



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Launch of the Anti-Intimidation and Ethical Practices Forum (AEPF)

**Sandton, Johannesburg, 28 January 2015**

Today a group of professional organisations in South Africa came together at the Institute of Directors of Southern Africa (IoDSA) to launch an anti-corruption initiative called The Anti-Intimidation and Ethical Practices Forum (AEPF).

The AEPF was formed in May 2014 by eight professional bodies who share a common concern about the rising levels of corruption in the country and the concomitant increase in the intimidation of the 'guardians of governance' i.e. professionals who work in fields such as auditing, risk management and governance.

Over 30 professional bodies, as well as relevant regulators and crime-fighting organisations gathered to discuss how to collaborate to combat corruption and protect whistle-blowers within their membership bases.

Speaking on behalf of the founding members, Dr. Claudelle von Eck, CEO of the Institute of Internal Auditors, explained that escalating complaints about intimidation from members of professional bodies led to the decision by the heads of these bodies to take a collective stand to empower their members. She said that *"Although some professionals such as internal and forensic auditors are more affected by this trend, all the founding organisations agree on the need to strengthen the ethical foundations upon which our professions are based"*.

The Deputy Public Protector, Adv. Kevin Malunga, set the context for discussions in his keynote address entitled *'Empowering whistle-blowers in South Africa-dealing with intimidation and strengthening people and institutions'*. He emphasised that: *"Good governance in most countries, including South Africa, is dependent to a large extent on the degree to which corrupt and irregular practices are decisively dealt with. Whistle-blowers face many types of intimidation that range from physical threats to dismissals and other occupational detriment which is against the law. The time is ripe for us to harness all possible resources in South Africa to ensure that financial, accounting and all other professionals receive maximum protection as they do their work, especially for the state."*

Dr. von Eck invited all professional organisations present to join the AEPF. Members of the Forum will work together to strengthen ethical standards in the professional arena and lobby for changes that will accord greater protection for whistle-blowers. Furthermore, the Forum aims to work closely

with the offices of the Auditor-General, National Treasury, the Public Protector and Corruption Watch, amongst others, in its quest to mobilise professionals against crime.

According to Accountant-General Michael Sass, *“Tackling corruption in the country requires a concerted effort by all, especially professionals in auditing, accounting and finance hence I see such a structure as maximising my office’s efforts as an Accountant- General South Africa. I therefore welcome this proactive measure taken by leading professional organisations, and undertake to offer a supportive and advisory role. I am looking forward to working collaboratively and where my assistance is needed I will avail it within the prescripts of my mandate and availability of resources.”*

Kimi Makwetu, the Auditor-General of South Africa said that the AEPF *“is a welcome development as its emergence will assist in strengthening transparency and accountability in both the public and private sectors”*.

Dr. von Eck further explained that it is critical for professional organisations to educate their members on following the correct procedures when blowing the whistle, as well as the legal remedies available to them. She added that: *“Most importantly, we hope that whistle-blowers will take comfort in the knowledge that this Forum applauds them for the courage and commitment to do the right thing, even when it is not easy to do so. We are standing with them”*.

CEO of the Institute of Directors of Southern Africa (IoDSA), Angela Oosthuizen, expressed the view that *“For governance to be effective, all role-players in the governance structures and beyond, should feel comfortable to responsibly air their views and make professional recommendations without the fear of negative consequences. From the viewpoint of director level, courage is one of the critical elements of effective leadership.”*

The founding members of the AEPF are:

- The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners of SA (ACFESA)
- Crime Line
- Ethics Institute of SA (EthicsSA)
- Institute of Directors of Southern Africa (IoDSA)
- Institute of Internal Auditors of SA (IIA SA)
- Institute of Risk Management of SA (IRMSA)
- SA Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA)
- SA Institute of Professional Accountants (SAIPA)

For more information go to: [www.aepf.co.za](http://www.aepf.co.za) or contact:

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