



## LORD CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE KINGDOM OF TONGA

### PRESS RELEASE

19 August 2020

#### **APPOINTMENT OF MRS. 'ELISAPETI LANGI AS AN ACTING JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT**

Over the last 12 to 18 months, a surge in class A drug-related offences has caused significantly increased caseloads in the Supreme Court criminal division. Without additional judicial resources, many cases would be at risk of inordinate delays which in turn poses a threat to the due and fair administration of justice in the Kingdom.

To assist in meeting this challenge, on 30 July 2020, His Majesty, King Tupou VI, in Council, approved the appointment of Mrs. 'Elisapeti Langi as an Acting Judge of the Supreme Court pursuant to clause 88(2) of the Constitution of Tonga.

After inviting expressions of interest from the entire Tongan legal profession, Mrs Langi was chosen from the ranks of the Magistracy where she has been serving for the past approximately three years as a Senior Magistrate. In July 2019, she was invested by Chief Justice Paulsen with enhanced jurisdiction. Prior to joining the Magistracy, Mrs Langi served as an Assistant Senior Crown Prosecutor for ten years. Her career at the Bar has included high profile and important cases such as successfully prosecuting the first case under the Computer Crimes Act and as counsel assisting the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the sinking of the MV Princess Ashika. Mrs Langi holds a Bachelor of Laws, a Master's in Criminology and other legal academic qualifications. She has contributed to the advancement of the profession and is highly regarded within the legal community, both in Tonga and overseas. In 2014, she was awarded the prestigious Australian Leadership Award.

Mrs. Langi's appointment is initially for a period of four months with effect from 1 September 2020.

The Supreme Court will host a welcome ceremony to mark this historic occasion on 31 August 2020 at 9:30 AM in Court 1.



**Michael Whitten QC**  
Lord Chief Justice of the Kingdom of Tonga

