



**ADDRESS BY JUDGE PRESIDENT M LEEUW
CHAIRPERSON OF THE JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY DAY
14 DECEMBER 2021**

Honourable Acting Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa, Justice R M M Zondo;
Honourable Judges President and Heads of the Superior Courts;
Leaders of the Regional Courts;
Leaders of the District Courts;
Other members of the Judiciary;
Valued stakeholders of the Judiciary and members of the public following these proceedings on the social media platforms of the Judiciary;
Members of the media who have joined us on this virtual platform;
Ladies and Gentleman;

Good morning to everyone.

Today's occasion marks the 4th anniversary of the Judiciary Annual Report since its first release by the former Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng in November 2018. It was in 2018 that the Judiciary, under the former Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng, resolved that the time was ripe for the South African Judiciary to account to the public about their performance. It is generally accepted that individual Judges account to the public through their judgement but the Head of Court, in order to give effect to the Judicial Norms and Standard understood that measures had to be put in place to ensure that the public was giving an insight on how the Judiciary as an Arm of State was performing. This accountability process does not only provide the public with the opportunity to be assured of the independence of the judiciary from the other two Arms of state but to directly engage with Judicial officers as represented by Heads of Court. This allow members of the public to understand how the lack of funding of critical Judiciary projects impacts on the speedy resolution of their cases.



The Judicial Officers resolved that it was not only important but necessary that they should give account on the number of cases finalised, the number of judgments reserved, account on how long judgments are reserved and provide reasons thereto. The Heads of Court further resolved that a framework, through which, the Court performance will be collected, collated and compiled in a report format had to be developed. But the first step was to establish a committee of judicial officers, supported by the OCJ officials, to oversee the data-gathering-process that will culminate in a production of a report and hosting of what has become known as a Judiciary Day. The Committee was established and became known as the Judicial Accountability Committee. Guided by the collective wisdom of the Heads of Court, I have had the honour to lead this Committee as it performed its function in the past three years.

Reflecting on the period since the establishment of the committee, it is important to highlight some of the achievements. As mentioned earlier, the first task was to establish a framework that will guide the Heads of Court and Judicial Officers on the process to be followed to collect, collate, verify and compile a report. The challenge, as some of you might know, was (and still) is that the Judiciary did not have an automated system to collect data from all Courts in South Africa. The data was always in manual registers. We found that though all courts kept data and reported internally similar information, it was not kept in a uniformed format. Therefore, the committee had to find a way of ensuring that the performance information to be released was standardised and credible. After many deliberations the following was agreed upon:

- Developed and release a Framework Document
- Develop Key Performance Indicators with each indicator to have a description and method of calculation. (The Indicator description and method of calculation can be found at the back of the Annual Report.)
- Develop targets for each KPI.



- Ensure provision tools to be used to collect data from and to assist Heads of Court with the compilation of the report for monitoring purposes.
- The Committee will also be responsible for the development of the Annual Report and organising the Judiciary Day event.

I am proud that the Committee has been able to deliver on all its goals. It is necessary to mention that the committee also considered and agreed that the Judiciary must develop its own Strategic Plan (based on its constitutional mandate) to set goals for the Superior and Lower Court Judiciary. Acting Chief Justice and Colleagues, I am happy to mention that a draft has been successfully produced and it is going through its final stages of refinement. Acting Chief Justice, the Judiciary Strategic Plan will not be implemented successfully if it is not properly funded. Discussion must be had with those responsible for the public purse to release funds that will ensure that the Judiciary is provided with the necessary tools to fulfil its constitutional mandate. We are in dire need of world class court automated system.

I take this opportunity to thank the former Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng, the Acting Chief Justice Ray Zondo and all the Heads of Court for the support and cooperation. It has been an honour.

Thank you

