



SOUTHERN AFRICAN CHIEF JUSTICES FORUM

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT
AUGUST 2015 TO AUGUST 2016

24th September 2016

WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

1.0 INTRODUCTION

I welcome you all to this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Windhoek; a special welcome is extended to the Chief Justice of Seychelles, Honourable Justice Dr. Mathilda Twomey who is making her maiden attendance.

This year's Meeting like many others in the past was preceded by an Annual Conference, attended by judges and non-judicial officers, drawn from the Southern and Eastern regions of Africa. The jurisdictions represented in this year's Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting are: Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles, Uganda, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

At the last Annual General Meeting in Zimbabwe, we did not agree on who should host the 2016 Annual Conference and the AGM. The decision to host this year's Annual Conference and AGM, was communicated to the Forum Secretariat in May, 2016. The delay to have the venue settled on affected implementation of preparatory work, and full engagement with the Forum members. The proposed dates, and the theme, "**Contemporary Issues in the Prevention of Transnational Organised Crime with special reference to cybercrime, terrorism, money laundering, human trafficking and proliferation – The**

Judiciary's Response' was circulated to all members for approval. Concerns regarding the dates were raised, suggesting possible postponement given the fact that the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges' Association (CMJA) was scheduled to take place around the same time. However, given the financial commitments and plans put in place by the host, it became practically impossible to postpone this year's conference. It is gratifying that the response to attend has been very impressive.

2.0 INTERGRATION AND COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES

In the period under review the Forum continued to foster active participation with strategic partners. The International Commission for Jurists (ICJ), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Democratic Governance and Rights Unit (DGRU) have provided financial and technical support to the Forum to host this year's conference. The Forum itself has also provided financial support to its members.

There is growing interest from international bodies to work with the Forum. This is because of the Forum's strategic positioning, being the only organised formation of Chief Justices that is operational in Eastern and Southern Africa. Evidently, we have in this year's conference the

participation of; ICJ, UNODC, DGRU, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Venice Commission, and Government Agencies.

In the period under review the *Dutch Foundation Judges for Judges* has shown interest to work with the Forum. And generally, The Forum did not relent to foster participation with like-minded judicial strategic partners. And while we continued to foster cooperation with outside bodies, the Forum's internal participation, interactions and consultations, either at bilateral or multilateral level continued to be utilized, and should continue to be strengthened. Chief Justice Othman of the United Republic of Tanzania, will be hosting next year's CMJA Conference. We must support him and the Judiciary of the United Republic of Tanzania in every way possible.

3.0 JUDICIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Being cognizant of the fact that judicial education is a key method of ensuring high standards of judicial performance and support for the rule of law, our strategic objective and the Zimbabwe Resolution on judicial education and training are in accord with this principle. In September, 2015, when we met in Zimbabwe, we reaffirmed our commitment to judicial education and training, and agreed to work towards the establishment of a regional judicial training

institution/programmes to create opportunities for the systematic, standardized and sustainable provision of continuing legal education for judicial officers. Given the Forum's limited financial capacity to sustain this objective, inevitably, ways of engaging international support were explored. The ICJ and DGRU were brought on board, implementation strategies were developed, and the Forum's Secretariat participated in the process, leading to the existence of the Judicial Institute For Africa (JIFA), which is still in its formative stage, but offered its first course in *Core Skills for Judges* in April 2016, (for full details see Coordinator's Report).

4.0 CONCLUSION

Having adopted the Strategic Plan 2015 to 2019, the Forum through the incoming Management Committee must consider progressive implementation of the Strategic Plan.

PETER S. SHIVUTE

CHIEF JUSTICE/CHAIRPERSON: SACJF