



Press Release

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For immediate release

SADC Regional Lawyers and African Judges Hold Joint Workshop to Deliberate on the SADC Tribunal Review Process

The SADC Lawyers Association (SADC LA) and the African Programme of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) will hold a workshop on Thursday, 27 January 2011 in Johannesburg to deliberate on the SADC Tribunal Review Process.

The workshop brings together judges and lawyers from the SADC region to focus on making recommendations to the SADC Heads of State and Government in line with the review process so as to ensure that the SADC Tribunal emerges from the process as a strengthened institution that is able and better placed to effectively provide justice to the citizens of the SADC region.

The SADC Tribunal was launched in November 2005 in Windhoek, Namibia. The first case at the Tribunal was lodged by a Malawian citizen on 27 August 2007. Over the years, the Tribunal has handled many cases, with the bulk of the cases being lodged by Zimbabwean citizens.

Following protests from the Government of Zimbabwe on the constitution and legality of the Tribunal, the SADC Summit at a meeting in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo in 2009 directed the regional Ministers of Justice/Attorneys-General “to undertake a review of the operations of the Tribunal with a view to strengthening it and improving its terms of reference”.

Whilst there have been mixed views over the legality of the process and the effect that it will have on the upholding of the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary in the region, lawyers and judges in the region have seen this as an opportunity for them to contribute towards the strengthening of the Tribunal.

The SADC LA and the ICJ aim at mobilising the participation of lawyers and judges within the SADC region and the wider African continent. Internationally renowned SADC lawyers, African judges and academics have been identified to lead the deliberations at the workshop. Participants have been drawn from Law Societies in

SADC, African judicial institutions, academic institutions and the SADC Secretariat's Legal Department.

Issued for and on behalf of the SADC Lawyers Association and the Africa Programme of the International Commission of Jurists

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