

**SPEECH OF THE AMBASSADOR, ANN WEBSTER, DURING THE VALIDATION OF
THE CONSULTATION REPORT ON TRADITIONAL JUSTICE AND TRUTH-
TELLING, JULY 18 2012**

Your Lordship, the Honourable Chief Justice,
Honourable Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
Honourable Minister of Internal Affairs
Hon. Deputy Attorney General
Honourable Justices
Honourable Members of Parliament
Heads of the JLOS institutions and representatives
District officials
Traditional and Religious Leaders
Members of the Civil Society Organisations
Fellow development partners,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is an honour for me to address you during this validation workshop of the transitional justice consultation report. On behalf of the JLOS development partners and on my own behalf, I wish to appreciate the JLOS institutions and individuals who conducted the consultations and have drafted this report that we are validating today. The report clearly brings out the crucial importance of traditional justice mechanisms as well as truth telling and reconciliation in a post conflict situation.

While appreciating this report, the development partners wish to express concern about the delayed report and the draft transitional justice draft policy. We are however optimistic that the processes for finalizing the policy will be expedited, and implementation will start promptly.

We would also like to appreciate the commitment of the Government of Uganda in fulfilling her commitment in the Juba Agreement on Accountability and Reconciliation. A lot has already been achieved in the implementation of transitional justice formal processes, for example the establishment of the International Crimes Division of the High Court, the pending trial, and the ongoing investigations. The findings of this study on traditional justice and truth telling mechanisms are clear evidence of the need for a holistic approach to transitional justice and the need to address it in an integrated way.

The report focuses on three issues. Traditional Justice, Truth Telling and Reparations. I would like to note that it is essential to link those traditional justice systems to the formal ones because these informal and traditional systems are where the Ugandan people adhere to in case of conflict. For example, many cases that involve land or family justice are being settled in the traditional justice systems. Sometimes, vulnerable groups like children and women are victims of these systems when principles of natural justice and human rights are not followed. Therefore, as we look at traditional justice within transitional justice, it is imperative for all of us to reflect broadly on how best traditional justice mechanisms can be strengthened and capacitated to enhance its compatibility with human rights principles.

The consultations have found that people feel there is a need for Truth Telling in order to come to sustainable peace and reconciliation. This truth telling, they say, should be both at national and local level. Also, it should be inclusive, addressing wrongs committed by all parties. I hope the validation workshop today will shine more light on how to organise such a progress. Also, it would be a good if government could publicly express commitment to such a truth telling process.

During the consultations, it became clear that there is a need for a reparation policy. Again, commitment from government is crucial here. Reparations can come in many forms, as the report rightly outlines. Compensation, restoration, but also more symbolic forms such as remembrance and public apologies. It would be good to here different views from the public and from government on this today.

The development partners acknowledge the coordination between the Government and in particular the JLOS, and civil society organizations in this discourse, however this can still be improved. We wish to reiterate the significance of a strengthened coordination between the sector and civil society for effective and collaborative implementation of transitional justice mechanisms; given the CSO's roles and placement in the lives of the common people and their ability to bridge government's role and programmes. We also hope for more coordination of the JLOS and the Prime Minister's Office that is implementing objective 4 on peace and reconciliation of the PRDP.

The Transitional justice policy is crucial for the enjoyment of sustainable peace and reconciliation among the war affected population, particularly those in Northern and Eastern Uganda. It will also guide the reintegration of the formally abducted persons who are not subject to the formal mechanism and will address some of the fears that are being raised by the war affected community following the lapse of Part II of the Amnesty Act.

With this few remarks I wish you all a fruitful discussion of the report.

Thank you,

JLOS

Justice for All