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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **LEGAL AID SA ENCOURAGES PRACTITIONERS TO APPLY TO RENDER *PRO BONO* SERVICE**

Legal Aid South Africa encourages in the spirit of Ubuntu, legal practitioners to voluntarily apply to render *pro bono* service to those who are unable to afford the cost of legal representation.

Legal Aid SA CEO, Ms Vidhu Vedalankar said rendering of *pro bono* service will assist in the wider access to justice for the poor and marginalised segments of our community thus ensuring that the rights enshrined in our Constitution become a reality for all South Africans.

“This is the foundation of the rule of law, which is imperative to the sustainability of any democracy,” said Ms Vedalankar.

She said Legal Aid SA’s research indicated that communities that were not able to afford the cost of legal representation were severely under serviced. “Notwithstanding the role of Legal Aid SA, the organisation has limited financial resources, which makes it impossible to cover the entire spectrum of those who require legal assistance, thus, it is imperative that *pro bono* is available to increase access to justice as this will contribute to enhancing the image of the profession as one that also works for and understands the public good,” said Ms Vedalankar.

Legal Aid SA has concluded agreements with all 4 Statutory Law Societies, whereby the organisation is a recognised structure where legal practitioners can render *pro bono* services as required by the rules of the respective law societies. “It is in the spirit of

Ubuntu, that practitioners are encouraged to apply to participate in our *pro bono* program.” she said.

In this *pro bono* programme, matters will be identified for *pro bono* service and will be allocated to a practitioner. Practitioners will be required to render *pro bono* legal services to poor and/or indigent persons and a certificate will be issued recognising the amount of *pro bono* hours so rendered in accordance with the various Law Society requirements.

Ms Vedalankar thanks in advance, practitioners that volunteer to participate in this *pro bono* scheme, as practitioners will be making a critical contribution to our democracy to ensure that our Constitution becomes a living document for all South Africans, especially the poor who are the most vulnerable in our society.

**-Ends-**

**Issued by the Communications Department of Legal Aid South Africa. For more information, please contact the National Spokesperson, Mpho Phasha on 011 877 2081/2143. Visit our website at [www.legal-aid.co.za](http://www.legal-aid.co.za) or call the Legal Aid Advice Line on 0800 110 110.**