

DON'T BE A GAZELLE: OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL CHALLENGED

The Office of the Auditor General has embarked on an exercise to strengthen its relationship with parliamentary oversight committees by partnering with AFROSAI-E to train its parliamentary and county assembly liaison officers on effective ways of relating with Parliamentary Accounts Committee (PAC) and Parliamentary Investment Committee.

The chairman of PAC, Hon. Ababu Namwamba, officially opened this one week intensive workshop for 25 Kenya National Audit Office staff, running from 29th July, to 2nd August 2013 at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies. The ceremony was graced by Agnes Mita, Deputy Auditor General who represented the Auditor General.

Hon Namwamba reiterated that the workshop had come at a critical time saying, "There is a new parliament where 95% of PAC members are new in parliament while others including myself have never served in PAC before and we therefore need your support in effectively executing our mandate."



Hon Namwamba, PAC chair giving his opening remarks

The Chairman of PAC further challenged the OAG and his team to join hands with other oversight Committees to replicate the same structures at the County level.

In a speech enriched with metaphors, Hon Namwamba said that Supreme Institutions in Africa faced extreme challenges in their pursuit of truth and facts, saying that the ultimate measure of the reputation of the OAG is where it stands in the face of controversy.

Despite the intense pressure from those being audited , he encouraged the OAG to do their job effectively and objectively , as the public expects and trusts that the office will play its oversight role.

Hon Namwamba evoked Thomas Friedman’s poem, *The World is Flat* by likening the situation of the OAG to the analogy of a Gazelle that wakes up in the morning in the

Savanna and promises to out-run the fastest lion that day, while the lion also wakes up promising itself to out-run the slowest gazelle.

He said, "The OAG should to be like the lion in the Savanna, and should not allow those being oversighted to treat it like a gazelle."

He further advised the OAG to focus on its core mandate, keep fidelity to the law, oath of office and best interests to the people of Kenya and not be distracted by sideshows saying, "You cannot reach your destination by stopping to throw stones at every dog that barks at you."

The chairman expressed his happiness with the relationship of PAC and the OAG and promised to strengthen it further as he trusted it to execute its mandate devoid of sectarian political posturing; as the OAG has over and over again demonstrated that it has an "independent objective eye."

He further promised that his team will henceforth expedite its role of deliberating on the OAGs reports, saying that discussions of 2010/2011 reports will be done the entire August.



Participants for SAI – PAC communication workshop

On her part Ms Mita said, “ The Office of the Auditor General considers PAC and PIC to be watchdog counterparts in the our execution of the three pillars of certification of accounts, managerial accountability and service delivery.”

The SAI- PAC Communication workshop is the third to be rolled out in the AFROSAI-E (English speaking, Africa), after Zambia and Lesotho. Other countries that will experience this rollout include Uganda, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

This rollout workshop is being facilitated by PAC- Communication experts in the region who include Pritom Phookun (Norway), David Njoka (Kenya), Josephine Mukomba (Uganda), Louis Mwansa (Zambia), George Phiri (Zambia), Casiano Okecha(Uganda) and Nkopotseng Halsa (South Africa).

The workshop content included four modules:

- a) Introduction to toolkit for SAIs on communication and reporting line in expectation of PACs
- b) SAI-PAC communication strategy
- c) Meeting PACs expectations for regularity audit reports
- d) Meeting PACs expectations for performance audit reports