



**SPEECH OF HON. JUSTICE BART M KATUREEBE, CHIEF JUSTICE, AT THE
OPENING OF THE NEW LAW YEAR 2018 HELD AT THE HIGH COURT GROUNDS
ON 29TH JANUARY 2018**

Your Excellency the Vice President
The Right Honourable Speaker
The Right Honourable Deputy Speaker
The Hon. The Deputy Chief Justice
The Honourable Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
The Honourable Attorney General
The Justices of the Supreme Court
The Justices of the Court of Appeal
The Judges of the High Court
Your Excellency the Ambassadors
The Archbishop of the Church of Uganda
Heads of the Constitutional Commissions
Heads of JLOS Institutions
The Chief Registrar
The Secretary to the Judiciary
The President Uganda Law Society
Your Worships
Members of the Bar
Distinguished Invited Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Judiciary, it gives me a great pleasure to welcome you all to the official opening of the Law Year 2018.

In a very special way, I welcome H.E Edward Kiwanuka Sekandi, the Vice President, who is representing the President as the Chief Guest to this function. You are most welcome to the Judiciary, which is also your home as an advocate. I request you to convey our gratitude to H.E The President, for graciously officiating at the recently concluded 20th Annual Judges Conference.

Secondly, I welcome the Right Honorable Speaker of Parliament, who has joined us in the celebrations marking the opening of the New Law Year. I equally welcome the Right Honorable Deputy Speaker, who is present. Right Honorable Speaker, I thank you for your personal support and that of Parliament to the Judiciary. We are counting on the Parliament to expeditiously enact the Administration of the Judiciary Bill into law and approve the Resolution increasing the number of High Court Judges from 51 to 82; two important legislations that will have far reaching consequences on the Judiciary, and the delivery of justice to the people of Uganda.

Your Excellency the Vice President, the presence of the three Arms of the State at this function shows how far our democracy has developed. Previously, the opening of the New Law Year was a Judiciary event but it is now a national function that involves all the three branches of Government. We owe it to the citizens of this country, as the three branches of Government, to work together to realize their aspirations as expressed in the development plans and the Constitution. Of course, working together must never mean, or lead to, interference into the functions of the other. But it is important that we plan for the country together so that no one branch of Government is unduly disadvantaged especially in the allocation of records as this affects service delivery to the people.

I am grateful to the Honorable Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, for his support in advocating for the welfare of judicial officers, which is fundamental to the effective functioning of the Judiciary. We thank you for steering the Administration of the Judiciary Bill in Cabinet.

We look forward to the timely tabling in Parliament of the Bill together with the resolution of increasing the number of High Court judges from 51 to 82.

I thank the Attorney General for his kind words and advice. I wish to acknowledge reforms that have been made in partly fulfilling the recommendations of the Supreme Court in the Presidential Election Petition 2016. I look forward to the full implementation of the electoral reforms as directed by the Supreme Court.

I wish to recognize Development Partners, who have been very instrumental in rebuilding the justice system and for funding the capital needs of the wider Justice Law and Order Sector institutions and in particular, the Judiciary. I thank them for their unwavering support and partnership that has given rise to the rule of law dividends especially in improving justice outcomes for the court users and building the capacity of Uganda to respond to crime and respect of fundamental freedoms and rights. We pledge to work with the Development Partners to concretize human progress and peace that remain a daily challenge for every one throughout the world.

I would like to commend the President of the Uganda Law Society for the excellent relationship that exists between the Bar and the Bench. We have worked successfully on law reforms, case backlog reduction and generally strengthening the rule of law in Uganda.

Mr. President, I am, however, informed that you will retire this year. I thank you for the reforms you have introduced in the Uganda Law Society and the rich friendship we have nurtured over the last two years between the Bar and Bench. I wish you success in your new endeavors and look forward to tapping your passion and vast knowledge on rule of law issues.

Last year, Hon. Justice Steven Kavuma, retired as the Deputy Chief Justice, after serving the Judiciary in various capacities. Hon. Justice Ezekiel Muhanguzi and Hon. Lady Justice Nahamya retired as judges of the High Court. HW Charles Emuria, retired as Deputy Registrar. HW Rutakirwa Praff and HW Jolly Nkore, retired as Chief Magistrates. HW Waako Charles, HW Okello Stephen Eyolu, HW Irene Bagatya Mukuba, HW Olinga Richard, HW Mwine David and HW Kunikina David, retired as Magistrates Grade II. The Judiciary is grateful to all the retired

judicial officers for their contribution to the cause of justice and Uganda, at large. I wish them a healthy and productive life in retirement.

In 2017, H.E The President appointed several judicial officers. I would like therefore to congratulate Hon. Justice Alphonse Chigamoy Owiny-Dollo, who was appointed Deputy Chief Justice, Justice Richard Buteera and Justice Paul Mugamba, who were elevated from the Court of Appeal to the Supreme Court.

I equally congratulate Justice Augustine Nshimye and Justice Jotham Tumwesigye, who retired and were appointed on a two year contract as Acting Supreme Court Justices. Several vacancies, however, still exist in the Court of Appeal and the High Court, which too require to be filled. I therefore call upon the JSC and H.E the President to fill all the existing vacancies in the courts of record to strengthen the Judiciary's fight against delay of cases and case backlog.

On the lower bench, I congratulate HW Harty Hatanga and HW Juliet Nakitende, who were appointed Acting Chief Magistrates. The appointments on the lower bench are a drop in the ocean because we need more than 300 judicial officers to fill 40% of vacancies in the Registry and Magistracy.

On behalf of the Judiciary and my own behalf, I congratulate Justice Solome Balungi Bbosa, a Justice of Appeal, for having been elected and appointed a Judge of the International Criminal Court. Justice Bbosa, your appointment to the ICC is a bonus for the Judiciary and will serve as a source of inspiration to judicial officers. I urge you to go out there as our ambassador and do Uganda proud as you have always done. This should show everybody that our judicial system can, and does, produce people who can compete with the very best in the world. We know you will excel and make Uganda feel proud indeed.

Purpose of the New Law Year

The New Law Year is a statement of accountability by the Judiciary to the public for the resources and trust invested by the citizens in the administration of justice in 2017 and 2018. I therefore, intend to lay before you the balance sheet of the Judiciary and above all, make

promises to the public regarding what the Judiciary is going to do to ensure justice for all in 2018.

Performance of the Judiciary in 2017

In 2017, the Judiciary disposed of a record 175,000 cases, which again confirmed our commitment to improve the performance of the courts. The following factors were responsible for the improved performance:-

- Improved funding for sessions in the High Court, Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court as a result of increased funding for case backlog clearance.
- Increased use of alternative dispute resolution in civil cases and plea bargaining in criminal cases that ensured timely adjudication of cases. In 2017, the High Court disposed of 1350 criminal cases through plea bargaining, representing 13% of all the capital cases awaiting trial in the High Court but 35% as a percentage of completed criminal cases. This impressive performance, only goes to show the potential that plea bargaining has in reducing pretrial remands that is partially responsible for the congestion in the prisons. We know we still have some challenges in that area, e.g. the absence of a Public Defender scheme. But we shall work tirelessly to overcome the challenges.
- Institutionalization of performance targets across the courts of judicature. Detailed statistics show that all the courts exceeded their targets as judicial officers in various courts struggled to achieve their targets. In this case, I would like to single out the High Court for their exceptional performance followed by the Court of Appeal, which performed well, particularly in the latter part of the year up to now.
- Judicial officers, of course worked very hard and I would like to thank them for the exceptional performance achieved in 2017. I encourage all judicial officers to use the momentum generated in 2017, to dispose of more cases than will be filed in 2018 if we are to meaningfully reduce case backlog. Of course disposal of a case does not stop at hearing the matter. It must involve timely preparation and delivery of judgments.

The performance of the courts was however dampened by the industrial action of judicial officers and prosecutors which disrupted work for three months. Our efforts to eliminate case

backlog was also severely affected by a critical shortage of judicial officers and prosecutors and logistical challenges and underfunding of the courts. I urge the Government to address the root causes of industrial unrest and case backlog through better pay and resourcing of the judicial function.

Financial Performance of the Judiciary

In the financial year 2016/17, the Judiciary received 127.7 billion shillings to fund courts. The funds appropriated to the Judiciary, were less than fifty percent of the funds the courts asked Ministry of Finance. All the appropriated funds were released except the Development Budget which performed poorly. Although the Judiciary was allocated UGX 5.9 billion for the Development Budget, only UGX 1.413 Billion had been released by December, 2017. We suffered the same fate last financial year, the Judiciary's Development Budget only performed at less than 43%. The development budget of the Judiciary is so critical in the administration of justice because it is out of this fund that we purchase vehicles, office equipment, renovate courts and where resources, permit, construct courts.

I therefore, call upon the Ministry of Finance not to cut the Development Budget of the Judiciary, given that the Judiciary is only but building its capital base, which requires a much bigger budget than what is currently given. Perhaps this is an area where, as the Heads of the three branches of Government, we should put our heads together. We get cases from MPs and other stakeholders for the posting of magistrates to their areas. But there are no courts in those areas. Where we have resorted to renting premises, we get into problems of paying rent. The people suffer for lack of judicial services.

THE QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE IN 2018

In 2017 the Judiciary registered many achievements, most notably there was increased disposal of cases and a number of reforms aimed at enhancing the administration of justice, were approved. In this period alone, we disposed of a total of 175,000 cases resulting in a significant reduction of case backlog from 34% to 25%. For this outstanding performance, the Judiciary received the Milestone Award during the 22nd JLOS – Development Partners Annual Review. In 2018 our promise to the people of Uganda is that the Judiciary will continue to work hard with dedication and commitment to execute its mandate as provided for in Article 126 of the

Constitution. In particular we shall continue, as a matter of priority, to deal with case backlog and work tirelessly to improve the image of the Judiciary. Our greatest desire is to give Ugandans the justice that they desire and deserve. One of our main goals in this New Law Year is to narrow the gap between public satisfaction and case disposal. It is not enough to complete a case. Litigants must feel that justice was done and that is the impact we want to achieve.

In our quest for excellence and to deliver on this promise, we will focus on implementing two key strategies that were launched in 2017. These are the Case Backlog Reduction Strategy and the Judiciary ICT Strategy.

The Case Backlog Reduction Strategy

In 2016, I established a committee, chaired by Hon Justice Richard Buteera to review case backlog in the Judiciary. Four main factors were identified as the major causes of case backlog. These are; the people, the system, the law and procedure, and infrastructure. A case backlog reduction strategy proposed and launched in March 2017, with a range of interventions to address the problems identified under these four broad factors as follows:

People: Regarding ‘people’, it was established that staffing gaps, corruption, absenteeism, poor attitude to work, low morale, non-adherence to the public service standing orders, poor time management, among others, caused case backlog. Several interventions have been put in place to address this challenge. The most significant are:

Approval of the Judiciary structure: We thank government for approving the structure of the Judiciary and 60% of the positions at the lower bench have now been filled. However gaps still exist in the higher bench. Our plea to Government today is to exempt the Judiciary from the recruitment ban because our services are both a human rights and security issue. The benefit of having more judicial officers outweighs having a recruitment ban.

Zero tolerance to corruption: in 2017 the Judiciary continued to pursue anti-corruption measures. This was majorly done through court open days, media campaigns, and court user committee meetings, engagements with the Judicial Service Commission, the Inspectorate of Government and Civil Society. Overall we have seen a significant decline in the incidents of

actual and perceived corruption. The 2017 report by the Inspectorate of Government showed that corruption in the Judiciary had reduced significantly. As a Judiciary we shall continue to implement the zero tolerance policy to eliminate perceived and actual corruption. We have started a process to automate court processes to reduce human contact, and facilitate information flow so that our customers can have self-service, where necessary.

Strengthening of the Inspectorate of Courts: As we reported last year, the Inspectorate of Courts has been revamped and strengthened. We plan to deploy more staff and have them trained to effectively handle their tasks. Our strategy is that the Inspectorate will shift from a fault finding/ firefighting approach to self-improved approach involving an agreement on self-improvement strategy between the inspectors and the officers. This will involve sharing information with all stakeholders including the public. But also involves finding the financial resources to send the inspectors out to various stations countrywide.

Performance management: The Judiciary has developed a computerized performance enhancement tool that is intended to evaluate the performance of both judicial and non-judicial officers and subsequently enhance productivity. It will be rolled out in the first half of this year.

Support supervision: Here we will emphasize management supervision at station to reduce cases of absenteeism, poor time management and promotion of quality assurance.

Targets: Targets have been set for all courts and judicial officers. We are serious about these targets and we shall continue to follow them up to ensure that they are achieved.

Continuous skilling of staff: As we are all aware, the trends of crime keep changing and we cannot maintain one approach to adjudication. The committee found out that judicial officers are still struggling in case management and judgment writing, among the many challenges. The need for continuous skilling cannot, therefore, be over emphasized. To keep pace with these changing trends and the need to serve our users well, we have reformed and scaled up the capacity of the Judicial Training Institute and resources will be provided to provide skilling on various aspects including case backlog and reform oriented training. We must find resources for the Judicial

Training Institute to fully carry out this crucial function of training not only Judicial Officers but other players in the justice sector such as Police and Prison officers.

Law Reforms

The case backlog committee identified that some of the current laws are outdated, complicated and tedious, thus promoting delay and hindering access to justice by especially ordinary people. To address these issues the Judiciary has embarked on a number of legal reforms. In July 2017, we set up the Civil Justice Reform Committee chaired by the Hon Principal Judge, to look into the civil procedure and identify areas for reform. The aim is to simplify the complex laws and procedure and promote access to justice.

The committee did a commendable job and made proposals for reform in the following problematic areas:

- I. Public Interest Litigation: the gist of the reform is to provide guidance on considerations for grant of public interest litigation order, identification of the clear issues for public interest and the right parties to public interest litigation and appropriate remedies in such cases.
- II. Representative Action: the proposal here is to amend Order 1r8 of the Civil Procedure Rules to define a representative action; provide for who can file a representative action; provide for considerations by court before grant of a representative order and provide for authority on behalf of the class (power of attorney duly signed and notarized), among others.
- III. Judicial Review: the proposal is to amend the Judicial Review Rules and ensure that Judicial Review is not applied where alternative remedies like appeals and revision exist, unless otherwise; and that judicial review does not apply to employment disputes for wrongful or unfair termination or such claims that require elaborate proof by evidence.

- IV. Recusal of Judicial Officer: the proposal is to have a practice direction to offer guidance on circumstances for recusal by a judicial officer on his or her own volition or on application by the parties.
- V. Integration of E-Justice in the administration of Justice: the proposal here is to have practice directions to promote and offer guidance to courts on the use of ICT. The rationale here is to reduce delay and backlog, improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of justice; adopt technologies for use within the courts and facilitate ICT and communication exchange between courts, parties and the general public.
- VI. Amendment to Orders 12, 17 and 18 of the Civil Procedure Rules: the proposal here relates to case management and it is suggested that upon closure of pleadings the next step should be summons for directions followed by scheduling conference, mediation or ADR then hearing. Part of the key proposals here is to do away with mandatory mediation.
- VII. Amicus Curie: the proposal here is to offer guidance to courts and litigants in handling applications of this nature in a bid to promote uniformity and consistency with specific emphasis on defining the concept; qualifications for admission as amicus; consideration before admission, procedure for admission, objections and appeals.
- VIII. Adjournments: the proposal is to have practice directions to provide guidance to the courts and litigants on circumstances under which adjournments can be granted and denied.
- IX. Grant of interim order: the proposal here is to amend Order 50 of the Civil Procedure Rules and enhance powers of Registrars to handle all interlocutory matters, provide timelines for handling such applications after filing and life span for *ex parte* interim orders.

The proposed reforms are currently before the Rules Committee for consideration. I appeal to all of us – judicial officers, advocates and all court users – to embrace these reforms when the time comes. However, these reforms will be meaningful only with behavioral change among litigants, advocates, judicial officers, and court users generally. The culture of doing business as usual, characterized by a poor work ethic, will no doubt undermine these wonderful reforms. Take for example the practice of holding a brief but not able to proceed. This will be severely discouraged.

Reforms for the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal rules are still under review by a consultant. A key reform, too, being considered is the introduction of the model of traffic lights during proceedings as a strategy for utilizing available time effectively. They will be fast tracked, and I am confident that by this time next year the relevant reforms will be in place.

Regarding criminal justice reforms, we have tried to reform several components of the law, such as plea bargaining, sentencing, and committal proceedings through practice directions. However, this is not sufficient. We call upon the Ministry of Justice to consider formalizing these reforms into substantive law. Indeed, in the just concluded Annual Judges conference, two days were devoted to issues of sentencing and appropriate reviews of the sentencing guidelines will be worked out.

In addition to the foregoing, we shall continue rolling out and promoting the already existing reforms through which we have registered huge successes. These are:

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR): In the period ending 2017, 130 (JLOS report) cases were settled through mediation at the Commercial Court alone. Mediation has gained momentum and is steadily spreading in all courts countrywide. This great innovation is still constrained by the lack of experienced mediators and low response to mandatory mediation in some cases.

Plea bargaining: Over 1350 cases were completed through plea bargaining in 2017. On average about 20% of the pending capital cases were completed through Plea-bargaining. This is a good innovation but sensitization, guidance to inmates, unsuitability for juvenile offenders remains a problem. The judicial officers' and prosecutors' strike also affected our output, as many planned

plea bargain sessions did not take place for over two months. The solutions include sensitization, improving quality of representation (proper representation should include proper taking of instruction), and engagements with prison authorities.

Small Claims Procedure: So far it has been rolled out to 38 courts countrywide and continues to be the best procedure for resolution of claims below UGX 10 million. The simplified procedure has no doubt put a smile on the face of ordinary litigants as it saves them for the cumbersome process of protracted litigation.

Mediation chambers: this is a new reform together with the Uganda Law Society and JLOS. This is intended to address the problem of lack of or inadequate mediators. In addition to CADER, we intend to pilot a mediation chamber where cases will be referred.

Infrastructure

The Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and many High Court Divisions in Kampala are housed in rented premises. The situation is not any different for the courts in the countryside. Most of these premises are unsuitable for court business. Our insufficient budget does not make matters any better for us. Out of the expected UGX 280 billion, the Judiciary received only 135 billion meaning only 40% of our budget is funded.

We urge JLOS, the Ministry of Finance and the private party to promptly reach financial closure so that construction of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, the High Court and other JLOS institutions can be built under PPP. This will save the Judiciary approximately 10 billion shillings spent on rent annually. For instance the premises occupied by the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal take a whopping UGX 8,046,192, 456/= which represents over 80% of the total rental budget of the Judiciary of UGX 10,312,291,052/=.

However even with the meager budget, our program this year is to rehabilitate our structures and we are on course with the refurbishment of the High Court building.

In addition to the foregoing strategies, we shall also apply the following interventions concurrently:

Elimination of delayed judgments:

In 2017, I issued a directive on delayed judgments. Our aim is to eliminate and or significantly reduce delayed or overdue judgments. We are in the process of compiling the list of judgments and rulings that are pending beyond 60 days after which we shall follow up and ensure the responsible officers write and deliver them. But I am pleased to report that there has been a significant reduction in delayed decisions.

Customized case backlog reduction strategies per court

We acknowledge the fact that every court has its own workload and various challenges. Therefore, we are ensuring that each court has its own specific case backlog reduction strategy.

Several courts including the Court of Appeal have formulated their strategies and others are in the process of doing so. The strategy of the Court of Appeal includes appellate mediation – 276 cases were completed under this strategy; creation of sub-committees to assist the DCJ on court and case management; holding in-house sessions; limited hearing of interim applications with focus on main appeals and applications and delivery of judgments where two justices are in agreement in criminal matters. This has solved the problem of delayed judgments. I therefore, call upon all judicial officers, advocates, prosecutors and litigants to be involved in formulation of these strategies. We acknowledge the fact that different courts handle different types of cases and therefore a particular strategy may not apply to all.

Case prioritization:

Litigants register all manner of cases in our courts. Many cases that are pending in court are applications that not only consume the limited judicial time but worsen the already existing case backlog burden, leaving substantive matters unresolved. This has resulted into a huge disparity

between public satisfaction and the high performance of the courts. To bridge this gap and given the limited resources, we shall give priority to cases based on the criteria below:

- I. Importance of the case/public interest
- II. Impact to the economy
- III. Urgency
- IV. Public safety

Under the prioritization we are proposing to focus on cases involving homicide, commercial, Sexual and Gender Based Violence, land and children.

Automation of the Courts

The use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) is considered as one of the key elements to significantly improve the administration of justice. The availability of web services, the possibility of consulting online court registries, legislation and case law, the use of electronic filing, the electronic exchange of legal documents, use of the internet to open the judiciaries to the public by providing both general and specific information on its activities; are some of the examples that are spurring judicial administrations around the world to rethink their current functions and activities. ICT enhances efficiency, access, timeliness, transparency and accountability thus helping judiciaries to provide adequate services

The Judiciary's 5-Year ICT Strategy 2016 - 2020

The Judiciary developed a 5-Year ICT Strategy for the period 2016 – 2020 with a Strategic context and rationale of:

- i. Reducing delay, improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of justice;
- ii. Adopting technologies for use within the courts; and
- iii. Facilitating communication exchange between the courts, parties and the general public.
- iv. Reducing incidents of corruption by reducing human contact in the judicial process.

The total cost of the Strategy over the 5 year period is UGX. 60.25 billion, with an annual requirement of UGX. 12.05 billion.

ICT Work Plan for the Year 2018

The With the annual ICT Budgetary requirement of Ushs 12.05 billion, the Government of Uganda provided Ushs 8 billion (which represents 66.7%) for the Financial Year 2017/2018.

A number of Strategic Programs are being implemented these include:

Development of an Electronic Court Case Management Information System (ECCMIS).

Under the Electronic Court Case Management Information System will be:

- i. A fully-featured system which automates and tracks all aspects of a case life cycle from initial filing (by use of e-filing) through disposition and appeal.
- ii. Founded on the Judiciary existing business rules and processes, requiring minimal human intervention.
- iii. Able to facilitate the efficient and reliable collection, organization, distribution and retrieval of significant amounts of case specific data as well as the processing of payment of relevant court fees and fines by the court users.

The Electronic Court Case Management Information System will serve as an On-Line single point of entry for all parties involved in managing court cases. The system records all court case information (On-Line) from the time a plaintiff files a civil case on-line; or in criminal matters, from the Directorate of Public Prosecution (DPP) through sentence and execution; efficiently sharing that information among all relevant Parties in the case including the Public.

The Electronic Court Case Management Information System will greatly contribute to the Case Backlog reduction through provision of:

- i. Real-Time access to case information by all the parties in that particular case;
- ii. A digitized court case file that will eliminate case file loss of misplacement;
- iii. Business intelligence through reports that provide knowledge of the existing case load before a Judicial Officer;
- iv. Electronic exchange of legal documents;

- v. Automatic notifications to Parties in a case on the progress and any action to the Court Case file that includes; case hearing dates, filed information on file at any stage, required action on the case file from any party etc.

Extension of Court Services to Luzira Prison Facility by use of ICTs

Plans are underway to install an Audio-Visual Link System between Buganda Road Chief Magistrates Court and Luzira Prison Facility. This will, for the start, be used to hear cases at the mention stages for the Luzira inmates, for all the Court Stations in the Central Region, by a Magistrate at Buganda Road Chief Magistrates Court. Handling of this case stage through Audio-Visual System will contribute to the reduction of case backlog as well as significantly reduce the costs, security risks and unnecessary traffic jam on transportation of the inmates to the respective courts for only these case mentions.

Access to On-Line Law Libraries and Databases

The Judiciary will subscribe to On-Line Law Libraries to provide up-to-date legal information to Judicial Officers. This will enhance their efforts towards case handling.

Provision of Laptops and Desktop Computers to Judicial Officers

Laptop computers will be provided to Registrars and Magistrates to enable them manage Cases allocated to them from any location at any time. This will enhance efficiency and effectiveness, contributing to case backlog reduction.

ICT System Integration with the National E-Government Infrastructure

With the support from the National Information Technology Authority – Uganda (NITA-U), The Judiciary will carry out ICT System Integration onto the National E-Government Services Infrastructure. This will guarantee Citizen Access to Court Services and cost reduction in form of hardware and software purchases through the use of the facilities in the Government National Data Centre.

Where we are now in this process: The process is currently at the procurement stage. Advertisement has been done calling for expression of interest by interested parties to develop and launch a case management system

A word of advice to the advocates

The legal profession is very important in any country, particularly ours which is in transition to a fully-fledged democracy. Advocates, therefore, have the responsibilities to ensure that no one is above the law; that everyone is answerable to the law; that every citizen has the greatest equality of opportunity and that everyone can aspire to be what they want to be through merit.

Advocates should fiercely promote the cause of the law and justice, defend the rule of law at all times, to ensure that justice is rendered to all without discrimination. Advocates should speak truth to power and must be upright and diligent and well prepared professionally to respond to public needs. Advocates must also upgrade and reinvent themselves throughout the course of their career in order to remain relevant. This means not only keeping abreast with legal developments, but also in maintaining keen interest in what is happening in Uganda and the rest of the world.

Last but not least, advocates should be a force for the common good and give back to society, through pro bono activities.

The Benedicto Kiwanuka Memorial Lecture

In September this year, the Judiciary, will celebrate the life and achievements of the late Benedicto Kiwanuka, who was dragged from the High Court and murdered during the reign of Idi Amin Dada. Benedicto Kiwanuka's life was taken away because of convictions in defending the rule of law and defending the fundamental freedoms of the downtrodden. He fiercely and above self, protected the rights of all for which he paid the ultimate price with his life. The late Benedicto Kiwanuka's life is, therefore, worth commemorating especially, as the Judiciary assumes a heightened and pivotal role in nurturing and protecting the rule of law and the truth.

The Judiciary has, therefore, decided to celebrate the life of Benedicto Kiwanuka annually through lectures and other activities to keep his legacy alive and as a reference point for judicial officers and other human rights defenders.

Conclusion:

I would like to remind all judicial officers and Judiciary staff that our vision is to be an excellent Judiciary that delivers justice to all. This vision, therefore, calls upon us to work harder and smart to enhance access to justice that remains elusive to the 95% of the people with unmet justice needs. All judicial officers must therefore commit themselves to resolving cases in a manner that promotes substantive justice to reduce the glaring gap that exists between court decisions and lack of satisfaction with court decisions that many court users feel because of the fundamental challenges in the justice system. Every judicial officer must, therefore, observe the core values of independence, impartiality, transparency, professionalism, integrity and accountability, equality and respect that underpin an excellent Judiciary. I also call upon the Government, to invest more in the Judiciary to make it effective and efficient in administering justice.

It is now my singular honor to welcome and invite H. E the Vice President to make his address.

Bart M. Katureebe

CHIEF JUSTICE