

LEGAL SECTOR CODE: A TURNING POINT FOR TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA'S LEGAL PROFESSION

Johannesburg, South Africa – 23 June 2026

The Legal Sector Charter Council (LSCC) today reaffirmed that meaningful transformation in South Africa's legal profession is not optional, it is a constitutional and economic imperative.

The Legal Sector Code, gazetted on 20 September 2024, represents one of the most significant transformation interventions since the dawn of democracy. It seeks to address decades of structural inequality that continue to limit access, ownership, opportunity and economic participation for Black legal practitioners.

Despite Black South Africans (African, Coloured and Indian) constituting 92 % of the country's population, the legal profession continues to reflect historical disparities. Many Black attorneys and advocates face persistent barriers, including limited access to quality legal work, unequal briefing patterns, restricted opportunities in specialised fields of law, underrepresentation in leadership positions, and high attrition rates among young practitioners.

The Legal Sector Code was developed to change this reality. The Code introduces measurable and enforceable transformation targets aimed at increasing access to legal work, expanding ownership and management opportunities, strengthening skills development, and creating sustainable pathways for emerging Black legal practitioners.

Among its key provisions, the Code requires organs of state and public entities to significantly increase the procurement of legal services from Black attorneys and advocates, with dedicated targets for Black women practitioners. It also promotes greater participation of Black practitioners in complex and specialised legal matters, strengthens mentorship and training initiatives, and encourages the development and growth of Black-owned legal practices.

Importantly, the Code seeks not merely to transform demographics, but to transform economic participation within the legal sector. Transformation must be reflected in who receives legal work, who leads law firms, who develops specialised expertise, and who ultimately benefits from the economic opportunities within the profession.

The Legal Sector Transformation Fund further supports this objective by providing financial and developmental support to Black attorneys, advocates, candidate legal practitioners and emerging legal enterprises, helping to remove barriers that have historically prevented growth and sustainability.

"The Legal Sector Code is not about exclusion; it is about inclusion. It is about creating a legal profession that reflects the constitutional values of equality, dignity and access to opportunity. It is about ensuring that talent, regardless of race or gender, is afforded a fair opportunity to participate and thrive."

The LSCC calls on government departments, state-owned entities, the private sector, law firms, advocates, legal practitioners and all stakeholders to actively support the implementation of the Code and contribute to building a transformed, inclusive and sustainable legal profession.

South Africa's constitutional democracy depends on a legal profession that reflects the society it serves. The legal profession is a pipeline for the judiciary, and a transformed more equal profession ensures the judiciary is well served. The Legal Sector Code provides a practical framework to achieve that vision.

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Media Enquiries:

Legal Sector Charter Council (LSCC)

About the LSCC

The Legal Sector Charter Council is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the Legal Sector Code, promoting transformation within the legal profession, and advancing the objectives of broad-based black economic empowerment in the legal sector. It was set up in March 2026 and consists of key stakeholders in the legal profession. Ms. Christine Qunta is the Chairperson of the Charter Council.