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Department:
Public Service and Administration
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Launch of the Open Government Challenge on Improving Access to Justice to Marginalised and Vulnerable Groups

Preamble

Presented by South African Universities Law Clinics Association [SAULCA] on 28 October 2025 at the University of Pretoria, Hatfield Campus - Javett Art Centre, South Africa

We, the undersigned law clinics and access to justice partners in South Africa, reaffirm our sacred commitment to the ideals of our Constitution. In a nation still grappling with the deep wounds of inequality and injustice, we stand as crucial bridges between the promise of justice and its practical reality for the poor, the marginalised, and the vulnerable.

This pledge is not merely a statement of intent, but a living document of accountability. It is a promise to our clients, our students, and our nation. We recognise that our mission is bolstered by partnerships within the global Open Government Partnership (OGP) framework, and we note with expectation the commitments made by our international allies. This pledge serves to articulate our own duties while holding a space for the promises made to us.

Our Core Pledge:

We pledge to:

1. **Provide Zealous and Compassionate Legal Service:** To offer pro bono legal advice, representation, and education of the highest standard, ensuring that lack of financial means is never a barrier to justice.
2. **Champion the Public Interest:** To fearlessly litigate strategic cases that challenge systemic injustice, advance human rights, and strengthen our constitutional democracy.
3. **Educate the Next Generation:** To train law students not only in legal doctrine but in the ethics of social justice, creating a new cohort of lawyers equipped with both skill and conscience.
4. **Foster Community Partnerships:** To work collaboratively with community-based organizations, social movements, and traditional leaders to ensure our services are

accessible, relevant, and empowering.

5. **Uphold Transparency and Accountability:** To be transparent in our operations, accountable to the communities we serve, and relentless in our pursuit of a more open and responsive government.

Our Commitments:

To give life to this pledge, we commit to the following concrete actions, which we will publicly report on annually:

- Develop and implement a standardised data collection system across participating clinics to track case types, outcomes, and systemic barriers, creating a powerful evidence base for justice reform.
- Launch a dedicated "Strategic Litigation Unit" pilot within two university law clinics, specifically focused on enforcing the right of access to information (PAIA) and socio-economic rights.
- Host quarterly community legal empowerment workshops in at least five underserved districts, focusing on tenants' rights, gender-based violence protection orders, and basic labour justice.

Conclusion:

This pledge is our contract with the people of South Africa. We make it in the spirit of *Ubuntu* – recognizing that our humanity is bound up in one another. We also make it with a clear-eyed view of the landscape, acknowledging both our own responsibilities and the supportive promises that are yet to be fully realised.

We call upon our government to fulfil its constitutional obligations to fund and support legal aid initiatives. We call upon our OGP partners to expedite the delivery of their pledged resources. And we call upon our fellow citizens to hold us accountable.

Together, we can turn the promise of justice into a lived reality for all.
