



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 20TH JOINT GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA – DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS
REVIEW**

HELD AT THE SPEKE RESORT, MUNYONYO ON THE 15TH OCTOBER 2015

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

Your Excellency, the Ambassador of Ireland and Chairperson of JLOS Development Partners Group

Your Excellences, Heads of Diplomatic Missions to Uganda

The Secretary to 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 Committees

Heads of Government Agencies and Departments

Partners and stakeholders from civil society

Invited guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

It is my honour to welcome you all to this 20th Joint Annual JLOS Government of Uganda - Development Partners Review. The review is an opportunity to once again take time to reflect on what we have achieved in the past year, and those tasks still ahead of us. I thank our

partners for their continued support, in terms of the resources provided but also with regard to the partnership, engagement and joint implementation of projects.

I wish note however, that this was a challenging year where the share of the JLOS budget as a proportion of the national budget dropped by 19% from 6.7% to 5.4% and worse still, the development budget dropped by 45% from 0.4% to 0.22% as a share of the national budget. This budget performance notwithstanding, the Sector was able to achieve commendable performance in the financial year.

I thank the JLOS institutions for their continued service and efforts towards the progress that we have been able to register thus far. I take this opportunity to acknowledge those who we have lost, who have contributed to the growth and the successes we have achieved this year.

I recognise the late General Aronda Nyakairima, Minister of Internal Affairs and member of the Leadership Committee for his exemplary leadership in the reforms in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control, and for ably guiding the National Identity Card project and the creation of the National Identity and Registration Authority. I wish also to recognise the late Joan Namazzi Kagezi, Senior Principal State Attorney for her tireless efforts in the investigation and prosecution of terrorism, war crimes and crimes against humanity and her commitment to justice for victims in situations of conflict. I also wish to recognise the late Paul Bogere, Commissioner for Local Council Courts in the Ministry of Local Government who was at the forefront of the project to strengthen and reform the operations of the Local Council Courts as bastions of justice at the grassroots. We salute them and all those who have departed in the year past.

I commend them and all the Sector institutions and staff for their efforts to address the needs of the most vulnerable members of our society, whether in the villages, in communities emerging from conflict or in the towns and cities where they remain vulnerable as a result of poverty or unemployment. As a Sector we acknowledge that vulnerability is a key obstacle to attaining justice for all and we endeavor to profile and target interventions that will alleviate the challenges that the poor and most vulnerable face in accessing justice.

Profiling vulnerability through Innovations

In the past year, the Sector has introduced innovative approaches aimed at promoting access to justice for those who continue to suffer undue limitations. The Justice for Children programme has now been fully incorporated into the JLOS structures. The programme is being implemented by the District Chain-Linked Committees in thirty districts and aims at providing support, through case management for children in conflict or in contact with the law. With the deployment of dedicated focal persons to support the DCC's, we are now able to pay special attention to cases involving children and provide necessary support to ensure that their cases are resolved in a timely manner.

The Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development is also leading efforts to reform the legal and policy regime relating to children, with on-going amendments to the Children Act and the Probation Act as well as reform of the institutional infrastructure for the care of children in need of alternative care. The Ministry has also introduced a Child-care toll free line through which they receive reports of abuse of children. This has led to an increase in the number of cases of abuse reported and has strengthened the Sector's ability to respond to offences against children. We thank UNICEF and our Sector partners for the introduction of this toll-free line and the domestic violence toll-free line that have made it possible for us to detect and combat domestic violence and other forms of violence against women and children.

The Small Claims project is now operational in fifteen courts country-wide and is contributing to the challenge of backlog by diverting matters from the lengthy full litigation. It also provides an accessible alternative to small businesses, several of which are operated by women, to resolve disputes and seek redress when necessary. In addition the roll out of alternative dispute resolution processes, particularly mediation, is supporting reconciliation and cost effective means of resolving disputes. This has proven to be particularly beneficial in family and land matters, which often involve family members, women and children who are likely to suffer injustice should the matters proceed to lengthy and costly litigation.

The Uganda Prisons Service is now providing maize meal to schools for feeding pupils in the Karamoja region. This programme is providing useful training and capacity building for prison inmates on the prison farms, while at the same time contributing to key national goals in the areas of health and education, under the National Development Plan. This inter-sectoral programme provides useful lessons for further engagements that advance the efforts of the Sector towards reducing poverty and promoting development.

Profiling Vulnerability through enhanced service delivery

The Sector has over the years expanded the presence of service delivery points, and currently 53.6% of districts have a complete chain of frontline JLOS services. The infrastructure developments are being supported by improvements in service delivery standards, through the reduction of lead times and the extension of services to previously underserved areas.

The increased availability of customized service points has contributed to higher case disposal, especially in cases related to children. The new remand homes have made it possible for children to be held closer to the courts where they are to be tried, making it easier for the cases to be disposed of. It also keeps the children closer to their homes and facilitates better reconciliation and resettlement in their communities.

We have also registered an increase in the disposal of cases, particularly civil and land matters. This has been greatly facilitated by the increase in customized court buildings and the recruitment and deployment of staff. As a result services have been extended to previously unserved areas and we are now able to reach more people closer to their homes. We have further supported the case disposal processes with the training and deployment of additional interpreters to assist those who cannot speak English in pursuing their matters and in being able to understand the process in the courts. The Uganda Police have also trained sign language interpreters to aid those who have hearing impairments. A manual for un-represented litigants was also developed and provides a useful guide for those who do not have legal counsel.

Together with the legal aid programmes, such as the Justice Centres Uganda, these innovations provide easier access to the JLOS institutions, for the ordinary Ugandans.

We have seen an improvement in the observance of human rights by Sector institutions with an 11% reduction in reports of human rights violations by sector personnel. We have also worked to improve conditions in places of detention and the bucket system has now been eliminated in 76% of the prison units. I must also commend the law enforcement agencies for their efforts in fighting crime. We have been able to register an increase in the disposal of criminal matters with a 101.95% disposal rate of cases filed in the year. The overall conviction rate has also increased from 57% to 63% and the average length of stay on remand for adult capital offenders, has fallen to 10.5 months.

About 18 million Ugandans have now registered for the National Identity Card and of these 6 million have now received their cards. Not only does the possession of the card provide a greater sense of identity as a Ugandan but it serves to enhance access to basic services that were much harder to attain for those who lack the resources. The National ID is a gateway to access other essential documents such as passports and will also facilitate movement across the region, extending the opportunities for Ugandans in business and trade.

The Uganda Registration Services Bureau has further extended the registration process by promoting the registration of births throughout the Country. 135 hospitals are now issuing birth certificates and the service has been extended to mothers who give birth to children in the prisons, so that they are able to register their children even while they are still in custody. This bolsters the child's standing in society, gives confidence to the mother that their child is not inordinately disadvantaged by the mother's incarceration and ensures that in future the child will be able to access vital services such as access to education under the Universal Primary Education programme.

We still have a lot ahead of us. We need to extend the infrastructure development programmes for JLOS service delivery points to the county and sub-county levels to redress the current urban bias. In addition, we need to fast track the recruitment of Grade I Magistrates and rationalise the Magisterial areas to provide for the areas that remain unserved and to cater for

the eventual phasing out of the Grade II Magistrates. We also look forward to extending the capacity building for Local Council Courts to the village and parish courts once they are elected into office.

To promote the fight against corruption the sector must de-concentrate the Anti-Corruption Court to ensure that it is not a Kampala preserve that increases operational costs of other JLOS institutions that service the court.

Given the investment and the capacity of the remand homes, there is need for review of their operations such that they serve as both remand homes and rehabilitation centres for juveniles sentenced to rehabilitation.

Conclusion:

As the Justice Law and Order Sector we remain committed to improving the face of justice in Uganda through timely and fair investigation, prosecution and adjudication of cases, the maintenance of law and order as well as the promotion and protection of human rights.

I welcome on board all new members who have joined the Sector in their various capacities. I particularly welcome the Justices and Judges of the Courts of Judicature, the Magistrates, Police officers and prison warders and wardresses. I call on all members old and new to continue with the efforts that have been made so far and work with integrity and dedication to contribute to our vision of ***ensuring that people in Uganda live in a safe and just society.***

It is now my pleasure to declare the 20th Annual Joint JLOS Government of Uganda – Development Partners Review open.

BART MAGUNDA KATUREEBE

CHIEF JUSTICE and CHAIRPERSON JLOS LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE