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Press Release

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SA & EU launch R260 million *Access to Justice Programme* in Orange Farm on International Human Rights Day

Deputy President Baleka Mbete, accompanied by Justice Minister Enver Surty and Deputy Justice Minister Johnnie de Lange, and EU Ambassador Lodewijk Briët, today launch the R260 million EU-funded Access to Justice and Promotion of Constitutional Rights Programme. The launch coincides with International Human Rights Day, of special significance as it marks the 60th anniversary celebrations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one of the fundamental texts establishing respect for human rights as a guiding principle in international relations.

Ambassador Briët notes that "International Human Rights Day represents an invaluable opportunity to reflect on the persistent human rights challenges worldwide and to identify what further steps South Africa and the European Union can take, together and independently, to promote human rights both within our immediate spheres of influence as well as throughout the world."

With reference to the new *Access to Justice and Promotion of Constitutional Rights Programme* Ambassador Briët continues: "Together, the South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development and the European Union have decided to embark on this new programme. The objective is to contribute to the strengthening of democracy by improving access to justice and promoting constitutional rights for South Africa's most vulnerable citizens, in partnership with civil society organisations."

"In line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action ... our funding supports the implementation of the policy and strategy of the Department of Justice itself. In doing so, we respect the principle of ownership that is at the heart of our cooperation with the South African government."

The Access to Justice and Promotion of Constitutional Rights Programme was developed as a result of the Joint Country Strategy Paper agreed upon by the SA Government and the EU which sets out the development strategy for the period 2007-2013. The Programme is scheduled to begin in the second quarter of 2009 and will run until 2012.

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