



**OPENING REMARKS BY HON ENG. HILLARY ONEK, MINISTER FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS  
AT A STAKEHOLDER CONSENSUS BUILDING WORKSHOP ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL  
TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE POLICY.**

**21 May 2013**

**Venue: Imperial Royale Hotel, Kampala**

My Lord, the Hon. the Chief Justice of the Republic of Uganda,  
My Lords, Judges and Justices of the Courts of Judicature,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Honorable members of Parliament,  
Your Excellency the Ambassador of Ireland to Uganda,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corp,  
Members of the Justice Law and Order Sector,  
Civil Society,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I welcome you to this very important consensus building workshop on the draft national transitional justice policy. I thank the JLOS development partners for their generous contribution to the Sector towards the development of Transitional justice and in particular, the Embassies of Norway, Ireland, Denmark,

Austria, Netherlands, the UN agencies, in particular the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UNWOMEN for their continued technical support to the sector in this very critical area of transitional justice.

In a special way I thank the Government of Uganda for recognizing the importance of transitional justice in this Country. I also do recognize the contribution of the local communities that provided the platform for pursuing transitional justice by providing the necessary information and support to the Sector, the civil society organizations for their vigilance in pursuing this subject; the religious and traditional leaders for providing overall guidance to this process.

In a special way, I thank his Lordship the Hon. the Chief Justice for providing strategic direction to the Justice Law and Order Sector, which today presents the draft national transitional justice policy.

Today, the Sector will demystify the concept of transitional justice, which I must say has sometimes been largely misunderstood. I have come to appreciate that transitional justice is a concept that has been alive in this country but needs to be revived and supported in order to realize its objectives.

Transitional justice aims at; healing victims, repairing the social fabric, promoting peace, reconciliation and accountability. These objectives are set in cognizance of the fact that in times of conflict, there are victims that need to heal from the harm they have suffered, the social fabric is most times broken, security of persons and property is at stake, relationships are broken, and crimes are committed with impunity.

Over the years, Ugandans endured untold suffering meted on them by various insurgent groups, such as; the ADF (Allied Democratic Forces), West Nile Bank Front,

UPDA (Uganda People's Democratic Army, the UNLA (Uganda National Liberation Front), the Holy Spirit Movement (of Alice Lakwena) and the Lord's Resistance Army.

During these conflict situations, millions of Ugandans were internally displaced, killed, children orphaned, women and girls abused, thousands abducted, and the normal social and economic fabric shattered. In the context of the LRA rebellion, it is estimated that over 30,000 children were abducted.

Today we are experiencing relative peace as a result of a combination of efforts by the Government. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has been at the fore - front of these pacification efforts notably; the Juba Peace Process that started in 2006 and yielded commitments on both the LRA and Government of Uganda side in relation to ending hostilities and finding comprehensive solutions to the LRA conflict in Northern Uganda. The Agreement also provides guidance for Uganda as a nation.

The Agreement on accountability and reconciliation in particular presents pertinent issues that are proposed in the draft national transitional justice policy. The Agreement;

- *Encourages the promotion of national legal arrangements consisting of formal and non-formal institutions and measures for ensuring justice and reconciliation;*
- *Encourages the use of traditional justice mechanisms;*
- *Obliges Government of Uganda to adopt formal justice mechanisms for the prosecution of serious crimes;*
- *Encourages Government of Uganda to adopt an integrated approach and multiple complementary mechanisms;*
- *Encourages the use of truth-telling processes and mechanisms for the resolution of conflict;*

- *Acknowledges the right of victims to information, meaningful participation, and dignity;*
- *Provides for reparations through a range of measures that may be include; rehabilitation, restitution, compensation, guarantees of non-recurrence and symbolic measures;*
- *Recommends a gender-sensitive approach in the implementation of the Agreement and that the special needs of women, girls and children must be recognized.*

I am honored to state that the sector has been guided by the Juba Peace process in the design of a national transitional justice policy.

This clearly shows that efforts dedicated to the pacification of northern Uganda have in the long run provided a guiding framework that will secure peace, promote reconciliation and ensure accountability so that violence is a thing of the past in this Country.

The proposed policy is a response to a legacy of past injustices and seeks to provide a prescription for strengthening stability while diminishing opportunities for impunity, through the application of a combination of justice mechanisms including formal criminal prosecutions, traditional justice, truth telling and reconciliation, reparations and amnesty.

The Sector proposals are as follows;

- a. Under the Formal Justice process; Government shall ensure witnesses are protected and victims participate in proceedings and to the extent possible, remove barriers for access to justice by victims especially the vulnerable.

- b. Under the traditional justice process; Government recognizes traditional justice mechanisms as a tool for conflict resolution.
- c. Under the truth telling process; Government shall establish and resource a national truth telling process.
- d. Under reparations; Government shall establish and implement a reparations programme for victims affected by conflict.
- e. There shall be No blanket amnesty and Government shall encourage those amnestied, to participate in truth telling and traditional justice processes.

The proposals highlighted are a representation of a majority views from a cross section of persons consulted during the key sector consultations and I can with confidence say that the policy marks a major milestone in the history of the administration of justice in Uganda.

With this policy, I am optimistic that much will be achieved in as far as creating room for accountability, healing, genuine forgiveness and reconciliation between the victims and the alleged perpetrators.

It now gives me great pleasure to officially open this consensus building workshop.

**Hon. Eng. Hillary Onek**

**MINISTER FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS.**