



Justicia Fiat

Launch
of
The Website of the Law Society
of
Lesotho

(www.lawsociety.org.les)

(A few Welcoming Remarks)

5th April 2018

by

Justice S.N.Peete

[1] I feel honoured and indeed delighted - if not humbled - to have been invited by the *Secretary General* of the *Law Society Council* to give “*Welcoming Remarks*” at this historic event where the “*Law Society Website*” – (www.lawsociety.org.les) is being launched. I speak on behalf of *Her Ladyship The Chief Justice Nthomeng Majara* and the *Honourable Judges of the High Court*. I must at once confess that I am not very conversant with *IT* gadgetry but I have been “*confidentially briefed*” as to how a *Website* functions and what it can offer as benefits. I also had an occasion to have a glimpse at the new *website* and I can’t help but marvel at what great items can be uploaded onto the *website* e.g. *Law Society* news, items, critique of cases, articles, complaints, comments,¹ opinions on the code of ethics, services, workshops, court sittings and the whole array of other matters.

¹ For example, proposed Judicial Reforms etc.

1972 – 1986

[2] When I was admitted as a young advocate in 1972, there was no *Law Society in Lesotho* and there were about 4 or 5 senior Basotho practicing lawyers.² Our present *Law Society of Lesotho* only came into existence in 1983³. To-day numbers have increased tremendously over the years into hundreds and we have about ten or more *King's Counsel*. The profession is at its new beginnings.

[3] The *Law Society Act No.13 of 1983* and *Legal Practitioners Act No. 11 of 1935* both need a complete overhaul in order to accord them with modern times and challenges. We also need a strong *Bar-Bench Association*⁴, we need a vibrant *Law Magazine* for the law profession. This magazine have its own site on the *website*. Lastly, we certainly need a *Law Training Institute* to cater for the (*Post law school*) professional training needs of a

² Names like *Messrs Sello, Ramolefe, Motlamelle, Mda, Molapo*, come to mind.

³ Prior to 1983 the Attorney General also exercised control over all legal practitioners in Lesotho – See also *Legal Practitioners Proclamation No. 93 of 1955 Law 4 of 1962 Act 7 of 1965 Act No.11 Of 1967 – Section 35*;

⁴ In Uganda their *Bar-Bench Association* is a powerful organization that supports both the Bench and the Law profession socially, ethically, and academically.

modern legal practitioner. It is in this scenario that the legal profession truly needs a Website – which in my view will be the “*life-blood*” of the ***Law Society of Lesotho***. With the website the legal profession will be enabled to lay firm foundations for Lesotho’s jurisprudence and its legacy.

- [4] Today the ***Judiciary of Lesotho*** and the ***Legal Profession*** no longer live or function exclusively in their own “*glass-houses*” or “*ivory tower*” (***French : tour d’ivoire*** –) because – as I always opine – “...*a lawyer of today may be a judge or magistrate of tomorrow..!*” No one is born a judge. As our revered ***Justice Schreiner*** once quipped:⁵ “*We are all students of law and must always learn and acquire more knowledge and skill in the field of law.*”

- [5] Today, we live in a fast moving world that uses ***IT*** gadgetry of all types and kinds and a website is one. The legal profession and

⁵ At a memorial lecture in Maseru late 70’s

practice in Lesotho today and in future shall be supported by this Website in the communication of important information and other data, in Lesotho and abroad. All these shall be now accessed with a lightning speed.

[6] We all know and accept that legal information is critically important in polishing our skills, our court advocacy and courtcraft and in the near future, court processes shall be filed and exchanged through the website and other media.

[7] More than anything, the *Website* will promote what I can call a *forum* for “*professional and for judicial excellence*” and it is only through uplifting standards of performance on all fronts that we can all achieve **confidence** and **respect** because we are “*all honourable men and women*”. The legal profession in Lesotho is one of most important stakeholders in administration of justice especially in the field of constitutionalism, human rights and of rule of law. An activist legal profession is a bastion of human liberties under the Constitution.

[9] Our young practitioners in the legal profession today must be strongly advised to actively access into and participate fully in this Website in order to polish, and advertise their intellectual prowess, capacities and talent into magnificent heights of professional excellence. Communication with other institutions of state and of the civil society shall be facilitated. We all live in a global village and indeed today you all have made history in opening “*new doors* and “*new corridors*” and you will have good rewards in your legal practice; new horizons and new knowledge will come your way. Today, we need practitioners who are specialized and to achieve specialized excellence,

[10] In today’s world, old sources of legal information are becoming very much antiquated and obsolete and like archives, they will soon be extinct! “*Googling*” is the in-thing. Even though I am about soon to retire from the Bench after a stint of 20 years, at heart I have always been a lawyer for the past 46 years; I will certainly contribute to the *Website* through my own personal initiatives as I intend to engage and dabble later as a consultant and we shall surely work at close quarters.

[11] Speaking for myself I must state quite clearly that today I am “*over the moon*” and excited about this new *Website* and I sincerely hope that the *Website* will link our legal profession in Lesotho with other legal professions on the subcontinent and with those further abroad. This *Website* – I am told - has “*no locked doors... no mountains... no dongas... no rivers... no oceans to cross! The sky is the limit!*”

[12] For the law profession in Lesotho dispensing legal services to the public involves many challenges which are multifaceted and this website shall become a life blood and pillar to the profession. The *Website* will be a modern electronic forum for communication of knowledge, information, ideas, intelligence, strategies and contact details all of which can be accessed by all members of the *Law Society of Lesotho*.

[13] I have also recently looked into the *Website* of the *Law Society of South Africa* (www.lssa.org.za) and have marvelled at the amount of information displayed on their Website ranging from ordinary

notices, legal services, professional comments on court decisions
even publications of vacancies on the Bench, even comments on
Bills before Parliament etc. Above all the new Website should
be used as an electronic medium for the stating the true visions
and goals of the legal profession, for instilling and upholding the
integrity of the profession and of the judiciary. I do wish that
sooner and not later, the *Judiciary of Lesotho* and the Faculty of
Law will also create their own Website and the two Websites shall
operate in unison.

Mr Khombelwayo Mlotswa

[14] I wish to thank ***Mr. Khombelwayo Mlotswa- Managing Director
- Mobile & Computers*** for his expertise in designing and setting
up this *website*. The *Website* of the ***Law Society*** is for which a
fine piece of work the legal practitioners and indeed the general
public will thank him dearly for the work well done.

[15] I also thank the **Management of *Victoria Hotel*** for having shown
us benevolence in offering “*gratis*” their *Banquet Hall* for this

historic launch which will be imprinted in the annals of the *Law Society of Lesotho*.

[16] I – therefore - on behalf of *Chief Justice of Lesotho, Her Ladyship Nthomeng Majara* and of the *Judiciary of Lesotho* here present, congratulate the *Legal Profession of Lesotho* for this noble pioneering feat and implore and exhort everyone to use this *Website* to its fullest potential and throttle!

I welcome you all and wish you all the best and *Godspeed!!!*

Justice S.N. Peete
9 April 5, 2018)