

**STUDENTS FOR LAW AND
SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**1ST NATIONAL CONGRESS
2016**

**STAY CITY CONFERENCE
CENTRE BEREA,
JOHANNESBURG**

15 - 17 JULY 2016

**SLSJ NATIONAL
CONGRESS REPORT 2016**

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STUDENTS FOR LAW & SOCIAL JUSTICE

INTRODUCTION

The weekend of 15-17 July saw the historic and revolutionary sitting of the first National Congress of Students for Law and Social Justice (hereafter “SLSJ”) at Stay City in Berea, Johannesburg . The theme of the Congress was ‘activism in our lifetime’. Cadre Nikhiel Deeplal presided for the last time as National Chairperson, he welcomed all guests and delegates and opened the beginning of a rejuvenated and inspired student movement.

The National Task Team (hereafter “NTT”), a group of skilled and passionate individuals under the stewardship of comrades Nikhiel Deeplal and Vuyo Mntonitshi, have geared up for this occasion from its creation in December. The Congress Committee worked tirelessly to ensure that all logistics and contingencies were in order to ensure that the revolutionary gathering was successful.

BACKGROUND

As an Association, we realise the changing circumstances and nature of issues faced by South Africans, young in particular, as having changed from the time the Association was formed. It then becomes necessary to review, not only our relevance in light of the current student politics of South Africa, but to restructure ourselves. We must ensure the role that SLSJ plays is effective, impactful and appealing advocating for social justice.

The first annual National Congress marks the launch of an SLSJ 'reborn'.

1. ATTENDANCE

All SLSJ branches, save for Varsity College Pretoria attended and were represented by at least six (6) delegates, including their respective Chairpersons. Members of the NTT, set up by the National Committee (hereafter "**NC**"), inclusive of Tinotenda Muringani, Vuyiselwa Ncube, and Lebohang Dube were present, alongside Nikhiel Deeplal, Vuyo Mntonintshi and Obakeng Monare as members of the outgoing National Executive Committee (hereafter "**NEC**"). We also had the pleasure of having two SLSJ Management Board representatives:- Advocate Lunga Siyo and Mr Nasholan Chetty, who briefly graced the delegation with their presence. Mr Sello Hatang, Professor Nomthandazo Ntlama and Ms Sharon Ekambaram of the SLSJ Management Board were unable to attend but sent their best wishes. *ProBono.Org*, *CASAC*, and *SERI* also sent representatives to show their support. *Section 27*, *Open Society Foundation*, *Juta*, *The LRC* and Ms Janet Love sent letters of support - as some of our greatest supporters to date. Well wishes and support were received from Justice Edward Cameron, Judge President Mlambo, Judge Kollapan and Legal Aid SA's CEO Ms Vidhu Vedhalankar.

2. OPENING GALA DINNER AND AWARDS CEREMONY

Advocate George Bizos delivered the keynote address at the opening Gala Dinner. Advocate Bizos, a well-respected human rights lawyer, recognised for his work in representing Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela in both his Treason and 'Rivonia' trials, hails as a living struggle hero and exemplifies how the law can be used to fight for social justice.

Honorary awards were given to the director of ProBono.Org, Erica Emdon (*the Victoria and Griffiths Mxenge award*), our Section27 Fellow, Tina Power and Vuyolwethu Mntonintshi (*the George Bizos Award*). Our most prestigious award, the Pius Langa Honorary Lifetime Chairperson Award, went to outgoing National Chairperson Nikhiel Deeplal - for his tireless work and immeasurable passion for social justice and the Association.

3. ADOPTION OF ANNUAL NATIONAL REPORTS

1. Secretary General's 2015 Special Report: **Adopted**
2. Secretary General's National Task Team Report (2016): **Adopted**
3. National Chairperson's Report (2015/16): **Adopted**
4. National Treasurer's Financial report(2015): **Not Adopted**
5. National Task Team Financial Report (2015): **Adopted**
6. Congress Chairperson's Report: **Adopted**

4. THEME AND PROGRAMME

Being our first National Congress, it was important to challenge ourselves as activists, so as to thrive beyond our comfort zones and to impact the community progressively. As young activists we want to plant a seed of change during our lifetimes, both to continue from where those before us have left off and to face the current social issues of poverty and marginalisation by race, gender and background. We grappled with the question of decolonising education, fee-free education, and redistribution of resources like land in our country. It is in each of us to play an active role, however small, in realizing the ideals of a socially just society. It was fitting to have Advocate Bizos address us- we thank him for his words of wisdom.

5. COMMISSIONS AND AGENDA ITEMS

In redirecting the organisation, the following resolutions were passed:

a. Re-Visioning of the Association

As part of re-visioning SLSJ, a document was adopted defining the Association. The Organisation's redefined vision is outlined as follows:

SLSJ is a student-based civil society organisation which engages in activism that seeks to engage students and communities, in order to build a socially conscious generation that will appreciate and contribute towards the promotion of constitutional values, access to justice and the realisation of socio-economic rights in different communities through community service and other programmes.

All necessary changes in this regard are reflected in the new Constitution of the Association, which was also strenuously debated and later adopted at this AGM.

It is important to note that SLSJ is no longer exclusively a law-student based activist organisation. This was arguably our most important resolution - SLSJ is open to *all* students registered at a South African institution of higher learning.

b. Partnerships with other student organisations

Noting the recent revival of student activism in South Africa, it is sad to note that SLSJ has been largely invisible. Last year the #FeesMustFall campaign dominated media and campus corridors while SLSJ was nowhere to be heard of. Members participated in protests and media appearances as private individuals. Other important campaigns that marked the beginning of the renaissance of student consciousness including #RhodesMustFall, #Open Stellenbosch and #IzweLethu.

Congress adopted a resolution that the NEC and branches must take active steps to form working relationships with the leaders of such movements. It was noted that SLSJ's participation at protests is encouraged. We condemn any violence or hate that forms the basis of such protests in which we participate.

c. National Campaign and National Agenda

The National Campaign:

SLSJ will conduct research and campaign for the standardisation, transformation, and decolonisation of university curricula. How it is that in one country a student studying at

Rhodes University can by paying more obtain a 'better' degree when compared to a student studying at the University of Zululand?

The National Research and Education Coordinator will release an official National Campaign Statement with preliminary research in due time.

National Agenda:

Two main issues were identified as areas of focus: Gender-based issues and race-based issues.

SLSJ will thrive to address gender-based issues of:-

1. Gender-based violence on and around university campuses.
2. Free sanitary ware for female students at all schools.
3. Rape culture on and around universities.

SLSJ will thrive to address race-based issues of:-

1. Criminalisation of hate speech.
2. Redistribution of resources(land) / outsourcing.
3. Language policies of universities.

The National Research and Education Coordinator will release an official National Campaign Statement with preliminary research in due time.

d. Free Education

SLSJ's Fees Commission conference, held at Misty Hills Hotel and Resort , led to a submission being made on behalf of SLSJ by the Legal Resources Centre. The Fees Commission set up by President Zuma to address the call for fee-free higher education in South Africa.

It was further noted that there is a possibility that fees might increase in 2017, SLSJ is to take the stance then, as to what should be the next move on the matter.

e. NEC portfolios

There were two changes in the titles of national portfolio offices.

The National Chairperson shall now be referred to as **the President, and;**

the National General Secretary shall now be referred to as **the National Secretary General**.

To fully comply with incorporation legislation, SLSJ must have only one authoritative body. It was resolved that the NEC will assume the position of the former NC as the sole controller and administrative body of the association as of the AGM. Congress thus ratified the NEC as the highest decision-making body and abolished the NC in its entirety. Communication will thus be direct between the NEC and branches.

f. Elections

As per our Constitution, free and fair elections of a new National Executive Committee must take place at each AGM. Elections for five national portfolios were held and the following individuals were elected:

Portfolio	Name	Contact Number	Email address
President	Tinotenda Muringani	084 384 9633	president.slsj@gmail.com
Secretary General	Lebohang Dube	078 922 3146	slsj.nec@gmail.com
National Treasurer	Kyle Dalton	083 699 8886	treasurer.slsj@gmail.com
National Research and Education coordinator	Siyabonga Ngcamu	074 323 0912	slsj.research@gmail.com
Ex officio member	Nikhiel Deeplal	076 924 7592	chairperson.slsj@gmail.com
**Community service coordinator	Ashleigh Le Fleur	076 3737 822	nationalcscslsj@gmail.com

** The office-bearer of the Community Service Coordinator portfolio is determined by way of appointment by the NEC.

g. Management board

To register as a trust, SLSJ has formed a board of trustees (hereafter “**Management Board**”). The Management Board is a body of appointed individuals who provide mentorship, guidance, and strategic support, to ensure the financial and administrative accountability of the National Executive Committee.

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The Management Board Members are:

1. Mr Sello Hatang
2. Professor Nomthandazo Ntlama
3. Ms Sharon Ekambaram
4. Advocate Lunga Siyo
5. Mr Nasholan Chetty

h. Constitutional Amendments

Important amendments included the inclusion of a Management Board, the shifting of power to the single executive body. This will ensure a system of constitutional checks and balances are in place to limit the powers of the NEC - while allowing the Management Board the capacity to observe the workings of the NEC and gives branches the power to keep the NEC accountable.

All amendments have been reflected in the Congress Minutes.

i. Adoption of the Constitution

The Constitution of SLSJ was adopted on 17 July 2016.

After many months of drafting, meetings, and debates, a new era of SLSJ is born.

4. FINANCIAL EXPENDITURE

<u>SUMMARY</u>		
FUNDER	INCOME	EXPENDITURE
SUBSIDY	ZAR 5,620.00	ZAR 5,580.00
JUTA SOUTH AFRICA	ZAR 24,500.00	ZAR 22,345.00
SECTION 27	ZAR 110,000.00	<u>ZAR 96,898.18</u>
OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION	ZAR 150,000.00	ZAR 150,000.00
<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>ZAR 290,120.00</u>	<u>ZAR 274,823.18</u>
	<u>CLOSING BALANCE</u>	<u>ZAR 15,296.82</u>

SECTION 27-FUND EXPENDITURE	
OPENING BALANCE	ZAR 110,000.00
<u>BUSES</u>	
UFS	ZAR 4,610.00
UWC	ZAR 6,272.00
WSU	ZAR 6,724.00
UFH	ZAR 6,412.00
UKZN-HOWARD	ZAR 4,320.00
UKZN-PNB	ZAR 5,418.00
NWU(SHUTTLE)	ZAR 7,200.00
OBSERVERS	ZAR 9,821.00
<u>SUB TOTAL</u>	ZAR 50,777.00
<u>SHUTTLES</u>	
OR TAMBO-DELEGATES 15th	ZAR 600.00
OR-TAMBO COMMITTEE 14th	ZAR 600.00
PARK- DELEGATES	ZAR 500.00
VUYO CPT SHUTTLE	ZAR 140.00
OR TAMBO-COMMITTEE & EXEC 18th	ZAR 600.00
OR TAMBO - DELEGATES 17TH	ZAR 600.00
<u>SUB TOTAL</u>	ZAR 3,040.00
<u>ACCOMODATION</u>	
ACCOMODATION 1	ZAR 2,894.40
ACOMODATION 2	ZAR 5,499.00
DEBTS	ZAR 2,093.00
<u>SUB TOTAL</u>	ZAR 10,486.40
<u>FLIGHTS</u>	
CANCELLED COMMITTEE FLIGHTS	ZAR 8,990.00
CONGRESS COMMITTEE	ZAR 11,187.00

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NTT(LEBO)	ZAR 1,425.46
NTT(TINO)	ZAR 948.00
NEC(VUYO)	ZAR 2,102.00
NEC(OBAKENG)	ZAR 2,501.46
BOARD MEMBER (CHETTY)	ZAR 2,339.86
SUB TOTAL	<u>ZAR 29,493.78</u>
NIKHIEL DEEPLAL	ZAR 900.00
TINOTENDA MURINGANI	ZAR 2,201.00
SUB TOTAL	<u>ZAR 3,101.00</u>
<u>GRAND TOTAL</u>	<u>ZAR 96,898.18</u>
<u>CLOSING BALANCE</u>	<u>ZAR 13,101.82</u>

<u>OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION GRANT</u>	
<u>ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
OPENING BALANCE	ZAR 150,000.00
STAY CITY	ZAR 150,000.00
<u>CLOSING BALANCE</u>	<u>ZAR 0.00</u>

<u>JUTA FUND</u>	
<u>ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
OPENING BALANCE	ZAR 24,500.00
TSHIRTS	ZAR 12,090.00
LANYARDS	ZAR 1,350.00
BANNERS	ZAR 3,625.00
CANCELLATION OF ORDER (HOODIES)	ZAR 600.00
ARTWORK (BANNERS, T-SHIRTS)	ZAR 395.00
TAX ON ORDER	ZAR 2,528.40
NAME TAGS	ZAR 1,756.60

SUB TOTAL	ZAR 22,345.00
<u>CLOSING BALANCE</u>	<u>ZAR 2,155.00</u>

<u>BRANCH SUBSIDY</u>	
ITEM	AMOUNT
STELLIES	ZAR 600.00
UCT	ZAR 600.00
NWU	ZAR 600.00
UFS	ZAR 350.00
UWC	ZAR 400.00
UP	ZAR 650.00
UFS	ZAR 220.00
VC-DURBAN NORTH	ZAR 500.00
UKZN-PMB	ZAR 300.00
UKZN-HOWARD	ZAR 300.00
WITS	ZAR 500.00
VC-WESTVILLE	ZAR 600.00
WSU	ZAR 0.00
OPENING BALANCE	ZAR 5,620.00
GIFT (GEORGE BIZOZ AND ERICA EMDON)	ZAR 400.00
FUEL	ZAR 400.00
SHUTTLES	ZAR 2,500.00
UFS CANCELLATION FEE	ZAR 70.00
REFRESHMENTS (ALCHOLIC AND NON ALCHOLIC)	ZAR 2,210.00
SUB TOTAL	ZAR 5,580.00
CLOSING BALANCE	ZAR 40.00

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5. LOOKING FORWARD

SLSJ continues to endeavour to inspire social consciousness on and around every campus and community it engages with. We look forward to a productive year, to work at ground level with communities and students so as to impact not only in the formal academic space but in real communities still suffering the abhorrences of apartheid and continued victimisation.

SLSJ continues a call for fee-free education and a transformed curriculum. We wish to expose the evils of sexual discrimination and gender-based violence at schools and campuses We desire open spaces for young South Africans to engage on real issues affecting real people every day.

6. SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank all our sponsors and congress partners:-

1. Open Society Foundation.
2. Juta Law Publishers.
3. Section 27.
4. ProBono.Org.
5. Lawyers for Human Rights.
6. Centre for Applied Legal Studies.

This Congress would not have been possible without your contributions. Without the financial and other support offered by funders and partners, this Congress would not have been as successful as it was. Your contribution to this movement goes a long way, it is an investment in the future success of our society through the work of all our members. We would also like to thank Advocate Bizos for addressing us and sharing his priceless insights. To all our guests and Management Board Members in attendance and absentia:- we would like to extend our gratitude for being a part of our story, *inde le ndlela esiyihambayo*. To all SLSJ members and branches, remember that the struggle for equality and social justice continues inside and outside SLSJ.

A luta continua.