieved can also lodge their complaints online.

Domestic connections

Ombudsman Nicol-Wilson has established connections with partners that have a crucial role in promoting good governance in Sierra Leone. He has a cordial and professional working relationship with government ministries and agencies, Heads of Diplomatic Missions, Non-governmental and Civil Society Organisations; thus, harnessing the support needed by his Office to accomplish his new strategic direction.

International networking

Mr. Nicol-Wilson has initiated and preserved very good and promising networks with key international institutions and fellow Ombudsmen, across the globe. He has links with the United Nations Development Programme, UK Department for International Development, European Union, World Bank, Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and other supportive and influential bodies, including the International Ombudsmen Institute; and has also recently represented his country in the Commonwealth Africa Summit, held in the United Kingdom.

Opening of North-West Office

Following the creation of a North-West Province, consisting of Port Loko, Kambia and Karene Districts, the Ombudsman has recently opened a regional office in Port Loko, to serve that region. This is a commendable manifestation that Mr. Nicol-Wilson believes in inclusivity.



SERVICE DELIVERY CHARTER

The services of the Ombudsman aim for the highest quality, to be open to scrutiny and accountability. As such, the Office has developed this Service Charter against which our services can be measured.

Our Mandate

To investigate and take actions that will resolve complaints from members of the public, who have suffered injustice as a result of maladministration, by government and its agencies.

Our Mission

The Office of the Ombudsman safeguards the community in its dealings with government and its agencies in Sierra Leone, by independent and impartial investigation and resolution of complaints.

Our Vision

A Sierra Leone, where administrative action by government and its agencies is fair, effective, efficient and accountable

We Promise that:

We will act in accordance with the Ombudsman Act, 1997

We will deal with your complaint free of charge

We will treat you fairly and with respect

You will be given the right to be heard, during the complaint process

Our actions with regard to your complaint will be balanced; taking into account all available evidence

We will explain our decisions and reasons to you

We can review any decision or conclusion we have reached about a complaint, upon a valid request.

In instances where service delivery is perceived to be inefficient or ineffective, a report may be forwarded to the Executive Secretary or the Ombudsman.

For All enquiries, please contact us on: +232 76 945 926

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS AND TIMELINES

Services	Standard Practice	Charges	Timeline
Receipt of Complaints	You can lodge a complaint in person, in writing, by telephone, via email or drop a letter in our Complaint Boxes at the Prisons or District Council Offices. Our officers will record your complaint, even if you cannot read or write.	Free	Immediately
Acknowledgment	We will register, file and acknowledge receipt of your complaint.	Free	Within five working days from the date of receipt
Assessment	We will examine your complaint to determine the appropriate line of action to resolve it. After which, you would be informed about our decision or line of action.	Free	Within five working days from the date of receipt
Referrals	If your complaint does not fall within our mandate, we will refer your case to the appropriate agency or authority or advise you on an appropriate remedy.	Free	Within five working days from the date of receipt
Contacting Respondents	We will forward your complaint, as written or recorded, to the agency or authority against whom you have complained, for a response. (Section (10) (2) of the Ombudsman Act, 1997)	Free	Within ten working days from the date of receipt
Feedback	You would be informed about the reply of the respondent.	Free	Within five working days from the date of receipt
Mediation	Upon examination of the available evidence; and where it is deemed an appropriate remedy, we will facilitate negotiation (s) between the complainant and the respondent. (Section (7) (1) (b) (i) of the Ombudsman Act, 1997)	Free	Within twenty working Days upon receipt of Reply
Investigation Report	Where your complaint cannot be resolved through contacts or mediation, we will investigate fully and write a report on our findings, with recommendations for remedial actions. A report will be forwarded to the Head or Minister responsible for the agency you complained against. (Section (7) (1) (b) (ii) of the Ombudsman Act, 1997)	Free	Within thirty working days from the date you were notified of the investigation
Follow-up on Investigation Report	We will engage the Head, or the Board, or the Minister responsible for the department investigated on our report, to ensure compliance with our recommendations. (Section (13) (1) Of the Ombudsman Act, 1997).	Free	Continuous
Letter to the President about a Complaint	Where the department fails to comply with our recommendations; and where it is deemed as the only option left to resolve the complaint, the Ombudsman will write to HE the President for necessary action. (Section (13) (3) of the Ombudsman Act, 1997)	Free	Within one year from date the report was forwarded to the Head or Minister.
Report to Parliament about a Complaint	Where HE the President could not act on a report forwarded to him within 90 days, the Ombudsman will refer the matter to the Speaker of Parliament, for necessary action. (Section (14) of the Ombudsman Act, 1997).	Free	After three months from the date the report was forwarded to the President

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