

MEDIA STATEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TAX OMBUD ANNOUNCES PROF. THABO LEGWAILA AS THE NEW CEO

The Tax Ombud, Judge Bernard Ngoepe, is pleased to announce the appointment of Prof. Thabo Legwaila as the new Chief Executive Officer of the Office of the Tax Ombud (OTO). Prof. Legwaila will assume the role of Chief Executive Officer at the Office of the Tax Ombud effective 1 April 2020. His appointment follows the departure of Advocate Eric Mkhawane last year. Judge Ngoepe said: “The appointment followed an extensive and competitive process



to select a candidate with the relevant academic qualifications and experience; Prof Legwaila is such a person. The appointment comes at a critical time when the OTO seeks its structural independence from the South African Revenue Service (SARS)”.

Prof. Legwaila has over 18 years of experience in the tax environment - 14 years in management and 13 years of executive experience. He joins the OTO after spending a number of years at Citibank, where he held several positions, including Senior Vice President Head of Tax: Africa and Vice President. Prof. Legwaila said: “I am honoured and thrilled to lead such an important institution. I am ready to use my passion and experience to ensure that the OTO succeeds in its mission; especially in its quest for structural independence from SARS”.

Prof. Legwaila holds the following qualifications: B Iuris (*Venda*); Bachelor of Laws (LLB) (*Wits*); Masters of Laws in Commercial Law (LLM) (*Wits*); Postgraduate Diploma in Tax Law (*UCT*); Masters of Laws (LLM), (*UCT*) and Doctors of Laws (LLD), Tax, (*Pretoria University*). Prof. Legwaila started his career as a Lecturer and advanced to Senior Lecturer in the Mercantile Law Department at the University of Stellenbosch. He was later invited to Harvard University where he spent time as a Research Fellow in the Harvard University International Tax Program in 2002. He subsequently moved into tax consultancy working for KPMG and later Ernst & Young. In 2006 Prof. Legwaila joined the South African National Treasury as a Director for Business Tax where his role was to develop the South African business tax policy as well as manage general tax legislative amendments and specific business law amendments.

In 2011 he joined Citibank as Head of Tax for the Africa division. Prof. Legwaila was appointed as a Professor of Tax Law at the University of Johannesburg in 2014 and as a member of the Davis Tax Committee (DTC) in 2015 which was set up by the Minister of Finance to *assess South Africa's tax policy framework and its role in supporting the objectives of inclusive growth, employment, development and fiscal sustainability*. Prof. Legwaila published widely in Tax Law both in accredited and peer reviewed journals as well as in magazines and newsletters. He also co-authored the tax textbook *Tax Law: An Introduction* in 2013 which is specifically intended at explaining “a vast terrain of tax law to students” and edited the second edition of the same book that was published in January 2020.

Issued on behalf of the Tax Ombud

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