



188, 14th Road, Noordwyk, Midrand, 1685
Private Bag X10, Marshalltown, 2107
Tel: +27 10 493 2500 (Switchboard)
E-mail: enquiries@judiciary.org.za
www.judiciary.org.za

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MEDIA STATEMENT

Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng hands over the reins of the Presidency of the CCJA

On 12 June 2019, the Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa, Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng, stepped down as President of the Conference of Constitutional Jurisdictions of Africa (CCJA) at the end of his two year term. He handed over the reins of the presidency of the CCJA to the President of the Constitutional Tribunal of Angola, Justice Manuel da Costa Aragão, who was elected for a period of two years. The handing over also marked the conclusion of the Fifth Congress of the CCJA which commenced on 10 June 2019 in Luanda, Angola under the theme: *“The Constitutional courts and Councils as Guarantors of the Constitution and the Fundamental Rights and Freedoms.”*

During his term of office as President of the CCJA, Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng, amongst others, oversaw the rapid growth of the CCJA as a continental body as well as its critical role on constitutional issues in the global arena. This can be attested by the growth in membership of the CCJA during Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng’s tenure. When he took over as President in April 2017, the CCJA comprised of 35 full members and one member with observer status. To date, the CCJA comprises of 46 full members and 3 members with observer status. The sharp increase in membership was due to Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng’s rigorous work in the continent in which he actively pursued jurisdictions that were not members by urging them to join the CCJA. He did this in commitment to the broader vision of the CCJA of bringing together, in a common African framework, African jurisdictions responsible for ensuring compliance with the Constitution; and the promotion of constitutional justice in Africa through dialogue and consultation. He remains steadfast to continue this drive beyond his role as the President of the CCJA.

Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng did not only ensure the increment in membership but also elevated the status of the CCJA in the global stage. He did this by ensuring that the CCJA participates in the Conferences of all other continental bodies from around the world thereby ensuring that the Africa’s voice is heard on constitutional justice matters. This culminated in the CCJA entering into co-operation agreements with three regional bodies, namely with the



Association of Asian Constitutional Courts and Equivalent Institutions (AACC), the Conference of the Constitutional Control Organs of the Countries of New Democracy (CCCOCND), and the Union of Arab Constitutional Courts and Councils (UACCC).

Additionally, during his tenure as President of the CCJA, Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng also served as the President of the Bureau of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice (WCCJ), for a year. And it was during his term as the President of the Bureau of the WCCJ that he convinced the global body to consider awarding the hosting of the Fifth Congress of the WCCJ in Africa. Indeed, the leaders of the world body agreed and awarded the rights to host the Fifth Congress of the WCCJ in Algeria in 2020.

It was through Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng's visionary leadership and commitment to judicial independence as well as the ideal to promote solidarity and mutual aid among its members that saw the CCJA pledging solidarity with Judiciaries that were under threat from the Executive branches of their respective states. This was done through penning statements that were published widely in the media in support of Judiciaries that were under attack in their respective jurisdictions. He also ensured that these statements also formed part of the agenda of the WCCJ, resulting in the WCCJ endorsing the need for the continental bodies and the world body to speak out against leaders who tend to attack the Judiciary for exercising its constitutional responsibility.

It was also during Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng's tenure as President of the CCJA that for the very first time since its inception the organisation participated in the Summit of the Heads of States convened by the African Union. This milestone was achieved in January 2018 when Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng had an opportunity to share the central role that Judiciaries play within Africa with the Heads of States. It is envisaged that the CCJA will continue to take part in such events as part of ensuring cooperation between the African Union and the CCJA.

Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng will remain part of the Executive Bureau of the CCJA for the next two years as per Article 20 of the CCJA statute which makes provision for the outgoing President to remain a member of the Executive Bureau for two years.

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Media enquiries:

Mr. Nathi Mncube

Spokesperson of the RSA Judiciary

C: 0848148364 **E:** NMncube@judiciary.org.za

