



Republic of Uganda



CLOSING REMARKS

BY HON. DR. JUSTICE YOROKAMU BAMWINE
THE HON. THE PRINCIPAL JUDGE OF UGANDA

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

8TH JUNE, 2016

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ICT STRATEGY FY2015/2016 – FY2019/2020 ON 8TH JUNE, 2016**

The Hon. Judges of the Courts of Judicature.
The Secretary to the Judiciary
The Chief Registrar
The President of the Uganda Law Society
The Representative – Ministry of ICT
The Executive Director – National Information Technology Authority –
Uganda
Your Worships
Senior Administrators of the Judiciary
Fellow Ugandans,

1. Introduction

I am, deeply delighted to offer these closing remarks to acknowledge the wonderful task ably accomplished during this 2 days Non – Residential ICT Workshop. The Judiciary recognises the support you render to enable it fulfil its mandate.

Throughout the Workshop, the Judiciary has gathered very wonderful ideas, suggestions and guidance from the relevant stakeholders namely:-

- i. The Policy makers,
- ii. Technical Advisors of Government,
- iii. Development Partners,
- iv. Partners in development and usage of Judicial Systems,
- v. The JLOS Institutions,
- vi. The Judiciary – Top Management, Planners and the Technocrats

2. Highlights of the 5 – Year Judiciary ICT Strategy FY2015/2016 – FY2019/2020

The Judiciary ICT Strategy has outlined:-

- i. The achievements of the Judiciary ICT Function to date.

- ii. The planned strategic programs for the next 5 years emphasizing the programs for each year.
- iii. The Costed the 5 year strategic programs detailing the annual budgetary requirements.
- iv. The Implementation plan for each of the strategic programs; and
- v. A Logframe for each of the strategic programs detailing the activities, indicators, means of verification and probable risks and assumptions. This will provide a tool for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of this ICT Strategy.

3. Outputs of the 5 - Year Judiciary ICT Strategy FY2015/2016 - FY2019/2020

At the end of the 5 year period (FY2019/2020), the following will be achieved:-

- i. An efficient enabling regulatory framework to support ICT deployment and usage in the administration of Justice in the Ugandan Courts.
- ii. A Uniform Case Flow Process in the Courts of Uganda
- iii. A robust Case Management System to enable; case management planning, performance measurement and reporting.
- iv. E-Filing of Cases to lessen litigants/law firms' physical trips to the Courts Registries.
- v. An efficient Document Management System including e-archiving to eliminate loss and mis-placement of case files.
- vi. Real-Time Court Recording and Transcription to the level of all our Chief Magistrates Courts.
- vii. Video Conferencing systems will be installed in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court and the High Courts (including the High Courts at the Circuits) and in 18 Prison Facilities to enable reduction of distances, incurred costs and risks to transport inmates to courts.
- viii. Digital Evidence Presentation Systems will be installed in our Supreme Court, Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court and the High Courts.
- ix. Court records will soon be accessed on our mobile phones.

- x. Reduced absenteeism and late coming to Court by Court staff as biometric time attendance systems will be installed in all our Court Stations.
- xi. An efficient and effective digital library.
- xii. All Judiciary Staff will have a 24/7 access to their office by use of ICTs.
- xiii. The public will pay its Court Fees including Cash bail using mobile money system.
- xiv. Centralized access to all Justice Information on the e-Justice Portal.
- xv. A Centralized monitoring of all our Court Registry operation across the country up to the level of Chief Magistrates Courts.
- xvi. The Uganda Legal Information Institute (ULII) will be popularized as a source of all judgments delivered in Uganda's Courts of Record.
- xvii. All Court Stations in Uganda will have access to at least one computer set and all Judicial Officers will have access to a Laptop computer.
- xviii. The Judiciary Local/Wide Area Computer Network will be extended to all the Chief Magistrates and 55 Grade one Court Stations.
- xix. All the Judiciary computer hardware and systems will be in serviceable conditions.
- xx. The Judiciary ICT Backbone infrastructure meeting International Standards.
- xxi. A shift towards usage of Open Source software as opposed to proprietary software that is capital intensive.
- xxii. Efficient Privacy and data protection systems
- xxiii. An ICT Organizational structure to efficiently and effectively support the Judiciary ICT Function. This will also be complimented by the enactment of the Judiciary Administration Law whose Bill is now before Parliament.
- xxiv. A Judiciary enabled by research and innovation in the area of ICT.
- xxv. Efficiently implemented ICT Projects as guided by the Information Technology Project Management Methodology (ITPMM) developed by the National Information Technology Authority – Uganda (NITA-U).

4. Benefits of the outputs on the Administration of Justice in Uganda

Once the envisaged outputs have been realised, the administration of justice will be positioned as below:-

- i. Reduced delays and hence backlog in the administration of Justice through improved case file handling systems, time management systems, individual performance monitoring and evaluation.
- ii. Public trust in the Judiciary will be improved through improved external and internal access to the Judiciary by use of ICTs.
- iii. Improved access to legal research information.
- iv. Reduced costs on proprietary software.

5. Funding and other support

The ICT Strategy has highlighted a budgetary requirement of US\$. 36,419,800,000/= whose source remains a huge challenge to the Judiciary.

6. Partners in development and usage of Judicial ICT Systems

The smart phone offers best evidence of how IT can transform society. With Internet banking, these days people rarely go to the Bank. Anytime of day or night they can access their money in the comfort of their sitting rooms.

In Singapore, the Supreme Court has successfully initiated "the paperless court" to reduce costs and improve efficiency. Its Electronic Filing System (EFS) enables law firms to file court documents electronically using the Internet. The CJ said so yesterday and I am his witness.

The EFS not only has the benefits of electronic storage but makes for faster:

- Document production
- Filing
- Serving
- Retrieval and Internet transfer

- Provision of an electronic record of hearing dates and documents filed.

The system eliminates file misplacement; permits files to be viewed by different parties simultaneously; reduces paper littering; and above all cuts down court case processing time. Can our ICT Committee take us there? We were happy to interact with the architects of that system-CRIMSON LOGIC.

If the presented strategic plan is something to go by, I can see some proverbial light at the end of the tunnel in this country.

Thank you our partners in development and usage of judicial systems that have show cased the available ICT solutions that can be deployed for an efficient and effective Judiciary.

These are:

- i. Crimsonlogic from Singapore
- ii. LexisNexis from South Africa
- iii. JAVS from the USA
- iv. GRANTEC from United Arab Emirates
- v. COMTEL from South Africa
- vi. COMPUTAS from Norway
- vii. ATTITUDE from Uganda
- viii. MTN from Uganda

Thank you for sharing information with us.

An area that still gives us headaches is that of Transcription services.I have always thought and still do that funds allowing transcription of court proceedings could be done by an external company.Out-Sourcing such service saves costs of purchase and routine maintenance of machines which can be done by the service provider. Such a company can train staff locally and provide employment to our children. I am informed such a company exists in South Africa-VERITAS INTERNATIONAL.

Such a facility would make life very easy for Trial Judges and Magistrates as it would eliminate the perennial complaints of delayed provision of record of proceedings and Judgements,loss of files or

even challenging the record of proceedings as we would have both audio and video recordings.

ICT Committee, I know you think big. Although this meeting has had the opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of such a facility in passing, you can think bigger by initiating detailed debate as regards outsourcing, locally or internationally, that provides transcription services in all our courts at a negotiated cost.

I, once again thank you all for your participation, guidance and support rendered during this 2 days Non – Residential ICT Workshop.

It is thus my pleasure to declare this 2 days Non- Residential Stakeholders’ Consultative Workshop closed.

For God and My Country.