

SA attorneys head to London for training

International Lawyers for Africa training programme candidates Nombulelo Beauchamp and Deon Nel.

Nombulelo Beauchamp and Deon Nel are two of 20 lawyers that have been chosen to participate in this year's three-month International Lawyers for Africa (ILFA) training programme. Eighteen lawyers will be placed in law firms and in-house legal departments in the United Kingdom (UK) and two will be placed in law firms in Dubai.

ILFA provides work experience in international law firms and also provides training in international law and key legal practice skills. This year the programme will run from 17 September to 7 December. ILFA is a *pro bono*/corporate social responsibility initiative launched in 2006 by international law firms to contribute to the development of legal skills and expertise of African lawyers.

ILFA director Nankunda Katangaza told *De Rebus* that candidates are initially selected by the 'in-country' committee in each country, which then compiles a shortlist. IFLA directors receive the application forms, interview notes and recommendations of shortlisted candidates from which to make their selection. Seventeen African countries participate in the programme, including Botswana, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe and Rwanda.

Ms Katangaza said that ILFA essentially looks for young lawyers, with about three to five years' post-qualification experience, who –

- have excellent academic credentials and references;
- demonstrate commitment to contributing to legal development in their country and Africa as a whole;
- are articulate; and
- demonstrate ambition and clarity of purpose.

Ms Beauchamp (31), an associate at Bowman Gilfillan, has been seconded to law firm Addleshaw Goddard's London office. She told *De Rebus* that she feels privileged to have been selected for the programme. 'There were several attorneys who applied, some of whom I met in the waiting area on the day of the interview, and any one of those candidates could have been selected,' she said, adding: 'I do not take this opportunity lightly.'

Ms Beauchamp told *De Rebus* that she applied to participate in the programme because she felt that she did not have the kind of exposure needed to grow as a young attorney and she was becoming increasingly demoralised. She said: 'I was searching for more. I learnt about the ILFA programme shortly before the date applications were due. I worked swiftly to meet the deadline and by God's grace I made it.'

Ms Beauchamp is hoping that the programme will provide an opportunity to increase her exposure to merger and acquisition transactions and to hone her ability to draft merger agreements and other transaction documents. She also hopes to gain more exposure to corporate law in general.

Mr Nel (30), a legal adviser at the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), has been seconded to law firm SJ Berwin's London office. He said that he was 'absolutely elated' that he had been selected for the ILFA programme. He added that it was an opportunity of a lifetime and that he considered himself 'truly fortunate' to be part of the programme.

Mr Nel told *De Rebus* that his participation in the programme would provide valuable insight into the UK's 'well-developed legal system'. He said: 'My secondment to one of London's leading law firms will provide valuable training opportunities and insight into the daily operations of a successful international law firm. This experience will expand my knowledge on programme financing and undoubtedly strengthen the DBSA's institutional capacity to expand current and future international partnerships.'

Nomfundo Manyathi,

nomfundo@derebus.org.za