

**CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS AND STATEMENT OF THE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN CHIEF JUSTICES FORUM CONFERENCE**

1. The Southern African Chief Justices Forum (SACJF), held a conference in Johannesburg, South Africa on 13 – 14th August, 2010, under the Theme ***“Sustaining the Independence of the Judiciary.”***

The Conference was attended by Chief Justices and Judges from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe.

2. Also attending the Conference were Mr. G. Bucchiquio, the President of the Venice Commission, Mr. P. Wendow of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and a representative of the Ministry of Justice of South Africa.
3. The Acting Chairman, Chief Justice Ernest Sakala of Zambia welcomed delegates to the Forum. The Chief Justice informed the delegates that the Meetings of the Forum are meant to promote an opportunity for Judges to consult, exchange views on various contemporary issues affecting member countries. The Chief Justice also called for close cooperation among

members to enhance the efficiency of the respective judiciaries.

4. The Conference received presentations and papers on different subjects including:

- The Danger of Politicizing the Judiciary;
- The Relevance of Commercial Courts to the Modern Judiciary;
- Computerization of the Judiciary; advantages and disadvantages;
- Modern challenges to the Independence of the Judiciary; and
- The Role of the Law and the Judiciary in Preventing Child abuse: The Zambian experience.

5. Following the rich discussions on the topics, the conference agreed to the following resolutions:

- (a) That the Judiciaries should continue to resist any moves that may be aimed at interfering with the decisions of the Courts;
- (b) That Judges of the member Countries should be sensitized and encouraged at different fora on the need to speak with one voice and resist pressure from the politicians;

- (c) That NGOs, the Civil Society and the citizens of member Countries should be sensitized on the need to accept the independence of the Judiciary;
- (d) That the best practices of the Commercial Courts should be extended to the other divisions of the Courts for the benefit of the whole Judiciary and for the benefit of all the citizens;
- (e) That the establishment of Commercial Courts in our jurisdictions will contribute to direct foreign investment and improve investor confidence in our Jurisdictions;
- (f) That the Introduction of Information Technology in our Court Systems will improve the efficiency, reduce backlog and reduce costs of running our Judiciaries;
- (g) That member Countries should share knowledge and resources on Computerization for the benefit of our citizens in member Countries;
- (h) That Judiciaries should encourage the establishment of Public Relations Offices which should react to the Media and defend, and give the correct position of the Judiciary.

6. The Forum mandated the New Management Committee to address various issues discussed and make amendments to the Constitution as suggested at the Meeting and by Chief Justice Ngcobo of South Africa.

7. The Forum acknowledges the contributions made by cooperating partners, particularly the Government of the Republic of Ireland through the Venice Commission toward the running of the Conference.

Johannesburg

14th August, 2010