

THE COMMISSION ON ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE
“Office of The Ombudsman”



'Hata Mnyonge Ana Haki'

Press Statement for Immediate Release

CAJ Cautions Public Officers against Unprofessionalism

16th October 2012

The Chairman of The Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ), Commissioner Otiende Amollo, has cautioned public institutions against unprofessionalism. He said public officers are servants of the public and the Commission is keen to activate Article 1 of the Constitution which declares “All sovereign power belongs to the People of Kenya”. He was speaking during a public forum in Kisii on 16th October 2012 during a county visit by the Commission.

Findings of spot checks undertaken during the visit revealed public institutions need to improve in service delivery. Of the six Departments visited by the CAJ, only the Kisii Hospital was found to be the most responsive. The hospital has an effective complaints mechanism in place and good hygienic conditions. The visits that sought to establish how Government Officers are conducting business revealed unprofessionalism was rampant in most of the public institutions visited.

Most of the institutions visited were not friendly to persons with disabilities and officers were not courteous. The spot checks also revealed delays in service delivery absenteeism and lateness in reporting to work. A key service department came under scrutiny as the officers were found to use mother tongue in the office, with claims of corruption against the officers. Commissioner Otiende said use of mother tongue in the office undermines the integrity of public offices and committed to take stern action against public officers who use mother tongue in the office. He also committed to take action on some of the cases identified, and make recommendations to the relevant authorities to improve service delivery. He cited an example of a strike by lawyers that has paralyzed operations at the Kisii Law Courts, thus hampering access to justice by the public.

The Commissioner also called on all public institutions to establish effective complaints desks. “Public institutions will be required to display contacts of the Commission to enable dissatisfied clients to further lodge complaints,” he said.

During the visit, the Commission brought its services closer to the people. The legal team provided legal advisory services where members of the public had an opportunity to lodge complaints relating to administration of justice, abuse of power, and integrity. Among the institutions visited included the Kisii Level Five Hospital, the County and Municipal Councils, the Ministry of Land, the Kenya Police, The Department of Civil Registration of Persons, and the Law Courts.

The Kisii meeting is one of the county visits the CAJ rolled out on 26th September 2012 that will see the Commission hold public forums in Garissa, Nyeri, Lodwar, Eldoret, Kisii, Kisumu, Kakamega, Nakuru, Machakos, Mombasa and Kilifi. During the visits, the Commission undertakes to among other things create awareness, offer advisory services and receive reports on maladministration.

The county visits aim at enabling Kenyans to actively participate in democratic and good governance in pursuit of social goods and services. Kenyans at the grassroots should demand integrity, responsiveness, transparency, accountability and efficiency from people who have been given the opportunity to serve.

For more information contact Phoebe Nadupoi, Senior Manager, Advocacy and Communications on 0721 910 725; pnadupoi@gmail.com