



CLOSING REMARKS

**BY HON. ANITA AMONG
THE RT. HON. SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT**

**DELIVERED AT THE SOUTHERN AND EASTERN
AFRICA CHIEF JUSTICES' FORUM CONFERENCE**

**HELD AT
SPEKE RESORT, MUNYONYO, KAMPALA**

ON 2nd OCTOBER, 2024.



The Hon. Chief Justice of the Republic of Uganda

The Hon. Justice Bheki Maphalala, Chief Justice of the Kingdom of Eswatini and Chairperson of the Southern and Eastern Africa Chief Justices Forum

The Hon. Chief Justices and your Esteemed Delegations

The President of the East African Court of Justice

The Hon. Deputy Chief Justices present

The Hon. Principal Judge of Uganda

The Hon. Justices and Judges of Courts of Judicature

The Chief Registrar, Courts of Judicature

The Secretary to the Judiciary

Members of the Fourth Estate

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon!

It gives me great pleasure to be here, on Day Two of the Southern and Eastern Africa Chief Justices Forum Conference, 2024.

My Lord, the Hon. the Chief Justice of the Republic of Uganda, I thank you so much for inviting me to come to this extraordinary conference at which your Honorable peers from Southern and Eastern Africa have converged to collectively reflect on critical issues concerning justice delivery.

The theme of this conference, ***“Enhanced Access to Justice: Underscoring Reforms in African Judiciaries”***, was meaningful, timely but also timeless. I say this because it is important to reflect on why reform of any nature is important.

To reform, is to make a change in something, especially an institution or practice, in order to improve it. But *‘effective reform’* has greater depth. It calls us to be more analytical in whatever proposals for change we are making. Effective reforms, judicial or otherwise, can help make governments more effective, foster stability within societies and unlock economic potentials. Effective reform gives birth to noble ideas for building nations; and leave behind great legacies.

Over the two days of this conference you have had an extensive discussion on exploring reforms in African Judiciaries, and candid conversations relating to the independence of the Judiciary, specialized courts, selection and appointment of judicial officers, among others, which are all integral components of the justice systems you run.

These matters are within your ambit and directly or indirectly affect the institutions you head and run. You have shared best practices, and perhaps some frustrations you have encountered. You have also shared lessons learned. From any novelty discovered here, be it legal, infrastructural or administrative, you have no doubt, grown stronger and wiser; and I celebrate that.

In the effort and journey of reform we are partners. And in this, I would like to refer to an African proverb which says; ***“If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go together.”*** One of the things that this means is that, there is value in fighting battles in larger numbers. It is valuable to put heads together to foster ways to do things better and bolder, with great clarity and most importantly, in unison.

I therefore applaud your commitment as a Forum of Honorable Chief Justices for your noble belief that the pursuit of better justice shall not be in vain in the sub-region. I applaud you on the fact that since, 2003, you have been persistent in the cause of attaining better justice, meeting regularly to adopt action plans to address issues in a systematic and sustained way in order to strengthen justice delivery in the sub-region.

For this reason, I am glad that an invitation was sent to the Hon. Chief Justices from non-member states and that some were able to honor the invitation. A special *“Thank you”* goes to the Hon. Chief Justices of South Sudan, Burundi and Somalia for accepting the invitation of our Hon. Chief Justice, and for taking a step in the right direction. It is right and proper to learn more from this interaction, to better yourselves and your respective jurisdictions.

I was equally informed that the Administrators from the Judiciaries of the member countries are also with us. Thank you for investing in the quest for reform. While reform can be exciting, it is never plain sailing, never a fully smooth ride. Your commitment to the

cause of reform, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen shall not be in vain.

In closing, I would like to make a clarion call to you, Hon. Justices and Judges, Ladies and Gentlemen. I want to encourage each one of us to be an agent for change in our countries and continent today, and not tomorrow. Please do not avoid the process that comes with reform, hoping that the price will be paid by your successors in office. Abraham Lincoln once said: ***“You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today”***.

I therefore encourage us to take stock of, and utilize our blessings such as the wealth of experience and intelligence; and your willingness to cooperate even more; to continue to move forward in the area of reform and to positively influence our spaces.

In all this we cannot forget to thank their Excellences, the heads of the State from which we all come, for fostering peace, security and the rule of law. But for these, many of us would not be able to cross the borders or sit in freedom and scrupulously unpack what may not be working in our jurisdictions and what can be done better.

My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, Uganda is no doubt the *Pearl of Africa*. Whereas you have come to Uganda to discuss critical issues concerning justice delivery, I hope you will find time to enjoy the richness of this nation, including its food, scenery, diversity in culture, and the warmth of its people.

I once again thank you for coming to the Republic of Uganda and now have the sincere pleasure to declare the ***Southern and Eastern Africa Chief Justices Forum Conference, 2024*** officially closed.

I say all this for God and My Country.

**HON. ANITA AMONG
RT. HON. SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT
THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**