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PRESS RELEASE

We issue this statement on behalf of the South African Institute of Intellectual Property Law (SAIIPL), its council and its members.

Established in 1952, SAIPL is the premier organization representing over 238 dedicated professionals specialising in Intellectual Property (IP) Law in South Africa. Our mission is to provide comprehensive support and expertise in various aspects of IP law, including patents, trade marks, registered designs, copyright, alternative dispute resolution in IP matters, anti-counterfeiting, plant breeders' rights, traditional knowledge and unlawful competition, as well as offering services in IP litigation and licensing.

At SAIPL, we pride ourselves on our members, who are among the finest IP counsel in South Africa and the African continent. They play a pivotal role in guiding both local and international businesses to safeguard their IP assets, thereby driving innovation and technological advancements. Our commitment goes beyond just legal counsel – SAIPL members actively represent our country as well as the interests of their firms and clients at prominent local and international organisations, including the World Intellectual Property Organisation.

Moreover, SAIPL takes a proactive stance in IP education and transformation within South Africa. We empower aspiring young legal practitioners and administrative professionals with the essential knowledge and tools needed to navigate the intricate landscape of IP law, fostering the growth and development of IP in the country and the African continent.

We have noted with concern the recent media coverage of legal and regulatory bodies such as the Road Accident Fund and the Masters Office. While the reports and the subsequent media coverage have been troubling, we cannot express an opinion on these organisations as we have little to no contact with these bodies in our day-to-day functions.

The purpose of this release is to offset any negative sentiment to these bodies by providing insight, and appreciation, for the tireless work carried out by the IP offices of the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission. We reference in particular: the Trade Marks Office, the Patent Office, the Registered Designs Office, the Plant Breeders' Rights Office, as well as certain surrounding functions such as the National Intellectual Property Management Office and the Technology Innovation Agency.

Without highlighting any achievements or persons involved with these organisations, as an industry, we compliment them on the tireless work put in to digitise and streamline processes, and the steps taken to bring the South African IP environment into the international fold.

The alleged downward movement and inefficiencies in similar bodies only serves to emphasise the upward trends we are seeing in the various IP offices and their surrounding functions.

As an industry body, we believe it is important to communicate our appreciation, and for the public to understand that there are well-functioning bodies that can serve as an example. No such function can or will ever be perfect, but the improvements in systems and efficiencies are to be commended. We also have no reason to believe that these upward trends are likely to reverse any time soon – in fact, we expect continued improvement given certain ongoing initiatives.

On behalf of our members and clients, we would like to thank these IP offices and their surrounding functions for the constructive efforts to keep South Africa aligned with international IP standards.

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