

22nd Meeting of the Board of Directors
Asian Ombudsman Association
Istanbul, Republic of Turkey
17th November, 2019

MINUTES

22nd Meeting of the Board of Directors (BOD) of Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) was held on 17th November, 2019 at Istanbul, Republic of Turkey. The meeting was presided over by the President AOA, Hon'ble Syed Tahir Shahbaz, Federal Ombudsman Pakistan. Mr. Abdul Khaliq, Executive Secretary of the AOA Secretariat, coordinated the Meeting.

2. Following Members of the BOD participated in the Meeting:

S.No.	Name	Position	Organization
1.	Syed Tahir Shahbaz	President	Federal Ombudsman, Pakistan
2.	Ms. Elmira Suleymanova	Vice President	Commissioner for Human Rights, Azerbaijan
3.	Ms. Winnie Chiu Wai-yin	Secretary	Ombudsman, Hong Kong – China
4.	Mr. Justice Hassan Darvishian	Treasurer	President, General Inspection Organization, Iran
5.	Mr. Li Shulei	Member Board	Vice Chairman, National Commission of Supervision, China
6.	Mr. Yamauchi Tatsuya	Member Board	Deputy Director General, AEB, Ministry of Internal Affairs & Communications, Japan
7.	Prof. Amzulian Rifai	Member Board	Chairman, Ombudsman Institution, Indonesia
8.	Ms. Sariya Saburskaya	Member Board	Commissioner for Human Rights, Tatarstan
9.	Mr. Harjeet Singh	Member Board	Director General, Public Complaints Bureau Malaysia
10.	Mr. Abdul Khaliq	Executive Secretary	AOA Secretariat

Agenda Item No. 1

3. Welcome and Introductory Remarks by the Chair

While opening the 22nd Meeting of the Board of Directors of Asian Ombudsman Association, the President AOA, Hon'ble Mr. Syed Tahir Shahbaz, Federal Ombudsman Pakistan welcomed the participants of the Meeting and thanked the host for honoring him and other colleagues to participate in the 2nd Istanbul International Ombudsman Conference organized so superbly by the Ombudsman Institution of the Republic of Turkey in the historic and magnificent city of Istanbul. He expressed his deep gratitude to Hon'ble Chief Ombudsman of Turkey and his team for making fabulous arrangements for this Conference.

Since the Event also included the General Assembly Meeting wherein new Board of Directors was to be elected, he gave a brief account of the activities and achievements of the Association since the election of the present Board. 17th AOA Board and 14th General Assembly Meetings were held in 2015 in Islamabad, Pakistan where present Board of Directors was elected. As per Bye-Laws, AOA General Assembly meets every second year; thus the 15th General Assembly Meeting was the prime activity of the PyeongChang Conference in 2017. The General Assembly Meeting was preceded by 20th Board of Directors Meeting in PyeongChang. Likewise, Board Meetings and Conferences held at Tokyo, Kazan and Baku provided great opportunities in promoting the cause of ombudsmanship, especially in our own Region.

He also appreciated the role of the incumbent Members of the Board and the Secretariat in enhancing the Cause of the Association. The team, that was chosen four years back, has evidently displayed their remarkable zeal to drive forward the basic objectives of the Ombudsmanship. It had been the joint effort of this Team that during their tenure six new members joined this august body and six more were going to join after approval of the General Assembly in its upcoming session. The Secretariat has been persistently expanding its capacity to serve the Association much more efficiently and professionally under the supervision of a very senior retired civil servant of Pakistan. Secretariat's digital communication tools have played significant role in bringing the AOA Members closer, making mutual responses more swift and effective. He requested the Members to be more proactive in sharing their information and experiences through the AOA e Newsletter, Website and proposed e Profile Directory.

At the close of his Remarks, he thanked and paid his heartfelt regard to the colleagues for reposing trust upon the incumbent Board Members in the past and assured that he and his colleagues from Pakistan would keep on serving this grand Association in whatsoever position they could be placed by the Ombudsman brotherhood. He, once again, congratulated and thanked Excellency, Mr. Seref Malkoc, Chief Ombudsman Turkey, for arranging such a grand event and keeping the participants so comfortable in the historic city of Istanbul.

4. Thereafter, the Chair asked the Executive Secretary to proceed with the Agenda. Accordingly, the Agenda Items were presented before the Members for their consideration and decisions; the proceedings of the Board Meeting and decisions taken therein are briefly recorded below.

Agenda Item No. 2

Approval of the Agenda for the Present (22nd) Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of AOA

Minutes:-

The draft Agenda for the 22nd Meeting of the Board of Directors of the AOA was presented by the Executive Secretary for the approval of the Board.

The Chair invited the Board Members to offer their comments, if any, on the current Agenda. However, no objection or observation was made by the Participants.

Decision:

Hon'ble Members unanimously approved the Agenda.

Agenda Item No. 3

Approval of the Minutes of the last (21st) Meeting of the Board of Directors of AOA held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 30th October, 2018

Minutes:-

The Members were apprised that the Draft Minutes of the 21st Meeting of the Board of Directors of Asian Ombudsman Association, held on 30th October, 2018 in Azerbaijan, were circulated among the Hon'ble Members of the Board vide e-mail dated 8th November 2018 for observations and feedback. The Minutes were issued on 14th January, 2019; however a few corrections were pointed out by the Office of the Ombudsman Hong Kong which were incorporated in the Minutes, and thus, the Final Minutes were circulated among the Members vide e-mail dated 18-01-2019. These Minutes were submitted for formal confirmation by the Board of Directors.

Hon'ble Members showed their satisfaction with the Minutes of the 21st Meeting of the Board of Directors of Asian Ombudsman Association.

Decision:-

In view of the above stated position, the Minutes of the 21st Meeting of the Board of Directors of Asian Ombudsman Association were approved by the Board unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 4

Implementation Report on the decisions of the last (21st) Meeting of the Board of Directors

Minutes:-

The Board was apprised on the implementation of the decisions taken in the last (21st) Meeting of the BOD. The Implementation Report, which had already been circulated to the Members, was discussed point by point. The Members showed their satisfaction on the implementation of the decisions taken in the previous Board Meetings.

Decision:-

The Board expressed its satisfaction on the Implementation Report and appreciated the efforts of AOA Secretariat for ensuring prompt and effective implementation of Board's decisions.

Agenda Item No.5

Report of the President, for the years 2017-18, on the Activities of the Association in terms of clause 5-5(i) of the Code of Conduct of Business of AOA

Minutes:-

As per Article 9(2) of the Bye Laws of AOA and Clause 5-5(i) of the Code of Conduct of Business of the AOA, an Annual Report on the activities of the Association is to be presented by the President to the Board.

Accordingly, a consolidated Report of the President for the years 2017-18 was placed before the Board for consideration and seeking its consent to place it before the General Assembly for ratification under Article 6(4)(f) of Bye Laws of AOA.

Decision:-

The Members appreciated the services rendered by the AOA Secretariat under the able guidance and patronage of Hon'ble President of the Association. In particular, the Board appreciated for managing efficient communication tools like AOA Website, e-Newsletter, online exchange of information. They also thanked the President for the successful drive for expansion of membership and for providing effective Secretariat services with least financial burden on the Association Fund.

Agenda Item No. 6

Consideration of applications for AOA membership from six Ombudsman Institutions:-

Minutes:-

The Board was apprised that six applications from following Institutions were received for the membership of the AOA.

- i. Provincial Ombudsman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan
- ii. Provincial Ombudsperson for Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace, Punjab, Pakistan
- iii. Office of the Ombudsman, Philippines
- iv. Office of the Citizen Ombudsman of Siheung City, Republic of Korea
- v. Provincial Ombudsperson for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace, Baluchistan, Pakistan
- vi. Provincial Ombudsperson for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

The AOA Secretariat reviewed these applications and concluded that the applicants are eligible for membership under the existing criteria identified in the Code of Conduct. Accordingly, the Secretariat drafted working papers for the Executive Committee of the Board to consider and recommend their proposals for the membership of the applicants, in terms of Sections 1-4 of the Code of Conduct. In terms of Article 5(1) & (6) of the Bye Laws of AOA, Office of the Ombudsman, Philippines could be granted Full Membership with Voting Right; whereas, the other five institutions could be granted Full Membership (Without Voting Right) as their respective countries already have the Voting Right. Two members of the Executive Committee, the President and the Secretary, had considered the applications and recommended to the Board of Directors for their acceptance under Section 1-2 of Code of Conduct of Business of AOA.

Thus, the Board of Directors was requested to consider the working papers and the membership applications of the above mentioned applicants for granting Office of the Ombudsman, Philippines Full Membership with Voting Right and other five institutions for Full Membership without Voting rights under Article 5(1) & (6) of the Bye Laws of AOA and, accordingly, the Board, in terms of Section 1-5 & 1-6, was requested to recommend for approval to the General Assembly for Membership under Article 6(4)(a) of the Bye Laws of AOA.

Decision:-

In view of above, the Board of Directors, unanimously, gave its approval for granting Office of the Ombudsman, Philippines Full Membership with Voting Right and other five institutions for Full Membership without Voting Rights under Article 5(1) & (6) of the Bye Laws of AOA and, accordingly, recommended, in terms of Section 1-5 & 1-6, their membership to the General Assembly for approval under Article 6(4)(a) of the Bye Laws of AOA.

Agenda Item No.7

Approval of the Audit Statement of AOA Accounts for the year 2018

Minutes:-

The Audit Statement prepared by M/s W.A. Associates, for the year 2018, was placed by the Treasurer AOA, Hon'ble Justice Hassan Darvishian, President GIO Iran, before the Board, in terms of Article 8(2) of Bye Laws of AOA.

The Board was requested to consider and approve the Audit Statement for the year 2018; and, accordingly, give its consent to place it before the General Assembly for ratification under Article 6(4) (f) of Bye Laws of AOA.

Decision:-

The Board approved the Audit Statement for the year 2018; and, accordingly, gave its consent to place it before the General Assembly for ratification under Article 6(4)(f) of Bye Laws of AOA.

Agenda Item No. 8

Suspension of Annual Membership Fee for Four years (2020-2023)

Minutes:-

Since, almost all the Secretarial and logistic support was being financed by the Office of Federal Ombudsman Pakistan, the AOA's funds had been accumulating over the years; thus, it was felt appropriate by the President AOA to propose to the Board and the General Assembly for suspension of Annual Membership Fee for four years (2020-2023).

The Board considered this proposal but it was generally viewed that subscription of Annual Membership Fee may not be suspended as it may have some legal and logistic implications in future. Rather, some activities should be identified where these funds can be usefully utilized for enhancing the objectives of the Association.

Decision:-

In view of above, it was decided that subscription of Annual Membership Fee may not be suspended; rather, some activities should be identified where these funds can be usefully utilized for enhancing the objectives of the Association. The Chair, thus, requested the Members to identify some useful activities for the utilization of these funds.

Agenda Item No. 9

Procedure of Election for any Vacancy Falling Vacant during Tenure of the Board

Minutes:-

The matter of filling a 'Vacancy Falling Vacant during Tenure of the Board' came under review of the AOA Board and finally the Board, in its Meeting held on 16th May, 2017 in

PyeongChang (Item No. 4), unanimously dropped the proposal for ‘Survey Monkey’ or other similar system in view of its high cost and availability of remedy under Bye-Laws 7(6) and 7(9) of AOA in resolving the stated matter. The Board further agreed that if the position of Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer would fall vacant for a long time in future, the “Counter Proposal”, preferred by Hon’ble Ombudsman Hong Kong, Secretary AOA, would be adopted to resolve the issues of finding replacement to fill the Mid-Term vacancy of Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer.

However, the Board had further desired that the Secretariat should prepare a comprehensive report on this Issue, which was prepared and submitted to the Board in its 21st Meeting at Baku. The Members applauded the report submitted by the Secretariat as a very high quality analysis of the issues related to the ‘**Procedure of Election for any Vacancy Falling Vacant during Tenure of the Board**’ and stated that the report had explicitly explained the problem and its solution available within the Bye-laws or by pursuing the counter proposal as already decided in the last Board Meeting. The Counter Proposal is reproduced below:

“For the sake of continuous and efficient operation of AOA, Members of the Board of Directors will be empowered to elect by secret ballot to fill any such temporary vacancies when arisen. This will ensure that all the candidates, proposers and seconders in such elections are eligible (since all Board members are full members with voting rights) and there will not be any difficulties in conducting the elections by secret ballot at a Board meeting”.

Since the Board, in its Meetings both in PyeongChang, Korea (2017) and Azerbaijan (2018), reached to the conclusion that the given law adequately provided the ‘Procedure of Election for any ‘Vacancy Falling Vacant during Tenure of the Board’, no further perusal of the point was considered appropriate. However, under Section 4-1 of the Code of Conduct of Business of AOA, the Board was obliged to place the stated position before the General Assembly for its information.

Accordingly, the Board was requested to give its consent to place the matter before the General Assembly for its notice under Section 4-2 of the Code of Conduct of Business of AOA.

Decision:-

The Board, in view of above, decided that no further perusal of the point was required; however, it gave its consent to place the matter before the General Assembly for its notice under Section 4-2 of the Code of Conduct of Business of AOA.

Agenda Item No. 10

Review of the Development and Performance of the Academy Established by the General Inspection Organization, Iran

Minutes:-

In the 21st Board Meeting in Azerbaijan, Hon’ble Justice Naser Seraj, former President, General Inspection Organization Iran, updated the Board on the activities of the Academy and

proposed to give it status of an affiliated body of the Association. He further shared with the Members that he desired AOA's support in terms of operational interaction with the Members and patronage of the Association; however, the Academy, for its financial and logistic needs, will not be dependent on the Association's support.

The President AOA supported the proposal made by the President, GIO Iran and stated that by granting the Academy a status of affiliated body will not only enhance its credibility but also add to the intellectual assets of the Association. The Members, thus, unanimously supported the proposal for granting the Academy status of an affiliated body of the Association and also approved for its placement before the General Assembly for ratification.

The Board was, thus, requested to place its decision before the General Assembly for ratification under Article 6(4)(e) of the Bye Laws of AOA.

Decision:-

The Board endorsed the decision taken in the previous meeting and granted permission to place it before the General Assembly for ratification under Article 6(4)(e) of the Bye Laws of AOA.

Agenda Item No. 11

Launching of e-Profile Directory on the AOA website of AOA Members & Alumni Members

Minutes:-

This initiative of 'Launching of e-Profile Directory on the AOA website of AOA Members & Alumni Members was presented before the Board with the view to provide ever ready database of the Member Institutions for their closer interaction and sharing of information and experiences supporting the cause of Ombudsmanship in the Region and beyond. Federal Ombudsman Pakistan had given his consent to manage necessary resources from his own account without any burden on the Association Funds.

The Board was requested to approve this initiative, presented under Section 5-5 of the Code of Conduct of Business, and place it before the General Assembly for its notice in view of Section 4-1 of the Code of Conduct of Business.

Decision:-

The Board approved the stated initiative, presented under Section 5-5 of the Code of Conduct of Business, and gave its consent to place it before the General Assembly for its notice in view of Section 4-1 of the Code of Conduct of Business.

Agenda Item No. 12

Subscription of News Items for e-Newsletter

Minutes:-

As per decision of the AOA Board and General Assembly, the AOA Secretariat is regularly issuing fortnightly Asian Ombudsman Association e-Newsletter, but response of the Member Institutions was not much encouraging. Therefore, the Member Institutions were requested to send News Items for e-Newsletter regularly to fully avail the Forum for mutual cooperation and sharing of experiences.

The Board was requested to place this initiative, taken under Section 5-5 of the Code of Conduct of Business, before the General Assembly for information and emphasis.

Decision:-

The Board appreciated the successful implementation of the initiative and desired that the Member Institutions should send News Items for e-Newsletter regularly to fully avail the Forum for mutual cooperation and sharing of experiences; however, it was considered appropriate that it should be issued on monthly instead of fortnightly basis. The Board further consented to place this initiative before the General Assembly for information and emphasis.

Agenda Item No. 13

Continuation of Mr. Abdul Khaliq as the Executive Secretary, AOA

Minutes:-

Mr. Abdul Khaliq, Senior Advisor Federal Ombudsman Pakistan, a former Secretary Finance Pakistan, had been working as Executive Secretary, AOA, since 19th February, 2016. In view of his appreciable contributions in running the business of the Association, continuation of his services as Executive Secretary, AOA appeared in the Organization's interest.

Thus, the President AOA recommended to the Board to approve continuation of his appointment as Executive Secretary in terms of Section V of the Code of Conduct of Business and place it before the General Assembly for information in view of Section 4-1 of the Code of Conduct of Business.

The Members appreciated the services rendered by the Executive Secretary in running the AOA Secretariat effectively and promoting means of electronic communication to improve interaction among the Member Institutions; however one of the Members opined that the proposed extension may be for two years, further extendable with the approval of the Board.

Decision:-

The Members, appreciating the services rendered by Mr. Abdul Khaliq as Executive Secretary AOA, approved continuation of his appointment as Executive Secretary for two years, further extendable with the approval of the Board, in terms of Section V of the Code of Conduct of Business and place it before the General Assembly for information in view of Section 4-1 of the Code of Conduct of Business.

Agenda Item No.14

Finalization of dates and place for AOA 23rd Board of Directors Meeting in 2020 and 17th General Assembly Meeting in 2021.

Minutes:-

The Members were asked to give their proposals for Date and Venue for hosting the AOA 23rd Board of Directors Meeting in 2020 and 17th General Assembly Meeting in 2021 through email dated 15th October, 2019. No formal proposal had been received till stipulated date (1st November, 2019).

The matter was also discussed in the Board Meeting. President GIO Iran showed his interest in hosting the 23rd Board of Directors Meeting in 2020; however, confirmation would be communicated if so approved by the Government.

Decision:-

The Board decided to place the above stated position before the General Assembly. If some other offer could not be found, the confirmation from Iran would be awaited.

Agenda Item No. 15

Scrutiny of the Nomination Forms and Approval of the Election 2019 Plan

Minutes and Decisions:-

The Board was apprised on the following issues related to Election 2019 Plan and necessary approvals were sought.

Scrutiny of Nomination Forms

The Board was apprised that the List of the Candidates and Nomination Forms had been sent to the Executive Committee Members three days before the General Assembly Meeting for their scrutiny and perusal. The same were also placed before the Board Members for their perusal. Complete satisfaction was shown by the Members on the process adopted for the Nominations, keeping the record in order, ensuring transparency and strict compliance of rules and procedures laid down in the Bye-Laws and Code of Conduct of Business of AOA.

Approval of Candidates' List

The Board, after its satisfaction on the process adopted as mentioned above, approved the List of the Candidates and their Nomination Forms to proceed for the election.

Procedure for Balloting and Counting of Votes

Procedure for Balloting and Counting of Votes was displayed in the Meeting. (i) Ballot Paper, (ii) Election Control List and (iii) Votes Counting Sheet were placed before the Board, which were appreciated as exemplary documents to ensure transparent and effective election proceedings without compromising the secrecy and independence of ballot as required under the rules. Thus, the Board approved these documents after their detailed scrutiny and perusal.

Appointing the Presiding Officer

The Board was apprised on the appointment of the Presiding Officer, in terms of Article 6(6) of the Bye Laws of AOA and Section 2-9 of the Code of Conduct of Business of AOA. The President AOA himself proposed to the Board for appointing the Presiding Officer, despite the fact that he had been elected unopposed. The Board, appreciating the proposal, agreed to appoint the Presiding Officer, in terms of the stated law and procedure.

Agenda Item No. 16

Approval of the Board of Directors is sought for placing the decisions taken at Agenda Points from 5 to 15 before the General Assembly for its consideration.

Minutes and Decisions:-

The Board was requested to grant its approval for placing the decisions taken at Agenda Items from 5 to 15 before the General Assembly for its consideration which was graciously granted.

Agenda Item No.17

Any other item, which the Chair or any Member of the Board of Directors may like to discuss

No additional item came under discussion.

Agenda Item No.18

Vote of Thanks

Before concluding the Board Meeting, the President AOA offered 'Vote of Thanks and Gratitude' to the host. The chair congratulated, Excellency, Mr. Seref Malkoc, Chief Ombudsman, Republic of Turkey for hosting the 22nd AOA Board of Directors Meeting, the 16th AOA General Assembly Meeting and 2nd Istanbul International Ombudsman Conference. He expressed his feelings that this grand Event would surely set a remarkable milestone for the promotion of Ombudsmanship within AOA and beyond. Concluding his remarks, he, once again, thanked all the Members for their participation and the Chief Ombudsman Turkey, the Organizing Team and the Government of Turkey for serving the noble cause of Ombudsmanship by organizing this great Event.