



Republic of Uganda



## OPENING REMARKS

BY JUSTICE BART M. KATUREEBE THE HON. THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF UGANDA

AT THE STAKEHOLDERS' CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP  
ON THE JUDICIARY ICT Strategy  
FY2015/2016 – FY2019/2020

7<sup>TH</sup> – 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2016

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**OPENING REMARKS BY JUSTICE BART M. KATUREEBE THE HON. THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF UGANDA AT THE STAKEHOLDERS' CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP ON THE JUDICIARY ICT STRATEGY FY2015/2016 – FY2019/2020 ON 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2016**

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The Hon. The Deputy Chief Justice

The Hon. The Principal Judge

The Hon. Justices of the Supreme Court

The Hon. Justices of the Court of Appeal

The Hon. Judges of the High Court

Your Excellences, Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Members of Parliament

Members of Constitutional Commissions

The Secretary to the Judiciary

The Chief Registrar

The President of the Uganda Law Society

The Permanent Secretary and Secretary to Treasury

The Permanent Secretary – Ministry of ICT

The Executive Director – National Information Technology Authority –  
Uganda

The Directors - National Information Technology Authority – Uganda

The President of the Uganda Judicial Officers' Association

Your Worships

Senior Administrators of the Judiciary

All Invited Guests

Fellow Ugandans, Ladies and Gentlemen

I, warmly welcome you all to this two day Non-Residential Stakeholders' Consultative Workshop on the 5 Year Judiciary ICT Strategy for the Financial Years 2015/2016 to 2019/2020.

I, thank you for honouring our invitation to this Stakeholders' Consultative Workshop.

The objective of this consultative workshop is to validate the Judiciary's revamped ICT policy which, I believe with other interventions, should over the next five years transform our method of work to make the Judiciary more efficient and effective. The ultimate goal is to improve access to justice for the people of Uganda and the overall image of the Judiciary.

### **1. The Draft ICT Strategy for the years 2015/16-2019/20**

The Judiciary has developed a draft ICT Strategy and the major task before us is to scrutinize this draft into a final Strategy through:-

- i. Assessing the adequacy and completeness of each of the planned strategic programs.
- ii. Advising on the available strategic partnerships for achieving the strategic programs.
- iii. Guidance on the role of stakeholders as highlighted in the draft Strategy document.
- iv. Discussion on the possible sources of funding for the Strategy.

### **2. The Judicial Problem (delays and Backlog as two major Problems in the Administration of Justice).**

It is true that our justice system has failed, for various reasons, including the limited use of technology, to deliver justice expeditiously. This delay in delivery of justice is one of the greatest challenges facing

most Judiciaries in the World including Uganda. The problem of delays is not a new one – it is as old as the law itself.

Delay in the context of justice means failure by the courts to hear a case within a reasonable time. An expected life span of a case is an inherent part of the system. No one expects a case to be decided overnight. However, difficulties arise when the actual time taken for disposal of the case far exceeds its expected life span, and that is when we say there is delay in dispensation of justice.

Delay in disposal of cases not only creates disillusionment amongst the litigants, but also undermines the very capability of the court to impart justice in an efficient and effective manner, culminating into case backlog.

The challenge before us over the next two days is to address the extent to which ICT can assist us to overcome the issue of case delays and backlog.

### **3. Legal and Judicial Reforms**

Many countries around the world are undertaking legal and judicial reforms as part of their overall development programs. Economic and social progress cannot sustainably be achieved without respect for the rule of law, democratic dispensation and effective protection of human rights; each of which requires a well-functioning judiciary that can interpret and enforce the laws equitably and efficiently. An effective judiciary is predictable, resolves cases expeditiously, and is accessible to the public. Unfortunately many Judiciaries in the

developing countries still face huge challenges of delay and case backlog, thus stifling economic development.

It is for this reason that Judiciaries around the world are adopting ICT so as to deal with case backlog through reengineering and automation of court processes.

#### **4. ICT and the Administration of Justice**

Today, it is important to acknowledge that the advent of ICT is fundamentally changing the way people work, learn and interact. ICT is being adopted in all aspects of society to facilitate online delivery of services. Both Government and the Private Sector have to move in this direction and adopt the emerging new technologies if they are to match and fit within the current global world.

The rapid development of ICT opens up new opportunities to significantly improve the administration of justice. The availability of web services, the use of electronic filing, the electronic exchange of legal documents, the possibility of virtual courts and online presentation of precedents, are some of the interventions that are spurring judicial administrations around the world to rethink their current functions and activities.

For example, there are a number of ways countries are using ICT to make administration of justice cost effective. These include:

- Electronic recording of evidence;
- Digital presentation of evidence;
- E-filing;
- Digital case management;

- Audio-visual presentation of evidence; and
- Electronic data management.

## **5. PREVIOUS JUDICIARY ICT STRATEGIES**

The Judiciary developed its first Strategy in 2000 covering a four year period to 2003. After its expiry, the second Strategy was developed in 2004 covering a five year period to 2008. The most recent Strategy also covered a five year period 2009 – 2013. Implementation of these Strategies have enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in our Judicial System, through the use of information management and court room technology.

I would like therefore to thank our partners who have generously funded the implementation of the previous strategies. These partners include; Danida, the Peoples' Republic of Korea, UNICEF, the Irish Government, the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS), and of course the Government of Uganda.

## **6. THE JUDICIARY ICT STRATEGY FY2015/2016 – FY2019/2020**

The globalization of the economy, social trends and other factors present new demands on judiciaries, while at the same time, advances in technology and communication offer opportunities to judicial policy makers to make justice more accessible, transparent and effective.

Therefore, for the next five years, Ugandans would like to see an ICT enabled Judiciary that is free of delays. To achieve this we need:

- i. An efficient and effective legal and regulatory environment to facilitate the use of ICT in the administration of justice.
- ii. Easy access to court rooms through appropriate court room technology including; digital presentation of evidence, video conferencing system and research.
- iii. Electronic filing of cases to eliminate time wastage and or loss of records.
- iv. Establishment of an Electronic Document Management System to secure court records.
- v. Establishment of a robust case management system to enhance planning, performance reporting, monitoring and evaluation of the Court and the individual Judiciary staff.
- vi. Automation of judicial processes to foster transparency and accountability, that are necessary for increasing public confidence in the Judiciary.

I am committed to see that this strategy when approved is implemented with minimum delay. We must, however, be alive to the reasons why the previous strategies did not fully achieve their objectives and ensure that those bottlenecks are overcome. I therefore call upon the Government and our development partners to provide the necessary resources to fund the ICT strategy. I also call upon all those charged with the implementation of this strategy to give it the priority it deserves. I wish to remind the Judges and staff of the Judiciary to prioritize the use of ICT.

I look forward to hearing recommendations from this workshop on implementing this draft strategy.

It is now my honour to declare this two day Non- Residential Stakeholders' Consultative Workshop open.

**For God and My Country.**