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## **CW bids farewell to Lewis, Msimang, who leave an impressive legacy in SA's fight against corruption**

Corruption Watch (CW) will, at the end of December, mark the departure of both its executive director David Lewis and board chairperson Mavuso Msimang. The latter marks the end of his second term on the board of the organisation, while Lewis embarks on other projects.

### **Anti-corruption champion**

More than 10 years ago, a group of concerned citizens came together to address what was then a growing corruption problem in South Africa. Leading the charge was Lewis, former head of the Competition Tribunal, who embarked on an ambitious and bold project to mobilise the public to report their experiences of corruption, and hold corrupt leaders to account.

CW was established at the time as the leading civil society organisation in the anti-corruption space, and later, as the local chapter of Transparency International in South Africa.

Lewis bows out as the organisation's dynamic and fearless executive director, having led CW since its inception in January 2012. During his time at the helm, he has created a seminal role for the organisation in finding creative and innovative solutions to addressing corruption, whether through public mobilisation, strategic impact litigation, promoting legal reforms, public education and advocacy exposing the devastating impact of corruption on the lives of ordinary people and through cutting edge research. Indeed, he has relished the chance to call out those in positions of power, or take on the big guns around matters of transparency and accountability.

Msimang said of Lewis: "I have had the pleasure of serving on the Corruption Watch board for the past 10 years, and so have been personally acquainted with the monumental role that David has played in making sure that the topic of corruption has remained front and centre."

"It is hard for me to quantify all that he has achieved, in taking on what has to be one of the most important and serious tasks in salvaging our democracy. I commend him for his commitment, his scholarship, his zeal, and sheer force of will in never letting up, and I wish him well in this next phase."

Lewis has skilfully navigated CW through the tricky interface between civil society, the public and private sectors, and has ensured that the voices – and rights – of whistle-blowers have remained on the national agenda – all the while holding the organisation to a deliberately non-partisan stance.

In addition to his Competition Tribunal work, he has served as an adviser and contributor to labour market policy, competition policy and the Competition Act, a lecturer in economics, a trade union activist, and author of several books. Lewis looks forward to the next stage of his life, which is to enjoy time with his family, while still pursuing his writing and commentary on current affairs and policy.

### **Passing the baton to seasoned social justice activist**

Lewis hands over the reins to Karam Singh, the current head of legal and investigations at CW. Singh brings a wealth of experience to the role, with knowledge and understanding of public institutions at the forefront of the fight against corruption, as well as the role of civil society.

Holding a Masters in Law with distinction from the University of Pretoria with a focus on constitutional and administrative law, Singh is an admitted attorney in both South Africa and the United States.

Between 2006 and 2016, he served at the Special Investigating Unit and the South African Human Rights Commission, two public bodies that have special pertinence to the work of CW in seeking transparency and accountability.

In addition, his period at the Open Society Foundation for South Africa gave him valuable insight into the importance of organisations working in social justice to lobby for much-needed change. He is a seasoned and committed social justice activist who is passionate about access to justice, the realisation of rights and the fight against corruption.

### **A leader of great integrity**

On the broader organisational level, Msimang's term also comes to an end on 31 December 2021, after he completes his second five-year term as a board member. He brought a wealth of integrity and experience to his leadership role, drawing on his distinguished career that spans over 50 years in fighting for justice and accountability.

He has occupied positions in the public sector as well as leading international NGOs. His early years serving on the MK Military High Command and as secretary to ANC president Oliver Tambo earned him a legitimate place as one of the country's most respected anti-apartheid veterans, instrumental in laying the foundations for a constitutional democracy admired the world over.

In his tenure overseeing the work and direction of CW, he has provided insight and authoritative guidance in the challenging task of navigating the organisation through politically charged and turbulent times. Msimang has represented a strong and commanding presence in the ongoing fight to eradicate corruption in the country, and will remain a respected and valuable supporter of CW's work.

"Corruption Watch could not have had a more appropriate chair for the organisation than Mavuso Msimang. He is celebrated for his dignity, his integrity, and his courage; he has been a fantastic guide and role model for all of us at Corruption Watch," Lewis said. "He will always have a place here, and we are immensely grateful for what he has contributed to the organisation and to the society."

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