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Media Statement

### **Budget Vote 2018: Office of the Chief Justice**

This afternoon, I will table the Budget Vote of the Office of the Chief Justice (OCJ) for the 2017/18 financial year. The OCJ was established by Presidential proclamation in 2010 as a new Department to give support to the Chief Justice in the execution of his leadership role as head of the Judiciary.

It is a step towards an ultimate judicial governance and court administration model suited to South Africa's constitutional democracy. The budget I table today will further demonstrate our commitment to Access to Justice for all, as well as support for judicial independence and transformation.

This afternoon's address will highlight the following key areas:

1. Over the Medium Term Expenditure Framework period, the OCJ has been allocated a total budget of R6.9 billion inclusive of the constitutionally mandated allocation. For the 2018/19 financial year, the allocated budget amounts to R2.142 billion. Of this amount, R1.022 billion is allocated to Judges' remuneration and benefits. This means that the OCJ will have an operating budget of R1.120 billion. The budget for the Administration of the entire OCJ amounts to R201.872 million which constitutes 18% of the voted budget.
2. The capacitation of the Office of the Chief Justice remains one of the office's strategic goals. Over the 2017/18 financial year the Office of the Chief Justice has steadily worked at increasing the Department's human capital, as at 31 March 2018, the Department had 1898 funded posts as opposed to 1679 from the previous financial year.
3. There has been a steady increase in the personnel of the Office of the Chief Justice.



As at 31 March 2018, the Department had 1898 posts. These include staff for the Mpumalanga High Court, which is due to be set in operation during the course of this financial year. The difficult economic situation and budget ceilings on the Compensation of Employees budget continues to be a challenge.

4. The Judicial Services Commission (JSC), has consistently sought to advance the transformation of the Judiciary, as it relates to racial and gender representivity, as required by section 174(2) of the Constitution.
5. Through the Aspirant Judges Programme, and similar training programmes, the South Africa Judicial Education Institute (SAJEI) is providing a platform through which an adequate pool of Judges can be sought, thereby addressing transformation of the Judiciary. To this aim the funds allocated for judicial training of judicial officials has increased from R41 million to R52 million in 2018/19 financial year.
6. R44.1 million is budgeted for the ICT Master Systems Plan during this financial year. This will increase to R50.2 million during the 2020/21 financial year.
7. As I reported in my budget policy statement last week, when we dealt with the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development's budget Vote Cabinet has appointed an Inter-Ministerial Committee to undertake research and advise Cabinet on an appropriate court administration model. The Inter-Ministerial Committee has already done extensive work in this regard and I am optimistic that this important work will be accomplished in this financial year. The report and recommendations of the Inter-Ministerial Committee will also take into consideration the views of the Judiciary on this matter.
8. My colleague, the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform and I will engage one another on the acceleration of a revised Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Bill as directed by the Constitutional Court. The envisaged Amendment Act once passed seeks to create a separate Land Claims Court with its own Judges. Our engagements also seek to find solutions to the requisite financial support to Legal Aid South Africa with regard to its representation of liable litigants in land restitution matters.

