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**LAW SOCIETY ELECTS POYO-DLWATI AND VAN ROOYEN
AS CO-CHAIRPERSONS**

Pietermaritzburg attorney Thoba Poyo-Dlwati and Welkom attorney Henri van Rooyen have been elected Co-Chairpersons of the Law Society of South Africa (LSSA).

The Co-Chairpersons have singled out the Legal Practice Bill as the major challenge for the year ahead. The Bill will restructure the governance of the legal profession and promote transformation. 'Should the current Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Mr Enver Surty, remain in his position after the elections, we are confident that the Legal Practice Bill will become a reality soon. We are committed to working with the Minister and the other stakeholders in the legal profession in this process. Since this legislation will be in force for many years to come, we must ensure that it entrenches the independence of the legal profession, as an independent profession and judiciary are fundamental to a democratic society,' say Ms Poyo-Dlwati and Mr Van Rooyen.

The Co-Chairpersons also indicate that they will encourage, through the statutory provincial law societies, monitoring of the scorecards that will measure compliance of transformation and *pro bono* initiatives in the attorneys' profession in terms of the Legal Services Sector Charter.

Ms Poyo-Dlwati has identified as important initiatives the implementation of a planned Attorneys Development Fund to support previously disadvantaged and new practitioners in their first years of practice to access and remain in the attorneys' profession; as well as discussions on cross-border practice rights in the SADC region. 'I also plan to engage the South African Women Lawyers Association and women in the legal profession to encourage their greater participation, particularly in the governance structures of the profession,' says Ms Poyo-Dlwati.

Mr Van Rooyen adds: 'Legal education and continuing training for attorneys are important to ensure quality legal service to the public.' He also highlights the pending court challenge by the LSSA to the Road Accident Fund Amendment Act and Regulations: 'This is an important challenge, particularly for indigent victims of motor vehicle accidents who may be unaware of the detrimental financial effects of the legislation, especially the removal of their common-law right to claim for compensation from the wrongdoer.'

Ms Poyo-Dlwati, a director at Pietermaritzburg firm Ngcobo Poyo & Diedericks, has been a council member of the LSSA since 2002. She was President of the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society in 2008 and is currently Vice-President of the SADC Lawyers Association. She has served on various committees both at the LSSA and the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society; has been chairperson of the Gender Committees of both bodies, as well as chairperson of the Pietermaritzburg branch of the Black Lawyers Association for a number of years. Ms Poyo-Dlwati focuses on conveyancing and commercial work and is involved in low-cost housing projects and land restitution programmes.

Mr Van Rooyen, an attorney, notary and conveyancer, is a partner at Welkom firm Neumann Van Rooyen Sesele. He has been a council member of the LSSA since 2005, is currently President of the Law Society of the Free State and has served on several committees of both law societies, including the Magistrates' Courts Committee and the Contingency Fees Committee. He has represented the LSSA on the Council of Debt Collectors and is a trustee of the Legal Provident Fund.

Photo attached: Thoba Poyo-Dlwati and Henri van Rooyen

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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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 18 400 attorneys and 4 900 candidate attorneys.

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