

PRESS RELEASE

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ASAFO & CO. AND LAWTONS AFRICA ANNOUNCE LANDMARK TIE-UP IN SOUTH AFRICA

Asafo & Co. and Lawtons Africa are pleased to announce their landmark agreement to join forces. The tie-up both significantly strengthens Asafo & Co.'s presence in South Africa where the combined South African teams will comprise 70 legal professionals, and expands Lawtons Africa's geographic reach across the African continent.

In joining forces, Asafo & Co. and Lawtons Africa are transforming the African legal services landscape by creating a unique service offering dedicated to providing top tier legal services on a truly Pan-African basis. The transaction will result in a combined team of 180 lawyers and legal professionals across 6 Asafo & Co. offices, plus the Lawtons Africa Johannesburg office, thus spanning North, South, East and West Africa and offering first class services in both common law and civil law systems.

This landmark tie-up comes at a difficult time in the continent's history due to COVID-19 and lockdown regulations around the world and in various African countries, and will enhance mutual offerings to clients in an evolving fluid virtual world.

Asafo & Co. and Lawtons Africa's clients will benefit from the teams' pooled strengths in corporate/M&A, private equity, financing, projects, dispute resolution (litigation and arbitration), real estate, oil & gas, energy/power, anti-trust, and employment and the combination establishes an ideal platform to expand their highly regarded mining and projects practices in other key hubs in Southern Africa. The tie-up will also enable both teams to increase their influence in shaping the legal market across Africa, particularly in relation to banking and finance, corporate governance, compliance and regulatory issues, areas where both public and private sector heads regularly seek their expertise.

Both firms' shared dedication to the continent and meeting the challenges of Africa's rapidly evolving economies, including intra-African trade and industrialisation, comes as a timely response to current market demands. Asafo & Co. and Lawtons Africa are amongst the few firms that bring together expert on the ground local advice with international expertise, resulting in high value-added solutions for their clients. The combined capabilities will result in a distinct alternative for businesses seeking legal support in Africa, at both domestic and international levels.

"This is a significant strategic achievement for both of our firms and puts us on track to be the first full-size Pan-African law firm. Our shared commitment to Africa and deep understanding of the continent is clearly different from other firms that do not have the same level of local presence and international know-how. We also have several practice areas that are aligned and others which we will both mutually benefit from. The combination with Asafo & Co. will allow us to reinforce our ties in East Africa and open up opportunities in West Africa and North Africa. This is a natural development for our firm, which has been operating from Johannesburg since 1892," says Jeff Buckland, Chairman of the Management Board of Lawtons.

“This is a great opportunity for both of our firms to move forward. Asafo & Co. will benefit from expanded coverage in Johannesburg, Africa’s leading financial centre, and Lawtons Africa will also benefit from our Pan-African footprint in both French- and English-speaking Africa. The tie-up gives us the critical mass and momentum needed to expand into other key African jurisdictions, where we are currently scoping out opportunities,” adds Pascal Agboyibor, Managing Partner of Asafo & Co.

Key facts about the Asafo & Co. and Lawtons Africa tie-up:

- 180 international legal professionals with strong local presence and know-how (over 90% of the team is based in Africa)
- 6 offices in Abidjan, Casablanca, Johannesburg, Mombasa, Nairobi and Paris
- 9 working languages: English, French, Afrikaans, Swahili, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic and most local and regional languages
- A full range of practice areas and sectors:
 - Practice areas: corporate/M&A, commercial, projects, financing, private equity, dispute resolution, construction, real estate, competition/anti-trust, employment, business restructuring and insolvency
 - Sectors: energy (conventional and renewable), infrastructure, natural resources (mining, oil and gas), telecommunications, banking and financial services.
- The Asafo & Co. Johannesburg office will operate under the name Asafo & Lawtons, and will focus on inbound and outbound cross-border projects.
- The Lawtons Inc Johannesburg office will continue to operate under the name Lawtons Africa, and will continue operating in South Africa to support clients on engagements in the domestic market.

About Asafo & Co.

Asafo & Co. is an international law firm established to deliver a unique and integrated offering of world class legal services dedicated to Africa-related business. With experienced teams on the ground in key hubs across the African continent and a unique Pan-African footprint, Asafo & Co. has positioned itself as Africa’s leading international law firm.

The team works on complex and far-reaching transactions, financings and dispute resolution matters in a broad range of sectors, including energy (conventional and renewable), infrastructure, natural resources (mining, oil and gas), telecommunications, as well as banking and financial services. Asafo & Co. regularly acts for governments, States, private investors, developers, commercial and development banks, development financial institutions and investment funds.

About Lawtons Africa

Lawtons Africa is a South African law firm offering world class legal services. Its roots stem from seeds sown in down-town Johannesburg in 1892. The diverse and seasoned team is highly qualified, market-recognised and skilled. The practice areas include employment, litigation and arbitration, construction, tax and exchange control, corporate/commercial, transaction advisory, M&A, private equity, real estate, competition/anti-trust, business restructuring and insolvency, wills and estates.

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