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MEDIA STATEMENT

**LAMOLA APPOINTS RATIONALISATION COMMITTEE TO IMPROVE ACCESS
TO JUSTICE**

The Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Ronald Lamola, has established a rationalisation committee to assist the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development to develop transformative solutions and address systemic barriers which inadvertently impede access to justice.

Access to justice in South Africa is severely curtailed by the lingering effects of apartheid judicial demarcations and spatial planning. In some instances, the distances travelled by citizens who interact with the justice system, is excessive. In other instances, the proximity of police stations, legal aid, and other state functionaries to a particular seat of a division of the High Court, has a bearing on the accessibility of the justice system.

The previous rationalisation process ensured that we now have a High Court of South Africa in each province. In order to ensure that these courts are able to fully service our population, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development must assess a number of factors this includes measuring the population ratio against the number of judicial posts in a division.

The rationalisation of the jurisdictional areas of the High Court comes at the heel of the rationalisation of the lower courts which is now at its final stages of implementation. Amongst other critical activities, the rationalisation committee will assess the judicial establishment of each Division of the High Court of South Africa, with a view to ensure that there is an equitable distribution of judicial posts across all divisions. The Committee commenced its work at the beginning of October, and it is expected to submit within six months, a report with recommendations.

The committee is chaired by retired Deputy Chief Justice Dikgang Mosenke, and comprises the following other members, retired Deputy Judge President of the High Court of South Africa Western Cape Division, Madam Judge Jeanette Traverso, retired Chief Magistrate, Ms Renuka Subban of Verulam Magistrates Court and retired Deputy National Director of Public Prosecutions, Dr Silas Ramaite. The Committee represents eminent persons with various experience in the judicial sector who will pledge their time in this tedious process as they have been discharged from active service.

The committee is established with a view to rationalise areas under the jurisdiction of the Divisions of the High Court of South Africa and the judicial establishments in order to enhance access to justice.

“ As we reimagine South Africa into a development state, we need to ensure that the structural barriers which inadvertently hamper access to justice are addressed systemically. I have no doubt that this committee headed by retired Deputy Chief Justice Dikgang Mosenke will deliver a report which will bring our systems in line with the best global practices. The rationalisation of judicial and associated posts will ensure effective utilization of human resource capital.”
said Minister Ronald Lamola.

The committee will be assisted by geographical information specialist amongst other specialists.

Issued by Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services

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