

**CLOSING REMARKS AT THE 5<sup>TH</sup> JLOS FORUM BY HON.  
BENJAMIN J ODOKI, CHIEF JUSTICE OF UGANDA  
DECEMBER 3, 2010  
MBALE RESORT HOTEL**

The Rt. Hon. Third Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Internal Affairs

Honorable Ministers present,

Hon. Judges present,

The Leader of the Opposition

Hon. Members of Parliament,

Heads of JLOS Institutions and other Government institutions and their representatives,

Representatives of Diplomatic Missions,

Representatives of Civil Society Organizations

Ladies and Gentlemen.

As you are all aware, the Annual JLOS Forum presents an opportunity for JLOS and its stakeholders to come together and deliberate on issues that are important for the enhancement of the rule of law, administration of justice and maintenance of law and order.

This year's JLOS Forum unlike previous JLOS forums that were held in Entebbe has been held in a different venue which is Mbale. The movement of this event to the Eastern Region of Uganda and preceding the event with an open day has allowed the JLOS Institutions to showcase the services they offer and to demonstrate that JLOS is not a Kampala affair. JLOS will

continue having its functions in the different parts of the country to enhance its interaction with society.

For the last two days, we have attended the 5th Justice Law and Order Sector Forum and had deliberations under the theme “Securing a Fair and Peaceful Election”. The selection of this theme is a demonstration of the sector’s appreciation of the relationship between fair and peaceful elections, the rule of law and maintenance of order in society.

The two day forum has focused on the opportunity for free and fair elections that is presented by the amended electoral laws, Electoral Commission’s state of preparedness for the coming elections, Public Order Management, the role of civic education in enhancing voter knowledge and participation in elections as well as managing electoral disputes before, during and after elections.

You will agree with me that we had eminent speakers and presenters who not only highlighted the strides made by our country in regard to the preparation for the coming elections but who also pointed out the challenges that have been faced, the issues that remain outstanding as well as the possible interventions to address the unresolved issues. These presentations generated interesting debate from which many issues emerged. A summary of the issues that emerged from the discussions has been presented to you but allow me to re-echo and emphasize some of the issues.

JLOS has responsibilities which include carrying out civic and voter education to raise awareness amongst the public;

maintaining law and order throughout the election period, investigation, prosecution and adjudication of disputes that may arise from the elections. Performance of these roles requires us to properly understand the needs and expectations of Ugandans and to exhibit robustness, credibility and neutrality as a way of allowing justice to be seen.

We have noted and agreed on the need to harmonize Government Interventions in regard to provision of civic and voter education as a means of sending out a uniform message to the public, raising the awareness of the public about the electoral process and particularly the importance of participation in voting.

It is acknowledged that the Civil Society Organizations, the media and other actors have also played and continue to play a key role in raising public awareness as we move towards the elections. We need to build on the positive strides made and strengthen the collaboration of stakeholders to ensure that we have free and peaceful elections

We have all heard from the Police and the Directorate of Public Prosecutions about the plans that have been put in place ahead of the elections. These interventions have included the establishment of units to specifically deal with election related cases that may arise. To concretize the mentioned interventions, we have agreed to critically look into the sector requirements from entry to the exit of the chain of justice regarding preparedness for the elections in 2011 and for future elections.

To address the requirements for preparedness, we will certainly need resources over and above what is at the disposal of the sector. As a sector we will therefore continue seeking support

from Government, our development partners and all our stakeholders to realize this noble cause.

Of course the tasks of the sector in this cause are many and the challenges are numerous, but I believe that with a combination of voter awareness, transparency, neutrality, proper coordination, cooperation and collaboration amongst the stakeholders, we can together contribute to having a free and fair elections as well as to the harmonious living in our society beyond the elections. My message to all of us as we close this forum is that we all have a stake and together we can make a tangible contribution. I therefore call upon each of us to do his/her part in the coming elections for the good of our nation.

Taking off time from your busy schedules to participate in the 5<sup>th</sup> JLOS Forum and your well thought out contributions to the discussions that we have had for the last two days is a manifestation of your appreciation of the fact that you are a stakeholder of the sector and commitment to dialogue and make proposals on how to address the issues that are critical for the sector and for the nation.

I must therefore use this opportunity to thank the Chairpersons of the various sessions we have had at this forum, for ably moderating the presentations and discussions. My appreciation also goes to the presenters for their articulate presentations. I also thank each one of us for our participation in and contribution at this forum. My appreciation also goes to the organizers for

coordinating the event and to the Mbale Resort Hotel for hosting this forum.

The theme of this forum has certainly generated a lot of discussion and perhaps the time was not enough for us to exhaust the issues that have emerged. We have made several resolutions which require multifaceted interventions. It is my appeal that we take forward the positive cohesion that we have exhibited at this forum to jointly tackle the issues that are ahead of us as we approach the 2011 elections.

Together we will be able to make a sound difference that will bring about freely flowing public confidence in and support to the government systems in our country.

It is now my pleasure to declare the 5<sup>th</sup> National JLOS Forum officially closed. I wish you safe journey back to your homes/next destinations.

For God and My Country

HON. BENJAMIN J ODOKI,  
CHIEF JUSTICE OF UGANDA  
DECEMBER 3, 2010