



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **ATTORNEYS' PROFESSION LAUNCHES R30 MILLION EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE, THE ATTORNEYS DEVELOPMENT FUND, TO SUPPORT NEW ATTORNEYS AND PROMOTE GREATER ACCESS TO LEGAL SERVICES**

The attorneys' profession last night celebrated the launch of one of its major empowerment initiatives, the Attorneys Development Fund (ADF). The main objective of the ADF – launched in Cape Town during the conference and annual general meeting of the Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) – is to promote the sustainability and growth of newly established attorneys' firms.

The ADF is a joint venture between the constituent members of the Law Society of South Africa (the Cape Law Society, the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society, the Law Society of the Free State, and the Law Society of the Northern Provinces, the Black Lawyers Association and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers) and the Attorneys Fidelity Fund.

The ADF, a section 21 non-profit company set up by the above constituent members with a start-up capital of R30 million, will assist attorneys by providing

- infrastructural resources for the establishment or operation of practices;
- business support by accredited service providers; and
- training by accredited training providers to empower attorneys to utilise the infrastructure and resources in order to establish and properly manage sustainable practices.

'The focus of the ADF will be on assisting attorneys – particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds – to set up firms and to provide those attorneys with the necessary business skills, infrastructural support and mentorship to ensure the sustainability and growth of economically viable and efficient law practices as business concerns,' say LSSA Co-Chairpersons, Thoba Poyo-Dlwati and Henri van Rooyen.

'The ADF is rooted in the commitments the attorneys' profession has made in the Legal Services Sector Charter,' explain Ms Poyo-Dlwati and Mr Van Rooyen. In order to improve access to justice and to legal services for the public, the attorneys' profession has undertaken to promote

- the development of a pool of representative, well-trained and competent professional providers of legal services;

- the transformation of the profession through capacity building;
- access to legal services in all areas – particularly in impoverished areas – through initiatives to ensure the sustainable provision of legal services in such areas; and
- the provision of skills development and skills transfer development programmes so as to increase the body of qualified and competent practitioners.

The ADF will be governed by a board of directors representative of the constituent members, but independent from the organised attorneys' profession.

The LSSA's constituent members have put in place support and mentorship structures, as well as practice development and business leadership training to underpin the empowerment initiatives of the ADF with complementary skills development and practice support programmes.

***ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, THOBA POYO-DLWATI AND HENRI VAN ROOYEN***

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**Editor's note:**

The Law Society of South Africa brings together its six constituent members – the Cape Law Society, the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society, the Law Society of the Free State, the Law Society of the Northern Provinces, the Black Lawyers Association and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers – in representing South Africa's 19 000 attorneys and 4 900 candidate attorneys.

In Afrikaans items, please refer to the 'Prokureursorde van Suid-Afrika'.

The Attorneys Fidelity Fund is a statutory body established and regulated by the provisions of the Attorneys Act, 1979. Its objective is to protect the public against loss as a result of the theft of trust funds by practitioners. The protection provided by the Fund encourages the public to use services provided by legal practitioners with confidence.