

THE JUSTICE LAW AND ORDER SECTOR

THE 6TH NATIONAL JLOS FORUM

Theme: a pro people justice system

20th – 21st March 2012

SPEKE RESORT AND CONFERENCE MUNYONYO

DRAFT SPEECH OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 6TH NATIONAL JLOS FORUM AT THE SPEKE RESORT AND CONFERENCE CENTRE, MUNYONYO HELD ON 20TH MARCH 2012.

The Rt. Honourable Speaker

Honourable Ministers

My Lord the Justices and Judges

Your Excellences members of the diplomatic corps

Your Highness the traditional leaders

Heads of JLOS institutions

Development Partners

Distinguished Guests

Members of JLOS institutions

Ladies and gentlemen

Individuals live and operate in a World of institutions. Our opportunities and prospects depend crucially on what institutions exist and how they function¹. It therefore, follows that how JLOS functions directly influences the opportunities available to the public who use its services.

¹ Amartya Sen; Development as a Freedom

I join the Honourable Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in welcoming you all to the 6th National JLOS Forum.

I welcome all the traditional leaders who have joined us at the Forum. The presence of traditional leaders at the Forum symbolizes the deep attachment they have to issues of justice in Uganda.

Madam Speaker, I would like to welcome you to the Forum and thank you for accepting my invitation to preside over the 6th National JLOS Forum as the Chief Guest. The JLOS family appreciates the remarkable work the Parliament of Uganda and you are doing to deepen and enhance good governance and democracy in Uganda. We also appreciate Parliament's role in providing the legal framework and resources necessary to discharge our mandates. JLOS is grateful to Parliament for passing about 80% of the JLOS sponsored and related laws.

We urge you in the same spirit to pass the pending bills on marriage and divorce, companies, counterfeits and geographical indications which are necessary for regulating family life and business in Uganda without delay.

The Justice Law and Order Sector, which has been in existence for twelve years, is made up of seventeen institutions, which are responsible for the administration of justice, maintenance of law and order and human rights. Collectively, JLOS institutions strive to promote the rule of law by ensuring the safety of the person and security of property. By working together and guided by the spirit of communication, cooperation and coordination, JLOS has registered several achievements in the delivery of justice. There is wisdom in related government institutions working together and I therefore encourage other sectors of Government to borrow a leaf from our experience.

The theme for this year's forum is **a pro people justice system**, which underscores the significant role people play in the delivery of justice. We are obliged by Directive Principle 10 of the Constitution **to take all the necessary steps to involve people in the formulation and implementation of development plans and programs which affect them**. There can be no better way of involving the people in the administration of justice than bringing our services to them and listening to their concerns.

We recognize that excluded and uninformed people cannot effectively participate in the administration of justice. Such people can neither advocate

nor cause the required reforms within the rule of law particularly, in Uganda, where there is a glaring gap between the people and the law.

We shall therefore, take it upon ourselves to simplify and educate the public about the law through barazas, the media, and publication of abridged versions of the laws. We shall deliver simple and straightforward judgments that speak directly to the litigants rather than the professional callings of lawyers. We shall also adopt a pro people communication strategy which emphasizes talking to people rather than talking at people to promote mutual communication between the people.

This heightened campaign of public engagement is meant to empower and inform the public about the law, their rights and most importantly, their obligations so that they can effectively play their role in supporting the administration of justice. It is a fact of life that a society can only change what it can see. Likewise, the society cannot change what it cannot perceive. Therefore, by getting the law to the people through translation and simplification, we shall be directly helping the society to participate, in a meaningful way, in the transformation of justice for the better.

We share and understand the challenges the public face in search for justice given delays that still make our services inaccessible and costly to the population. According to the World Bank, when judiciaries:

Carry a large backlog of cases they erode individual and property rights, stifle private sector growth, and, in some cases, even violate human rights. Delays affect both the fairness and the efficiency of the judicial system; they impede the public's access to the courts, which in effect, weakens democracy, the rule of law and the ability to enforce human rights.

The Third Justice Law and Order Sector Strategic Investment Plan (SIP III), has been designed to address in a concrete manner the entire root causes of delay and red tape in the delivery of justice. In particular, we shall pay attention to strengthening institutions through restructuring, staffing, retooling, training, monitoring and evaluation to give them additional mileage to discharge their mandates. We shall give strong consideration to developing and enforcing service delivery standards and performance management to weed out delay and improve service delivery.

In terms of empowering the people, we shall continue with our plan of extending our services to the most disadvantaged and under served areas.

Provision of legal aid in the next five years will be enhanced through state and non-state actors, purposely to empower the vulnerable to claim and enforce their rights and extricate themselves from ignorance. With regard to supporting the other sectors of the economy and the public to create wealth, we shall reform the law regulating business and cut down on the processes and time for registration of business, travel and acquisition of licenses and permits. Reduced lead times, will no doubt speed up the integration of Uganda within the East African Community.

We shall draw upon the achievements of our two previous investment plans and the lessons learned to build a better and a pro people justice system. By 2017, more people will have access to our services, more people will be confident about the law; there will be greater respect for human rights by all JLOS institutions; there will be reduced corruption; better living conditions for the men and women in the Police and Prisons; increased case disposal and reduced backlog and above all, a loved and respected JLOS.

These reforms will no doubt, call upon the support of the public, the Government and our Development Partners as well as the commitment of the

staff. I therefore call upon the Government and Development Partners to provide more resources to match people's aspirations.

Thank you for your attention.

I now invite you to watch a video presentation of the SIPIII before I invite the Rt. Honourable Speaker to launch SIPIII.

BJ Odoki

CHIEF JUSTICE

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