

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

PRESS RELEASE

Re: FORUM SHOPPING

1. Reference is made to the above matter and my circular (Circular No.1 of 9 October 2013) addressed to the Attorney General, all Legal Practitioners and Law Society.
2. The above-mentioned circular has been construed to say that there are Judges sympathetic to parties' cases and that there are Judges who are corrupt.
3. I want to make it clear to all and sundry that at no stage did I intend to impute impropriety to the Judges. For the record, I hold the Judges of this Republic in the highest esteem and have complete confidence in their integrity, independence and impartiality. Consequently, to the extent that I was understood to impute that Judges are corruptible I have unequivocally apologized to them and assure the public that they have a corruption free judiciary acknowledged the world over for its integrity, independence and impartiality.
4. The cancellation of registration of the originating process at Lobatse was not intended to impute the Lobatse division to be an instrument of forum shopping or corruption, but a measure to minimize abuse of the judicial case management system registration process.
5. **The issue of forum shopping is a matter of grave concern to the judiciary and we are going to take steps to stop it. It cannot be acceptable that clients or their lawyers pick and choose who of the Judges should preside over their cases as that gives the impression that Judges are not independent and impartial and they will take sides unduly, in violation of their constitutional duty.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maruping Dibotelo', is positioned above the name and title.

MARUPING DIBOTELO
CHIEF JUSTICE

18 October 2013