

Legal Practice Bill

Earlier this year the Policy Unit of the Department of Justice had stated that it was intended to submit a draft Bill prepared by the unit to Cabinet in May 2001, with a view to this proceeding to parliament this year. The wider legal profession however met at a series of summit meetings to voice strong opposition to the policy unit's draft. The meetings were attended by the GCB, Law Societies of South Africa, Black Lawyers Association, National Association of Democratic Lawyers, Advocates for Transformation and SA Criminal Law Bar.


At a meeting of the wider profession with the minister on 20 April, a way forward was agreed. This is that:

- (a) The policy unit's draft will now not go to Cabinet in May.
- (b) A draft Bill will be produced by a joint government-profession working group of 15 (of which fully ten members will come from the profession).
- (c) Its chair will be the respected LRC director, Mr Geoff Budlender.
- (d) It is intended that a new draft will be

submitted to a further summit meeting of the minister, the profession and others in October.

In a media release dated 23 April 2001 Jeremy Gauntlett SC, the GCB chairman, welcomed the new initiative by the Minister of Justice relating to the drafting of the Legal Practice Bill. "The GCB welcomes

this constructive step. It offers the prospect of a principled, workable and affordable regulatory system, and which ensures that an independent judiciary is served by an independent legal profession."

The full text of the submission on the Legal Practice Bill by the GCB is reproduced on pages 17 to 19 of this issue. 



The GCB representatives at the meeting of the wider legal profession with the Minister of Justice on 20 April 2001 to discuss the Legal Practice Bill, from left to right: Chris Loxton SC, GCB chairman Jeremy Gauntlett SC, Fayeza Kathree and GM Malindi. Photo: De Rebus

Advocacy training: Lesotho workshop


Report by Sharise Weiner SC, Johannesburg Bar, convenor of the Advocacy Training Committee

The General Council of the Bar of South Africa conducted an advocacy training workshop in Lesotho over the weekend of 30 March to 1 April 2001. The workshop was funded by the US government and was co-hosted by the US ambassador to Lesotho, Cathy Peterson, and Judge Jan Steyn, president of Lesotho's appeal court. The workshop was opened by Lesotho's Minister of Justice and Human Rights and the US ambassador. This was the first time that the South African Bar has conducted an international initiative. Twelve South African trainers, including Justice Johan Kriegler, conducted the workshop in the high court at Maseru.

Although forty practitioners from Lesotho initially registered to partici-

pate, due to certain unforeseen administrative problems only twenty took place in the full workshop. The workshop ran from Friday evening until Sunday lunch. The training consisted of the demonstration and performance of practical advocacy skills, such as techniques in leading and cross-exam-

ining witnesses, and the presentation of oral argument.

The workshop was very successful and the GCB has been requested by the Department of Justice in Lesotho and Judge Steyn to investigate the possibility of conducting future workshops in Lesotho. 



At the advocacy training workshop in Lesotho: Judge Jan Steyn, president of Lesotho's appeal court (third from left), Katherine Peterson, US ambassador to Lesotho (fourth from left), and Sharise Weiner SC, convenor of the GCB's Advocacy Training Committee (far right).