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LAW

'Gratitude': SA's first World Court judge hailed

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FILLED with gratitude and excitement for the journey that lies ahead, South Africa's first-ever judge appointed to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Professor Dire Tladi, has thanked all who supported him throughout his months of campaigning for the position.

The announcement of Tladi's historic election was made last Thursday by the presidents of the UN General Assembly and Security Council after rigorous voting rounds.

"So many people played a role in this, there's so many people to thank, I just don't know where to start.

"I feel so humbled by the whole experience, it's been a difficult couple of months of campaigning and trying to balance a lot of things.

"The process and how intense it was, has taken a lot out of me, but I am absolutely ecstatic, nervous, thankful, grateful, humbled," he said.

A professor of International Law at the University of Pretoria and Future Africa's Research Chair in Global Equity, Tladi's nomination was officially endorsed by South Africa's Cabinet in May, marking a recognition of his expertise and contributions to the field of international law.

Comprised of 15 judges elected

by the UN General Assembly, the ICJ plays an important role in settling legal disputes between nations in accordance with international law.

It also provides authoritative advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorised UN organs and specialised agencies.

Dr Heide Hackmann, director of Future Africa, welcomed Tladi's appointment as a milestone in the pursuit of global peace and justice.

"We are extremely proud of Professor Tladi and congratulate him on this remarkable achievement.

"His appointment as the first South African judge at the ICJ will undoubtedly raise the important voice of Africa and contribute to shaping a safer and more equitable world for all. We look forward to witnessing the positive influence his expertise will have, and commit our support to him in taking on this important international role."

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) said it had confidence that Tladi would represent the African continent.

LSSA executive director, Anthony Pillay, said Tladi would bring a new context and assist in further developing international law jurisprudence. "South Africa is proud that a South African representative has been appointed, and we know he will effectively represent our continent."