



THE JUSTICE LAW AND ORDER SECTOR

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE BART MAGUNDA

KATUREEBE

CHIEF JUSTICE OF UGANDA AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE

JUSTICE LAW AND ORDER SECTOR LEADERSHIP

COMMITTEE

AT THE 21st JOINT GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA –

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS REVIEW

HELD AT THE SPEKE RESORT, MUNYONYO ON THE 27TH

OCTOBER 2016

My Lord, the Deputy Chief Justice
My Lord, the Principal Judge
Honourable Ministers
Honourable Justices of the Supreme Court
Honourable Justices of the Court of Appeal
Honourable Judges of the High Court
Your Excellence the Head of Delegation of the European Union
and Chairperson JLOS Development Partners Group
Your Excellencies, Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Uganda
The Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Public Service
Heads of JLOS Institutions
The Solicitor General and Chairperson JLOS Steering
Committee
Members of the JLOS Steering and Technical Committee
Heads of Government Agencies and Departments
Partners and stakeholders from Civil Society and Private
Sector
Invited Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

I welcome you all to the 21st Joint Annual JLOS Government of Uganda – Development Partners Review. As with past reviews, this is a day we set aside to review performance and discuss the challenges that the Sector has faced in the past year.

This is a particularly important review as it considers our performance towards the end of implementation of the 3rd Sector Strategic Investment Plan and it comes at a time when we are designing our 4th Investment Plan.

The Sector has undertaken a mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Investment Plan and a report to that effect is to be launched in the near future. This year's performance report should therefore be able to provide a baseline against which we can review our progress by marking where we stand as of now in terms of the targets that were set by ourselves and by identifying outstanding challenges.

Building a trustworthy justice system for the benefit of all

This year's review is being held under the theme **“A Pro-people Justice System: Building Public Trust”**. This theme reiterates our goal to strengthen the justice system, promote the rule of law and enhance the public trust and confidence in our ability to provide a safe and just society in which the economy can thrive and each Ugandan is supported to achieve their full potential.

Over the past years, we have taken measures to create greater access to our services and improve the quality of care that we provide to our clients. We have worked to create a more certain legal and policy environment and a more conducive environment for doing business. We have also made progress in addressing crime, improving the observance of human rights and strived to improve our accountability internally while at the same time holding others accountable to the

public. In our report today, we will demonstrate the progress we have made so far.

In addition to the foregoing, we have also worked to ensure that people in Uganda have a better understanding of the Justice system and believe that it can serve their needs. Building public trust in the justice system is a pre-requisite to the entrenchment of the rule of law because Rule of Law basically presupposes accessibility to the law, equality before the law, observance of human rights, speedy resolution of disputes, fair trials and the consistent application of the law. As you will note from our report, these are the issues that we prioritized under our strategic plan. Therefore as we take stock today of our achievements and challenges, we are also looking ahead at what we still need to do to achieve the above stated noble goal.

Our findings and those of our partners and stakeholders demonstrate that we have made some strides in this regard. The report of the mid-term review indicates that public confidence in JLOS institutions has increased from 26% in 2012 to 48% currently and public knowledge of the JLOS institutions now stands at 90%. Satisfaction levels with JLOS services, by those who have used the services, has also increased from 59% to 72% on average. In comparison to other jurisdictions, according to the Global Competitiveness Report,

Uganda has risen in the Index of Judicial Independence from 2.8 in 2014/15 to 3.41 in 2015/16. The Country's overall ranking has also improved from position 128 out of 144 countries in 2014/15 to position 91 in 2015/16.

In practical terms, the Sector now has a functional presence in 82% of the districts, up from 75% last year and the number of districts with a complete chain of justice has now risen from 53% in 2014/15 to 59.8% in 2015/16, following the completion of construction of various facilities. The case clearance rate now stands at 125% and there has been a 20% reduction in pending cases. This has been attributed to the appointment of key personnel and the increased use of initiatives such as Plea Bargaining and the Small Claims Procedure as well as staff training and enhanced coordination and performance management across the Sector. Mediation has gained traction and we now report a 55% success rate, up from 26% in 2014/15.

As a result of the improved case disposal, we have also seen the average length of stay on remand reduce from 30 months in 2012 to 10.4 months currently and case backlog has reduced from 32% in 2014/15 to 25% in the year under review. Crime rates have also gone down as a result of the coordinated crime prevention strategies and improved investigations and prosecutions and the rate of recidivism is at 21%, one of the lowest in the World.

Addressing the bottlenecks hampering greater trust in JLOS

Our desire however is to see greater levels of confidence and satisfaction in the Sector. We are aware that case backlog remains a thorn in our flesh and relatedly the congestion levels in the Prisons are still excessively high. We also cannot shy away from the fact that corruption, whether real or perceived, continues to cloud the public perception of the Sector and ultimately reduces public confidence in the system.

This is where we intend to focus our attention now and in the year ahead. In the Judiciary, for example, we have already conducted a full census of cases in the system and are set to work on addressing the challenges that have slowed our Court processes. We are combining this with targeted policy and legal reforms to re-design the justice system so as to better meet the needs of Ugandans under the middle-income status the Country is aiming at.

The Sector has variously embraced technology and several institutions are working on transforming processes and service delivery mechanisms so as to bring them in line with the changing ways of doing business and to meet the global ICT demands. Automation of our processes and the creation of E-Registries across the Sector is a priority that we have to pursue and achieve.

These are not mere dreams but realistic tasks that we have set for ourselves and which we intend to achieve with the support of our partners and the general public. We have embarked on wide sensitization programs and information sharing and in this regard we are grateful to our partners in the media who have taken a keen interest and supported us in this endeavor. We urge you to continue promoting responsible reporting so as to enhance healthy dialogue in the promotion of justice, law and order in Uganda.

We thank our partners in civil society and the private sector who have worked with us, engaged us and challenged us to continue improving on the way we do business as a Sector.

We thank our development partners, whose support has contributed to our achievements this and the years before. We also thank our partners in the various Ministries, Agencies and Departments of Government in Uganda that have partnered with us and supported the Sector in different programs. We look forward to continued collaboration as we take the Sector into this final year of the 3rd Strategic Investment Plan.

Conclusion

Let me take this opportunity to welcome our newest member to the Justice Law and Order Sector, the National

Identification and Registration Authority. The Authority has taken on the mandate of handling the registration of all persons in Uganda.

I also take this opportunity to welcome the Head of Delegation of the European Union as the Chairperson of the JLOS Development Partners Group and the entire Delegation as partners in the future growth and development of the Sector.

I once again welcome you all to this meeting and it is now my singular honour and pleasure to declare the 21st Annual Joint JLOS Government of Uganda – Development Partners Review open.

Thank you for listening to me.

Bart M. Katureebe

CHIEF JUSTICE AND CHAIRPERSON, JLOS LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE