

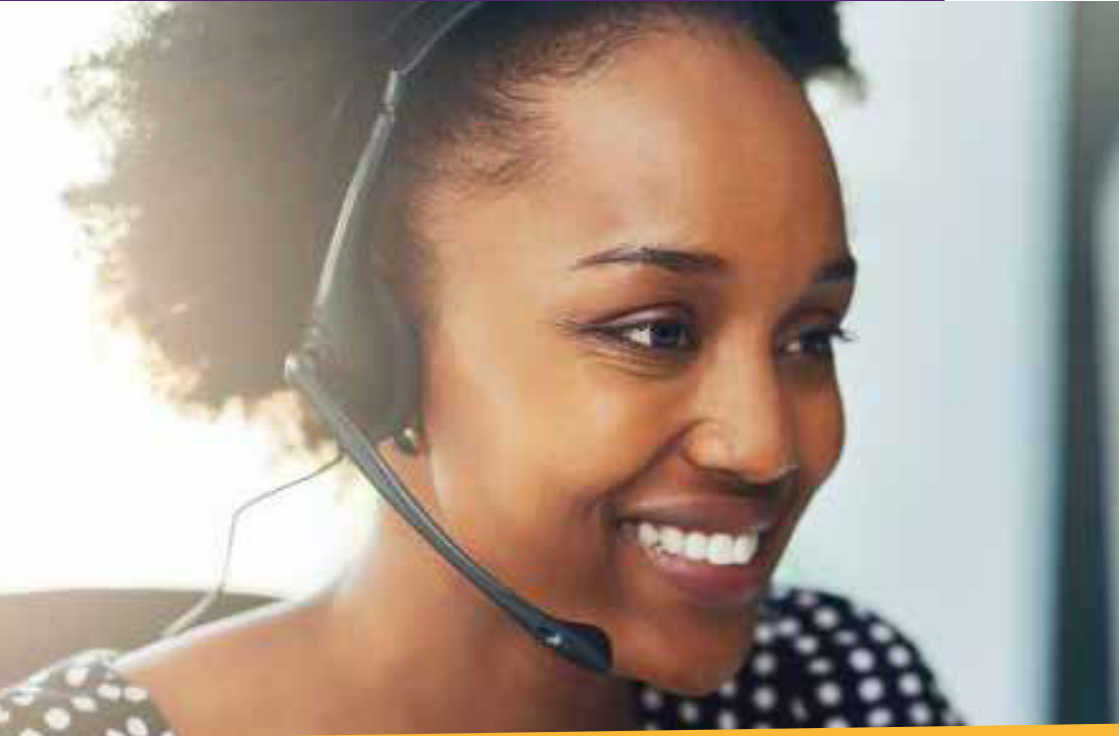


JUDICIARY CLIENT CHARTER



2020 – 2023

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Foreword

Article 126 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda provides that judicial power is derived from the people and shall be exercised by the courts established under the Constitution in the name of the people and in conformity with the law and with the values, norms and aspirations of the people.

Article 126 (2) of the Constitution sets out the principles applicable in the adjudication of cases brought before the Courts and these include:

- a) Justice shall be done to all irrespective of their social or economic status.
- b) Justice shall not be delayed.
- c) Adequate compensation shall be awarded to victims of wrongs.
- d) Reconciliation between parties shall be promoted, and
- c) Substantive justice shall be administered without undue regard to technicalities.

To achieve the above, the Judiciary in consultation with key stake holders has developed this client Charter which specifies service delivery commitments and standards by which its performance will be measured. It also provides both Judicial and non-judicial staff with clear standards to strive for in the service and the mechanism by which the people shall participate in dispensation of justice without compromising independence, impartiality, dignity, accessibility and effectiveness of the Courts of Judicature.

This Charter contributes to the key strategic objectives of the Judiciary Transformation Plan of enhancing performance, accountability, excellence, and independence in the judicial process. It is an additional initiative towards the continuous improvement of the judicial process to provide timely and quality services to all.

The Judiciary, as a service provider, is committed to implementing this Client Charter as a social contract with our clients.

I therefore, call upon all our clients to embrace the provisions of this Charter to ensure that our services meet your expectations.

Hon. Bart M. Katureebe



CHIEF JUSTICE

Preamble

A vibrant Judiciary is instrumental for the successful implementation of government programs in line with the National Development Plan;

Whereas the government of Uganda has over the last two decades undertaken a number reforms as part of the overall development programs, the Judiciary has in the recent past spearheaded and implemented a number of initiatives aimed at enhancing performance and accountability.

The Judiciary has developed this Client Charter to provide a framework for defining judicial service delivery standards in order to improve the administration of justice in Uganda. It contains basic information about the court system and procedures, including feedback and complaint handling mechanisms.

The objectives of this charter are:

- a) To inform our clients and stakeholders of the services offered by the Judiciary;
- b) To create awareness to our clients on their rights and obligations; and
- c) To provide accountability framework for the Judiciary to its clients and stakeholders.
- d) Act as a tool for monitoring and evaluating performance

This Charter will help the Judiciary to fulfill its mandate and identify and address gaps in the service delivery with a view of providing satisfactory judicial service to all.

I wish to thank all our internal and external stakeholders, especially the Judiciary Technical Committee, the Editorial Board and Top Management who participated in the development of this Charter. I call upon you to maintain sustained commitment for its implementation.

Pius Bigirimana



PERMANENT SECRETARY/SECRETARY TO THE JUDICIARY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Judiciary is an arm of the State under the doctrine of separation of powers. The other two organs are the Legislature, which makes laws; and the Executive, which enforces the law.

This Service Charter presents the commitments for the Judiciary as mandated by the Constitution. **Section 1** of the Charter covers Judiciary's Vision, Mission, Mandate and Core Values. **Section 2** covers Key Results Areas, **Section 3** highlights Service Standards and **Section 4** is for Service Commitments. **Section 5** covers Rights as a Court User, **Section 6** Client Obligations; and **Section 7 covers accountability and Section 8** sets out the Feedback, Complaints and Appeal Mechanism.

1.1 Our Mandate

The Judiciary is Constitutionally supposed to: administer justice through resolving disputes between individual and individual (civil) and between the state and individual (criminal); interpret and defend the Constitution and the laws of Uganda; promote the rule of law; promote human rights of individuals and groups; initiate, develop and implement training programmes for the development of the Judiciary staff; contribute to the enforcement of law and order; enroll and license advocates; license and discipline Court Bailiffs; keep custody of laws enacted as well as disseminate legal literature; receive government revenue accruing from the courts; and introduce modalities for alternative dispute resolution (ADR) to reduce the burden of cases on the courts.

1.2 Our Vision

Justice for All

1.3 Our Mission

To be an Independent, Competent, Trusted and Accountable Judiciary that Administers Justice to All

2.0 OUR CORE VALUES

The Judiciary's strategic direction and result areas are based on its core values that form the basis for all its operations. These values which will also guide the implementation of this Charter are:

- a) **Independence and impartiality.** The Judiciary will ensure that it operates freely in its own best judgment, without taking directives from, or being controlled by, any person or authority.
- b) **Transparency:** The Judiciary will be open at all times in dealing with all partners in the administration of Justice, document its operations and freely disseminate these. The Judiciary will Endeavour to win the confidence and trust of all Ugandans and the international community, through the quality of its services.
- c) **Professionalism:** The Judiciary will Endeavour to have well-trained, professionally competent and self-confident staff, that will administer justice to all.
- d) **Integrity:** The Judiciary will carry out its activities in an honest and truthful manner, and will take all reasonable measures to prevent willful wrongdoing by its officials.
- e) **Accountability:** The Judiciary will take full responsibility for its actions, and will always be answerable to the people of Uganda and to its partners.
- f) **Equality and respect:** The Judiciary will continue to uphold the principles of equality, equal opportunities and affirmative action in respect to gender and other disadvantaged groups.

3.0 OUR STRUCTURE

The Judiciary operates under a two tier system:

3.1 The Courts of Judicature: -

- a) The Supreme Court
- b) The Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court
- c) The High Court (Divisions and Circuits)
- d) Magistrates Courts

3.2 Finance and Administration

This branch of the Judiciary is composed of staff members who offer administrative support services to the courts.

4.0 OUR SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITMENTS TO YOU

- a) Make just decisions of court to all manner of people without fear or favour, affection or ill-will.
- b) Treat all court users with dignity, courtesy, patience and respect.
- c) Provide accessible, timely and quality judicial services.
- d) Ensure that adequate compensation is awarded to victims of wrongs.
- e) Employ and deploy well trained professionally competent judicial staff and continuously build the capacity of all our staff.
- f) Provide services in an honest and transparent manner.
- g) Uphold the principles of justice, equality and affirmative action.
- h) Provide timely and appropriate actions on poor service delivery-related complaints.

- i) Refund bail money within 30 days from the date of the order.
- j) Provide excellent Customer Care.
- k) Provide optimal delivery of support services and logistics to facilitate the work of the entire Judiciary.
- l) Carry out impact assessment, monitoring and evaluation of programmes of the Judiciary on a quarterly basis.
- m) Ensure payment for goods and services rendered to the Judiciary within 30 days after delivery.
- n) Develop and provide an effective information system for the Judiciary.
- o) Provide effective Human Resource information for the Judiciary.
- p) Enforce zero tolerance to corruption.

4.1 Court Vacation

The Judiciary observes vacation periods when the courts strictly entertain criminal matters and urgent civil matters as follows:

- i) 23rd December – 7th January** (all courts);
- ii) 1st to 31st August** (Supreme Court and Court of Appeal);
- iii) 15th July – 15th August** (High Court and Magistrates Courts).

5.0 OUR SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

We shall at all times adhere to and continuously improve the standards of services indicated below:

- a) Provide a safe, accessible and convenient working environment
- b) Our offices are open Monday to Friday: 8:00am-12:45pm and 2:00pm-5:00pm.
- c) Courts start at **9:00am**
- d) Receive and register all cases in a timely manner.
- e) Our staff will be courteous, polite, dress formally, display name-tags and exhibit a high level of Integrity and respect all court users.
- f) Safeguard court files, exhibits, documents and official records.
- g) Timely response to all inquiries and complaints.
- h) Provide reasonable assistance to court users with special needs on request
- i) Decisions of Court shall be delivered within **60 days** after the close of hearing; and **90 days** for the Supreme Court
- j) Respond to all received correspondences within fourteen (14) days, including obtained through suggestion boxes
- k) Regularly share information through our website; official publications; media; outreach campaigns; and court open days.

6.0 CLIENT RIGHTS

Our Clients (Court Users/Suppliers) have a right to:

- a) Access to information
- b) A fair, speedy and public hearing
- c) A Court Interpreter
- d) Timely court decisions
- e) A copy of the proceedings and judgments at a prescribed fee
- f) Respect from court staff

7.0 CLIENT OBLIGATIONS

Our clients shall have the following obligations

- a) Report on time to attend to their court matter(s)
- b) Observe orderliness in court and its premises
- c) Abide by court rules, procedures and instructions
- d) Pay all the necessary court fees
- e) Provide correct and honest information required by the courts
- f) Not to carry any weapon to court
- g) Respect court staff.
- h) Do not corrupt court staff.
- i) Promptly report unprofessional conduct by any court staff.
- j) Shall not use **offensive** and **obscene** language/ gestures in court.

8.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

The Judiciary shall provide accountability through:

- 1) State of the Judiciary Address
- 2) Opening of the New Law Year
- 3) The Annual Performance reports
- 4) Periodic official reports and publications
- 5) Policy Statements
- 6) Court Open Days
- 7) Judgements

9.0 FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

We welcome feedback about our services. We also welcome suggestions on how we can improve service delivery. We commit ourselves to taking your complaints and suggestions seriously and to dealing with them as quickly as possible.

However, complaints against decisions of court should be addressed through appeals or applications for review or revision to the appropriate courts.

In case you have a problem, suggestion or complaint, you may contact any of the following:

- 1) A Chief Magistrate or **Magistrate** in charge of a court near you
- 2) A **Judge** or **Registrar** at a High Court Circuit or Division in your area

*You may also seek further assistance through the following offices at the **Judiciary Headquarters in Kampala** at the following address:*

Kampala High Court Building,
Plot 2, The Square,
P.O. Box 7085 Kampala, Uganda
Tel: 256 414 233 420/2,
Fax: 256 414 344 116,
Email: info@judicature.go.ug,
www.judicature.go.ug

- 1) Chambers of the Chief Justice
- 2) Chambers of the Deputy Chief Justice
- 3) Chambers of the Principal Judge
- 4) Chambers of the Chief Registrar
- 5) Secretary to the Judiciary's office
- 6) The Inspectorate of Courts
- 7) Public Relations & Communications Office

In addition you may use the following avenues:

- a) Customer Care Desks at court
- b) Suggestion boxes at all courts
- c) Official e-mail: complaints@Judiciary.go.ug or feedback@Judiciary.go.ug
- d) Court Open days



NEW JUDICIARY INNOVATIONS TO ENHANCE PERFORMANCE AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE



▶ LEXISNEXIS - ONLINE LEGAL RESEARCH SOLUTION

The Judiciary procured access to the LexisNexis Online Legal Research Solution to aid Judicial Officers' online access to legal materials as well as legal journals, commentary works, encyclopedias and bulletins to enrich their research and for quality decisions.



▶ TOLL FREE HOTLINES 0800 111 900, 0800 225 587

The Judiciary in January 2019 acquired Customer Feedback Telephone with a Toll-Free facility at its headquarters in Kampala. The facility has enhanced the Judiciary's public accountability processes through the consistent provision of accurate information about Judiciary/court services and instant response to user complaints. The facility, now being upgraded into a fully fledged customer care centre, also boost efforts by the Inspectorate of Courts in its mandate to receive and investigate complaints of maladministration of justice against any staff of the Judiciary and all cadres of judicial officers.



▶ E – PAYMENT OF COURT FEES

The Judiciary together with the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) and selected commercial banks have completed the requirements for court users to pay court fees using e-payment methods. Payments can be made using Mobile Money at the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court and all the High Courts, including their Divisions (Kampala, Luwero, Masaka, Mbarara, Kabale, FortPortal, Masindi, Gulu, Lira, Arua, Jinja, Iganga, Mbale and Soroti).

Point-of-Sale (PoS) have been installed by commercial bank agents and Payway Machines to handle any form of payment such as cash, debit cards, Visa cards, credit cards, mobile money payments. These are currently installed at our High Court Divisions:- Criminal, Commercial Court, and Buganda Road Chief Magistrates Court. More PoS machines will gradually be installed across the Country by the relevant Commercial Banks and PayWay.



▶ THE PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT TOOL

The model has three main components: The performance drivers, the aspects that determine transformation and work throughput, and the performance outcome: citizen/ user satisfaction. It recognises the importance of having a positive public image of the Judiciary as the ultimate mark of its high performance.

Below are the weights of the assessment mark attached to each of the parties in the evaluation process.



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