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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**LEGAL AID SOUTH AFRICA REAFFIRMS ITS COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING THE YOUTH**

This year, June 16 marks 40 years since the tragic events of the 1976 Soweto Youth Uprising. In commemorating Youth Day 2016, Legal Aid South Africa reaffirms its commitment to protecting the youth of this country, as entrenched in the Bill of Rights. At the beginning of Youth Month on 1 June, which also fell during Child Protection Week and on International Children’s Day, the Centre for Child Law at the University of Pretoria and Legal Aid South Africa in conjunction with ProBono.org launched a booklet entitled ‘Guidelines for Legal Representatives of Children in Civil Matters’.

Legal Aid South Africa and the Centre for Child Law have collaborated in various ways to promote and advance child rights in South Africa, and realised some years ago that there was a need to provide guidance as to the effective legal representation of children. A series of colloquia was then held by both organisations to try and understand the concerns of our practitioners on how best to represent children.

Our Chief Legal Executive, Patrick Hundermark, explains: “The experiences shared by our practitioners showed that it is a field of legal practice that can throw up challenges and dilemmas that professionals are not always expecting and for which there was minimal guidance. The colloquia thus ensured the formulation of guidelines for Legal Aid South Africa practitioners that conforms to recognised standards”.

The Centre for Child Law recommended that these guidelines be published, so that the profession could also benefit from the collaboration of the two organisations. “These guidelines serve to assist children’s representatives to understand their role; explain their role to the child and to others, and to ensure competent legal representation and adherence to appropriate ethical standards,” says Hundermark.

In addition Legal Aid South Africa, as part of its Memorandum of Understanding with the Chief Masters Office, administered estates on behalf of vulnerable children to protect their interests and effected payment of R46,3m to children beneficiaries in the 2015/16 financial year.

Such work is part of our ongoing commitment to fulfil our mandate as set out in the Legal Aid South Africa Act (39 of 2014) and Section 28(1)(h) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

The Guidelines can be downloaded here:

[http://www.pulp.up.ac.za/pdf/2016\\_04/2016\\_04.pdf](http://www.pulp.up.ac.za/pdf/2016_04/2016_04.pdf)

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**Issued by the Communications Department of Legal Aid South Africa. For more information, please contact the National Spokesperson Lesleigh Timothy on 011 877 2204 or Media and Marketing Manager Godfrey Matsobe on 011 877 2382**

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

Please be reminded that the name of our organisation **Legal Aid South Africa** is correctly abbreviated as **Legal Aid SA** and not as LASA. We respectfully request that you use the correct abbreviation **Legal Aid SA** which is representative of our mission to deliver quality **legal aid** services to the poor and vulnerable in South Africa.