

SOUTH AFRICAN VISITING LAWYER PROGRAM 2006/2007

The Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice Initiatives at the New York City Bar is seeking law firms and corporate law departments to participate in the South African Visiting Lawyer Program for 2006-2007. The Visiting Lawyer Program brings black lawyers from South Africa to New York City for an intensive one-year work-and-training program at New York law firms to enhance their corporate law and international commercial practice skills.

Although the South African political system has largely moved toward a more equitable distribution of opportunity along racial lines, the

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financial and legal leadership of the country continues to reflect the effects of apartheid. It is important to a successful transformation in South Africa that black lawyers and law firms build a stronger capacity to represent institutional clients and thus participate meaningfully in major commercial work. The City Bar, in furtherance of the New York bar's leadership in international commercial practice, would like to aid that process.

The Visiting Lawyer Program is now in its fourth year. Thus far, 19 South African lawyers, 10 New York law firms and the legal departments of five banking institutions have participated in the program: Citigroup; Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton; Clifford Chance; Cravath, Swaine & Moore; Credit Suisse First Boston; Goldman Sachs; JP Morgan Chase; Kirkland & Ellis; Morgan Stanley; O'Melveny & Myers; Shearman & Sterling; Simpson Thacher & Bartlett; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom; Sullivan & Cromwell; and Weil, Gotshal & Manges.

Philip Isom of O'Melveny & Myers, which has participated in the Visiting Lawyer Program for three consecutive years, noted that the South African lawyers come with an enthusiasm both to work and to immerse themselves into the firm and its practice. This motivation greatly facilitates their integration into the life of the firm, both in terms of their work and the friendships that are made.

Selection Process:

- Applicants will be solicited by the City Bar in collaboration with the Law Society of South Africa. Screening of applicants will be done by the City Bar and commercial practitioners in New York and South Africa;
- Final interviews and selection will be done by Justices of the South African Constitutional Court and commercial practitioners from New York and South Africa;
- Firms will have the opportunity to review the credentials of the successful applicant proposed to be seconded to them.

Criteria for Selection:

- Member of a historically disadvantaged group;
- Minimum of two years' practice experience;
- A demonstrated capacity to work well at the junior level, as evidenced by a statement by the responsible senior describing the trans-

action and the contribution of the applicant;

- Strong academic references;
- A plan to share skills on return to South Africa.

There are certain contributions that will be necessary from participating law firms, including salaries, travel expenses and other aspects of firm participation. The Association will conduct a pre-arrival seminar for the visiting lawyers to "bridge the gap" between commercial practice in South Africa and New York, and will conduct periodic seminars during the year to integrate these lawyers into the New York legal community.

Firms interested in participating in the South Africa Visiting Lawyer Program should contact Joan Vermeulen at the Vance Center, (212) 382-6680 or jvermeulen@nycbar.org.



Visiting Lawyers Program. Betsy Plevan, City Bar president (front left), and Joan Vermeulen, Vance Center executive director (top right), welcome members of the new class of visiting lawyers from South Africa and congratulate members from last year's program. They are (front, left to right): Bester Ngoepe, Meluleki Nzimande and Nzame Qokweni. Pictured (top, left to right) are Zodwa Zenzile, Zingisa Mhlaba, Nontu Made and Peter Mahlangu. Other fellows (not pictured) are Sabelo Mabuza and Muhammad Sader from last year's class.