

Students for Law and Social Justice

Coordinated by students across South Africa

www.slsj.org

2015

National Committee Special Report

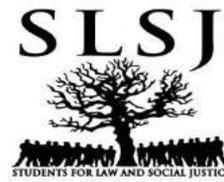


Composed by the National
General Secretary, Mr. Vuyo
Mntonintshi and the National
Chairperson, Mr. Nikhiel
Deeplal

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1. Introduction

In 2015, SLSJ was placed in a difficult and sensitive position owing to a culmination of events that took place throughout the history of the organisation. The problems faced affected various levels of SLSJ, including the membership and National Committee (NC). Due to history repeating itself time and time again, these problems seemed consistent - many SLSJ partners, and other external persons, as well as internal SLSJ members decided to take a stand - for our own good - against the organisational issues we as a student body faced.

Financial contributors were the initial bodies to signal discontent and indicated that they would no longer fund the organisation as they had done in the past. They gave a number of valid reasons for their decision; all reasons highlighted to us were that SLSJ had a history of a lack of accountability, communication and continuation with the financial contributors, which essentially caused a long-term breakdown in the relationship. Due to the lack of financial structures within the organisation and a lack of consequences for mala fide action (at all levels), people did not account correctly and accurately to funders, which meant that the funders could not see where their money was being spent. This was for obvious reasons problematic for them. The organisation's behavior in this regard was indicative that we had grown to be irresponsible and unreliable. They further found an issue with the lack of communication between SLSJ and them, and held that they were only reported to when funding requests for Seminar were required. This meant that they knew nothing of the organisation during the rest of the year; however, when it was time for Seminar proposals, SLSJ would just pop up and make requests, most times expecting funds. Following the receipt of funds SLSJ did not maintain communication with them as to the spending, as well as accounting to them properly. As stated above, in some cases, funders were not accounted to at all. With an exception to the Student Advice Programme (SAP), which was provided for by a particular funder, most of the money went towards Seminar which, due to the unclear communications line, created a certain perception of the organisation and limited it in many ways. Moreover, all the funds were often requested for the Seminar which meant that the organisation became known as a seminar based organisation, centering the organisation's aims on that. This was a detraction from other motives of SLSJ and is not satisfactory to those providing funding or those participating as members, as it denies the ability of growth or proper recognition of the Constitutional mandate of the organisation.

Many of the mentioned difficulties can be attributed to a lack of continuity in the leadership of SLSJ. Owing to the structure of the organisation being based on short-terms of leadership, where duties are passed to a largely inexperienced team, it is foreseeable that it

will continue to be a problem. Furthermore, there are very few mechanisms in place to safeguard an effective handover of information and leadership positions. This was present in terms of the NEC (this NEC experienced it personally) handing down information and records to the incumbent NEC. This meant that relationships with the funders began afresh every year with all institutional knowledge of the historic relationship of the funders and the NEC being lost in the process. The seeking out of the funders would only happen late into the term when the need for funds arose, and ended shortly after the money was given. This became a perpetual cycle and thus routinely broke down valuable relationships for SLSJ.

The problem of continuity extended beyond a break-down in communication, and affected a major concern of the organisation, which was that SLSJ was not a registered entity and functioned on an Ad Hoc basis from year to year. There was no way of them being secured when money was appropriated to us. This was especially difficult as we did not have a board or trust that could be held accountable, or a board to hold the NEC accountable. This also made fund raising increasingly difficult as a lack of a Non-profit Organisation (NPO) number meant many funders could not (as stated in their policies) provide us money. The lack of a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) also meant corporate could not give us money either. This caused a deficit in the amount and consistency of finances approved.

Last year, a Fiscal Agent was used to administer the funds for the Annual Seminar due to the above highlighted problem. Although one funder did consider doing the same thing this year, they later announced that this method could no longer continue and that we needed a legal entity which, as later highlighted to us by a partner, was amended into the constitution. This made it binding on the NECs, yet no one enforced this. Due to the above reasons, funds did not come through and the Seminar date was moved to allow for us to try deal with the situation. Most funding deadlines had passed and still no funds could be secured. In addition, there had been a promise for the past few years to the very same funders that SLSJ would become a legal entity, and each year the NEC reaffirming that they were working on it with nothing every materializing. They decided until we resolve our problems they would no longer fund us. Some went to the extent of cutting all communication until this matter was dealt with.

None the less, the NC took a decision to no longer have an annual Seminar and that will be discussed later in the report.

There were further problems for the organisation. We (and the office of the Chairperson in particular) discovered many issues as we interacted with partners, alumni, academics, civil society movements and friends of SLSJ. SLSJ became known as a Seminar-based organisation and was limited by this. It had not transformed and due to its historic past, still seemed to have a particular agenda of a particular place which seemed as if it was never going to change. Partnerships with Law firms and civil society organisations where being broken down as nationally there was no co-ordination, and at Branch level these relationships were being heavily compromised. This became problematic to us as we were losing these valuable and insightful partners. It was brought to our attention that SLSJ only approached partners to attend the National Seminar and that became the extent of the partnership. This meant that branches had become completely autonomous and unsupported in terms of the SAP and other outreach programmes we have, where these partners could have been great

assets. They also highlighted that SLSJ did not ask for help with the organisational issues we faced, to which many could have been solved at a very early stage with the help and resources of these people. We also did not in the past try and extend our relationship to partners who dealt with various sectors within the civil society space, and kept only in touch with the traditional partners we knew.

Alumni shared similar views as partners. They stated that SLSJ had a vast range of Alumni in various places that had access to multiple resources that were never called upon, and even if they were, we always called on a select few times. They stated that they were willing to help, and all that was needed was that we reached out to them. Alumni also raised the issue as to the role we now played within the university and civil society space. All of the above lead to one of our biggest partners to speak up and address directly about what they saw and how they thought they could help.

2. 2015 NC Meeting and Workshop

A letter was sent to the National Executive from this partner stating they would not be giving us the usual contribution towards seminar as they saw serious issues within the organisation which needed to be addressed first before they would fund us. Their letter informed us that they would rather have SLSJ leadership sit down and have frank discussions about transformation and where we are, where we are going, and how we should we get there. They thus informed us that they would be funding a 4-day NC Strategic Planning Workshop or meeting for the NC to do just this. They highlighted, amongst other things: the lack of communication between the NC and the NEC; the lack of visibility and activity of the NC; the lack of accountability within the organisation; poor financial control; and the bad state of sourcing funding. The letter highlighted section 8.7 of the SLSJ Constitution, which gave the NC the power in 2012 to register SLSJ as a legal entity to combat the issues raised above; but, as discussed above, nothing has been done or achieved to date. It also highlighted our non-existent financial records, which as a sitting Chairperson I found impossible to locate despite asking and being promised records. The letter also highlighted the lack of Institutional Memory with the high turnover of leadership. The letter lastly suggested that a review of the organisation should be done by an independent third party, prior to the workshop, so we could address those issues in the workshop. However, due to time, it was not possible, and the review may be taken care of after the workshop. They also offered to organize an employee for SLSJ for a certain time period to work exclusively on registering SLSJ. To this end, they were prepared and did fully fund this workshop that was left in the hands of the NEC of SLSJ to make decisions on, but which they assisted logistically and administratively. The letter stressed that the reason for this workshop was to strengthen the organisation and to help the organisation deal with the various problems we faced in a sustainable manner.

The workshop was then planned to take place in late July; however, due to the short time available and the amount of work that needed to be done, together with the fact that many NEC members, including the Chairperson were not in the country during the time leading up to the workshop, which despite their travels being necessary, proved extremely difficult for

the effective planning of the workshop. The workshop was then moved and it was decided to take place in September.

The workshop took place from Friday the 4th of September to Monday the 7th of September in Braamfontien, Johannesburg at the Section 27 and CALS Boardrooms. It saw the entire National Committee attending - or in the rare case in an NC member not being able to attend, then a representative was sent to echo the branch views. It was also decided to invite former leaders and founding members to speak with the group. Key partners within civil society, government and Chapter 9 institutions were also invited to talk to us about various things. The closed sessions, however, saw the NC sit together and deliberate issues before final resolutions were taken. These decisions were made with the intention of growing the organisation as well as restoring effective structures, leadership and goals. The Friday night session began at 7pm and ended at 2am the following morning. The Saturday session began at 9am and ended at 2.30am with a 1 hour comfort break in between. The Sunday session started at 9.30am and ended at 3am, and finally the Monday Session started at 10am and ended at 1pm due to many individuals flying out later that afternoon.

We are pleased to report that the workshop was a great success and saw some of the brightest and most inspiring minds of our time in attendance. Hon. JJ Jeffrey, the Deputy Minister of the DoJ, lead a discussion on the views of Government; and Deputy Public Protector Adv. Malunga shared the views of Chapter 9 institutions, particularly those of the Public Protector. Insights and perspectives were given by civil society organisations such as: the Legal Resources Centre, presented by Adv. Brickhill on behalf of Janet Love; Lawyers for Human Rights, presented by Jacob Van Garderen; Doctors Without Borders, presented by Sharon Ekambaram; Section 27 presented by Tim Hodgson; and Comrade Steven Falkner from Nine Plus Unions. Butho, from Section 27, also lead a session on effecting better communications. Finally, one of the most effective and informative sessions was the one with former leaders, both the founders of SLSJ as well as those who carried it forward in the last few years.

2.1 Former Leader's Inputs

The former leaders told us about the history of the organisation: it was established in 2008, in Cape Town, and it was a seminar based organisation, and the vision and mission of the organisation was centralised around access to justice and the national campaign. The former leaders mostly talked about how we can re-look and re-define the vision and objectives if this organisation, and ensure that it is relevant and also appealing to other students.

Proposals: SLSJ -

- (a) Must ensure that as many people as possible must participate in the organisation, and a sub-committee in every portfolio should be created.

- (b) Should review the financial policy and have a standalone policy for the whole organisation.
- (c) Have key performance indicators.
- (d) Must have proper induction and handover processes.
- (e) Have branch executive committees elected within a certain time of the year.
- (f) Have a threshold for the vetting process to second the nomination of a candidate that wants to join an organisation.
- (g) Should have a shift in language to have SLSJ be social-justice oriented, and branches continue to do activities that promote access to justice.
- (h) Have budgetary long-term plans.
- (i) Should develop a campaign that is not centred on law.

2.2 Resolutions

2.2.1 SLSJ as a Legal Entity

The NEC of SLSJ had agreed, at their meeting earlier this year, to start the process of registering SLSJ as a trust. After engaging with the NC, a list of Trustees was decided upon. The nominees nominated by branches were mostly white, and one of the nominees who fell in this category raised an issue with this. The General Secretary spoke to Equal Education who assisted in drafting a trust deed. Trustees were approached after the names were reshuffled and the response was very poor. This was highlighted due to the fact that the trustee list was ambitious and listed individuals who were high profiled and rarely available. This concern was shared by partners who were aware of the process being put into action. Getting the involvement of the NC in this discussion proved more difficult than expected and it was decided to push this matter to the workshop. Following a prolonged discussion between former leaders of SLSJ as well as the NC, the various options of the specific legal entity SLSJ could be were discussed and resolved. The NC resolved to register SLSJ as a Trust under the Trust Property Control Act No 57 of 1988 and will then proceed to register under the NPO Act with the Department of Social Development. There were concerns regarding how long the registration of a trust would take. If this is a prolonged procedure which will slowdown the fundraising process, then we will try and register as a common law organisation under the NPO Act in the interim. This will require massive constitutional changes and will therefore be a last resort. In a recent meeting, Janet Love, the National Director of the Legal Resources Centre, offered their services to help get SLSJ on its way and registered. We will therefore be engaging with the Legal Resources Centre for their assistance in drafting, and the legal steps to be followed to register the Trust. The NEC also decided that Marry Geel, a former compliance officer from the Western Cape, will be engaged with SLSJ to assist with the ground work of getting SLSJ registered. However, her services come at a price. We will take Section 27 up on their offer of having someone assist in this regard with the NC suggesting Ms Geel. The trust would comprise of five trustees.

On Monday morning, 7th September 2015 at the NC Workshop, we had a teleconference between the NC and the Open Society Foundation. OSF advised us on many matters, especially on how to proceed with funders in future. They explained their decisions regarding funding, and guided us as to what they required from SLSJ. Open Society Foundation (OSF) has indicated that they would be willing to offer support to SLSJ (financially and otherwise) for the process of setting up the Trust. An explanatory note on the funds SLSJ requires, and the purpose for the funds has been sent to OSF together with this report in order for them to consider the amount and the kind of support they will be offering. All of the funds received will be directed towards the registration of the Trust or work in connection with the above to sustain the organisation until such a time the above is achieved. These funds will be used to assist with costs involved in setting up the trust, in getting the trustees together, as well as a meeting between the NEC and the National Task Team. We still require a Fiscal agent to administer the funds on our behalf until the trust is set up. SLSJ is busy working on securing this agent (for seminar last year, the same process was used with UWC being the agent. But UWC would not be used as the agent again). In hope that we would have been registered as a trust by early next year, we will then apply for OSF's March funding call, in hope of receiving more funds then. In the interim, OSF has agreed to lend their support to SLSJ when we engage with fellow funders.

2.2.2 TRUSTEES

The NC together with the NEC compiled a list of potential trustees consisting of the following persons:

- Dorrón Issacs
- Judge Denis Davis
- Justice Kate O' Regan
- Peter Malaba
- Siphó Mtathi

All of the above persons were contacted and asked to be trustees. However, only one person, Dorrón Issacs, the founding chairperson of SLSJ, accepted the nomination. Alternative action had to be taken and the NC compiled a list of new nominees that reflected the demographics of South Africa better. Thus far the following persons have been approached and have agreed to be trustees:

- Dorrón Issacs- Equal Education Treasurer and founding Chairperson of SLSJ
- Nasholan Chetty- University of Fort Hare lecturer and Director of the of Legal Aid Clinic
- Sharon Ekambaram- Founding Director of Doctors Without Borders SA
- Lungo Siyo- Advocate at the LRC and former SLSJ National Chair

2.2.3 Congress Committee Chairperson

The NC was wholly appreciative of the efforts of the National Seminar Chairperson, Prince Asaga, in securing funding for the seminar and engaging in its organizing. However, issue was raised with the lack of transparency and lack of respect of due process provided by the seminar chairperson in accounting for the source of funds already received for the National Seminar. Clarity was sought with regards to the source of the funds and the manner in which they came to be in seminar chairperson's possession. Due to the short presence of Prince Asaga at the meeting the above issue was not addressed fully.

The NC resolved that an investigation conducted by the chairpersons of the University of Fort Hare(UFH), Walter Sisulu University(WSU) and the University of Cape Town(UCT) along with the National Treasurer, would be launched to investigate the source of the funds and the conduct of the seminar chairperson in his fundraising and upon conclusion, its findings would be presented to the NC.

It was further resolved that until the investigation was complete, Prince Asaga would exercise none of the powers delegated to him by the NEC as seminar chairperson and should the investigation prove unfavorable for him, he would be removed from the position of seminar chair. In the interim Tino Munrigani, general secretary of the WSU branch and member of the seminar committee was appointed as the acting head of the seminar committee. Should the investigation prove favorable for Prince Asaga, it was resolved that he would resume his position as seminar chairperson and Tino Munrigani would step down and resume his position as a member of the seminar committee.

The NC was informed by Prince Asaga that he had sold his motor vehicle and had donated the proceeds of the sale towards the National Seminar. Appreciative of the generosity of Prince Asaga the NC resolved to give the money back to him and requested he pledge the money to the Seminar once the taking place of the National Seminar was certain but the decision to do so would be solely up to him.

2.2.4 Transition from National Seminar to Annual National Congress

SLSJ has been known as seminar based organization due to the integral part seminars, including the Annual National Seminar, play in the organization. The Annual National Seminar affords students from different backgrounds, race, classes and universities an opportunity to engage with some of the most outstanding and distinguished persons within the social justice sphere and public interest law litigation.

The National Seminar also presets the members with an opportunity to elect new leadership during the NEC elections.

The National Seminar however has become a costly affair and the great number of members nationwide has made it impossible to reach quorum for the purposes of NEC elections during the National Seminar. In addressing these issues, the NC resolved for SLSJ to no longer have a National Seminar every year but instead host a National Congress. Due to the

lack of funding it also became apparent that a National Seminar would not take place this year.

2.2.4.1 National Congress

The National Congress will operate as a forum for delegates from each branch to discuss and amend the policies and vision of SLSJ. It is at congress that valuations of the organization will take place and most importantly necessary constitutional amendments will be performed at congress. In relation to the National Congress, the following was resolved:

- (a) The first congress will sit in 2016
- (b) The National Congress will decide on the date for the next National Semina

2.2.5 SLSJ Leadership

The National Seminar no longer being scheduled and it being the traditional location of NEC elections, the NC resolved that a National Task Team, its members selected by the NC, would administer the organization at a national level and perform similar functions as an NEC, albeit with a limited mandate which is as follows:

- 1) Facilitating the registration of SLSJ as a trust.
- 2) Develop a financial strategy that will ensure financial accountability
- 3) Organizing of the National Congress and NEC elections at Congress
- 4) Ensure occurrence of constitutional amendments through the use a block voting system
- 5) Maintaining and developing partnerships with other organizations
- 6) Maintaining communication between the NEC, NC and BEC as well as partners and funders.

The NTT will number six competent members that may come from any province, with no demographic or other requirements other than competency being used to select the members of the NTT. The process that was agreed upon was that an application form would be drafted and then released to all members of SLSJ. Applications would then be sent to branch chairpersons. Branch chairpersons would go through the applications made by members of their branches, and then from their experience as a leader within their branch, they would endorse those applicants they felt qualified. Following that, they would email all the applications to the entire NC with the names of the endorsed applicants being highlighted. The NC would then go through the applications and would then, via telecom, decide who would be appointed to the NTT. The NTT will be briefed and will be kept informed by the NEC while they are still acting in their official capacity. The briefing and informing of the NTT will be a form of handover where the NTT will be briefed on their specific role, which we hope to use funds from OSF for.

To assist the NTT in its newly founded mandate, the NC resolved that the current NEC will remain in a honorary role. The NEC will have limited power and will perform the task of facilitating the day-to-day running of the organization and ensuring a sense of continuity within the organization.

The reasons for the above decision are as follows:

- The tasks of the various portfolios within the NEC are essential in ensuring the work of the organization continues. These tasks have to be completed and have to have individuals to man these offices.
- It is not feasible to get a new NEC to serve from December, when the current NEC term would ordinarily come to an end, until the official vote of 2016 which will happen in April next year at congress.
- The sudden change over from one NEC to another, if it were to occur, would cause a great loss of institutional memory. The new NEC may not be fully acquainted with the challenges currently facing SLSJ and may fail to address them.
- If the current NEC were to completely leave office, the functionality of the organization as a whole will be directly affected and the vacuum it may create would be detrimental to the work of SLSJ.

To further ensure continuity and the maintenance of institutional memory, the NC decided that the Ex officio for the NEC that will be voted in at congress in 2016, will be the current National Chairperson, Nikhiel Deeplal.

2.2.6 Institutional Memory

This is one of the greatest concerns that the leadership of SLSJ felt must be redressed. Addressing the issue of institutional memory will ensure that the scenario where an incoming NEC does not know what the previous NEC was doing, documents not being able to be found, reports of the previous NECs being absent, does not arise. Such a scenario often results in the leadership not knowing how to approach a sponsor, which sponsors to approach, and even the due date for the submission of proper proposals are missed as a result.

It was resolved that:

- (a) A Google Drive account must be created where documents will be stored.
- (b) An effective handover process must be done.
- (c) Proper induction of the new leadership must occur. Concentration must be placed on all positions

2.2.7 Employee or Admin Assistant

SLSJ is an organisation that is controlled by students. The disadvantage with this arrangement is that students tend to be very busy with academics. In light of the issues

raised, working at the national level of SLSJ is almost a full time job. Each and every day involves having to dedicate a great number of hours to conclude SLSJ related work from booking, collection of data from branches consolidation of books making phone calls to redress the challenges that they are faced with having to engage with partners and sponsors who require reports funding proposals within a short space of time.

The NEC of SLSJ is changed each and every year, and the employee in the past would play a very pivotal role in the transition period between the predecessors and the incumbents.

The NC resolved that:

- (a) That we must approach our funders to assist SLSJ in paying our employee.
- (b) That the employee must be someone with accounting and booking skills.

2.3 Partnerships

Traditionally SLSJ has been well known within civil society. However, we have not managed to sustain concrete relationships with many of the organisations in this sector. There are several reasons for this break down. Firstly, relationships were centered around the National Seminar, where SLSJ would rely on the insight and expertise of influential members of these organisations. As it has not been possible to host a seminar this year, this aspect of SLSJ's relationship with members of civil society was lost. Secondly, the sustained relationship between SLSJ and our civil society partners has been impeded by the transitions between successive NECs. The current NEC only inherited a few strong relationships with civil society organisations from the previous NEC. These include our relationship with Section 27 and Corruption Watch. Our interaction with the civil society sector has been limited to our involvement with the Public Interest Law Gathering (PILG). This NEC decided to expand our relationships and add to our traditional relationships. It was then decided that the National Chairperson would engage with potential partners to try and build up SLSJ's reputation, as well as the organisation's programmes and projects. The NEC's goal in this was to provide more opportunities for its members through the establishment of stronger relationships with partners.

The following are existing relationships that have been maintained or strengthened:

1. Section27

We have successfully maintained a cordial relationship with this organisation. The Section 27/SLSJ fellows gave key administrative and developmental support throughout the year. The Fellows and former members of SLSJ that occupy permanent positions at Section 27 have continued to be an indispensable asset. Aside from funding the NC workshop, they offered strategic support, and assisted by providing resources. Furthermore, they provided SLSJ with telecoms, which were very much needed to facilitate NC communication. Their Executive Director, Mark Heywood, was always available to offer SLSJ guidance and helped this NEC become a cohesive and responsive unit.

2. Corruption Watch

Corruption Watch approached SLSJ in hope of working together on youth focused projects they are planning to roll out on a national level. They met with most of the NEC, and following discussions, it was decided that SLSJ would help with the nationwide implementation of a project regarding the upcoming 2016 local government elections. SLSJ will use its branches across the country to facilitate this project. The NEC met with youth leaders across the country to determine their thoughts on the campaign were, and what their needs would be. There will be a follow up meeting with the Executive Director, David Lewis, to discuss ways forward for the planned project.

3. CLASI

(The contents of the paragraph is currently being re-visited)

Relationships that were re-visited/established during the year:

4. The Legal Resources Centre

A series of effective meetings have been held with the LRC. An outcome of these meetings was an offer to assist SLSJ in the ongoing process of establishing a legal trust. Additionally the LRC has committed to investigating the possibility of creating internships, research and candidate attorney positions for SLSJ members. The National Director, Janet Love, will be presenting the above to their executive. SLSJ has worked with LRC on the PILG committee as well as on the Unite Against Corruption (UAC) committee. Our interactions have been a success, and we hope that this is the start of a prolonged relationship.

5. Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS)

CALS will be working with SLSJ on outreach programs in the near future, particularly in rural areas. CALS has also offered to investigate the possibility of internships for both under- and postgraduate students that form part of SLSJ's membership.

6. SONKE Gender Justice

SLSJ is involved in ongoing discussions with SONKE Gender Justice. So far SONKE has offered to provide members with information regarding Community Service projects as well as support to those affected by issues of gender. SLSJ is looking to further engage with SONKE in order to assist with their advocacy work. The possibility of establishing a research position for a member of SLSJ is currently being investigated.

7. Centre for Environmental Rights (CER)

SLSJ is involved in ongoing discussions with CER to create a position for a candidate attorney. This position would be for a period of two years. CER has proposed that our two organisations approach Bertha together to secure funding for this venture. CER suggested additionally that other public interest law firms be approached to create a rotation of the candidate attorney to maximise exposure. The success of these discussions is pending the outcome of further discussions with the Bertha Foundation.

8. Equal Education (EE)

SLSJ and EE have committed to establishing a national plan for a mutually beneficial relationship. This will build on the continuing work that the organisations do together, as well as offering support for any SLSJ projects surrounding education. EE has agreed to act as a fiscal agent for SLSJ when called upon. Unfortunately, a meeting with the EE law clinic was not successful. However, SLSJ has been advised that the possibility of a relationship should be revisited due to the change in leadership at the Law Centre.

9. Doctors Without Borders (MSF)

The relationship between SLSJ and MSF developed as a result of SLSJ assistance during the xenophobic attacks in Durban. The relationship has progressed with the possibilities of future cooperation and collaboration in future. These include SLSJ hosting public dialogues in conjunction with MSF in 2016. The possibility of creating internship or employment opportunities is being investigated by MSF. Finally MSF is investigating the possibility of offering fieldwork positions for SLSJ graduates in conflict zones should members wish to pursue advocacy in these areas.

10. Public Protector (PP)

SLSJ is currently in the process of entering into an MOU with the office of the PP. This will involve SLSJ notifying members of opportunities available in the offices of the PP as well as allowing SLSJ members to volunteer in satellite office projects across the country.

11. Foundation for Human Rights (FHR)

FHR has historically funded SLSJ's national seminar. Ongoing discussions indicate that FHR is interested in partnering with SLSJ on a number of projects. Firstly, FHR would like to run and fund a project that examines LGBTI issues in communities, schools and universities. FHR is also open to funding other projects that SLSJ may wish to undertake concerning human rights' issues. This may extend to any projects SLSJ may enter into with the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. FHR has also indicated that it will consider funding two permanent research positions aimed at furthering key areas of SLSJ's work – namely the national campaign on the transformation of legal education. Once this has been finalised the posts will be advertised.

12. Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR)

SLSJ has partnered with LHR to assist in their work conducted during the xenophobic attacks, as well as during PILG. Formal discussions are underway and possible projects are being discussed. In the mean time LHR has offered support to our outreach programs. They will also consider setting up exclusive work opportunities for SLSJ members.

13. Open Society Foundation (OSF)

OSF's relationship with SLSJ has been solidified. OSF is now playing a greater role in SLSJ after we made overtures for assistance as well as showed an intention to change the way we do business. We have made a funding proposal for a discretionary fund to assist with setting up the trust as well as the subsistence of the organisation until we get to congress.

14. Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DOJ)

SLSJ has previously abstained from forming relationships with government. This NEC took the decision to change this so that we may engage with the powers that be. This has led to multiple engagements with the Deputy Minister of Justice and the DOJ. In our interactions with government we have raised existing problems within government as well as proposed solutions. Discussions thus far have yielded the following opportunities. The DOJ has committed to supply SLSJ with constitutions in the official languages in order to assist in or program of constitutional literacy. The

DOJ will look to work with SLSJ on the 20th anniversary of the constitution celebrations next year. SLSJ will take up a seat on a body of review comprised of civil society organisations and government departments that will evaluate how constitutional education in the country is progressing and how it can be improved. Further collaborative projects focusing on access to justice are being discussed. Finally the DOJ has committed to source and provide literature on the specific areas these projects might focus on.

3. Conclusion

As an organisation that is constantly growing with a relatively young leadership, we are ready to admit that mistakes have been made. The biggest one being that we remained, and still in some areas, remain static when the world requires change. Change is sometimes difficult. This past year has made us realise its importance, and we - as an organisation - are ready to act on this. The journey we are about to embark on may not be one that changes the world as SLSJ strives to, but it is one that will certainly change SLSJ - a change which is necessary to ensure that SLSJ continues to exist next year, especially in the wake of the financial threats we face. This NEC has worked diligently under severe circumstances to keep the organisation alive and will continue to do so in the upcoming months. We would urge members of the leadership countrywide to assist in any way possible to ensure we reach our ultimate goal. The benefits of establishing SLSJ as a legal entity as well as the transformation the organisation will go through will outweigh any harm, and we believe that it will make SLSJ the organisation that everyone wants to be a part of. We thank our members, leaders, partners and funders for their support and contribution over the years, and we hope that this new transparent chapter in SLSJ's life will provide greater opportunities for the organisation.

SLSJ National General Secretary
Mr Vuyo Mntonintshi

and

SLSJ National Chairperson
Mr Nikhiel Deeplal