



PERCEPTION ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN UGANDA

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PRESIDENT

UGANDA LAW SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ Administration of Justice in Uganda is bred from the preamble of the 1995 Constitution as amended and is groomed by Chapter 8 of the same.
- ▶ This is a concept that involves all stake holders in the justice system from the grass roots to the helm of the temple of Justice these include: the Police, Prisons, DPP, ULS and the Judiciary
- ▶ Administration of Justice is a means through which equality is achieved even for those that may seem voiceless in the eyes of those who in their personal opinion are more privileged and feel are above the law.
- ▶ As a Country, I am proud to say that we have come a long way in this noble cause and I applaud you all for the effort or contributions you have made in whichever way.
- ▶ George Washington rightly stated that, **“the administration of Justice is the firmest pillar of Government.”**

THE JUDICIARY

- ▶ It would be remiss of me to talk about Administration of Justice in Uganda without addressing the tenet of its independence in as far carrying out its mandate and even the welfare of the Judicial Officers. I am really glad the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020 came into force. With this law in force, there is a big stride towards independence for example towards budgeting which has created opportunities with better terms and conditions of service.

Judiciary Cont...

- ▶ In the Previous years one of the challenges towards effective administration of Justice has been the low number of Judicial Officers to attend to matters that arise. I am glad that in the year 2021 **we were able to witness 48 newly appointed Magistrates take oath of office to boost of the workforce of the Judicial members already present though this doesn't resolve the challenge of understaffing in the Judiciary. The current ratio of Judicial Officers to the Population of 45 million stands as follows:**
- ▶ Supreme Court 1:5,111,111
- ▶ Court of Appeal 1:3,538,461
- ▶ High Court 1:793,103
- ▶ Magistrates' Courts 1:158,075

It is my hope that one day, we shall have a court system where there is at least a Grade One Magistrate at every sub county level country wide.

Judiciary cont..

- ▶ **We are currently living in the era of technological advancement.** The Covid-19 pandemic had its far reaching negative impacts but also more than ever exposed and created a need for us as key players in the Justice System to embrace and adapt to new technologies in order to make Administration of Justice and access to it a possibility. I am very pleased and applaud the Judiciary for all the effort that has been rendered towards building **the Electronic Court Case Management Information System (ECCMIS)** and utilisation of the **Video Conferencing System** in the Commercial Division, Mbarara High Court, Arua High Court, Masindi High Court and Masaka High Court and the **Digital Court Recording and Transcription** rolled out in the High Court Land and Civil Divisions. I trust that if the above are to be rolled out in even other courts, a huge leap towards Administration of Justice would have been made.

Judiciary Cont...

- ▶ Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)
- ▶ I acknowledge the judiciary efforts in gender related barriers to access to justice such as;
- ▶ Supporting the process of development of a training manual for Judicial officers on GBV which will be launched this year;
- ▶ Putting in place judicial officers as trainers to train on GBV;
- ▶ Training clerks, front desk officers and administrators on the victim & trauma informed approach when dealing with victims of GBV and conducting of the SGBV sessions

THE UGANDA LAW SOCIETY

- ▶ As the Uganda Law Society, **we boast of a 4050 registered membership** as at end of 2021. However, **over 80% of this membership is concentrated in the central business district of Kampala Metropolitan**, leaving a lot to be desired in access to legal representation in the up country areas of this country which in a way affects administration of Justice.
- ▶ We have currently been looking at the critical mass of our young lawyers and through various initiatives have tried to implore them to fill up some of these gaps. **We hope to set up legal advisory hubs all over the country as the ULS so as to bring these services closer to the people that need them. This is only possible through the strategic partnerships with like UIA, PSFU and Buganda Kingdom through whom we can be able to easily reach the common person with dire need for legal services.**

DPP

- ▶ The DPP being very pivotal in administration of justice is facing some challenges such as resource gap.
- ▶ The office of the DPP can assist in dealing with torture by not sanctioning files where evidence has been procured through illegal means like torture.

PRISONS

- ▶ As at December 2021, Prisons were operating at;
- ▶ 336.8% operating capacity;
- ▶ 47.9% of these are convicts whereas 51.8% of these are remandees.
- ▶ I am glad that Prisons partnered with the ULS and other stake holders such as b the DPP and Attorney General in the Prisons Decongestion Program which we have already started with obtaining all requisite data. Such an undertaking will contribute greatly to administration of Justice since remandees such as those that have been in prison for a period longer than the one they would have served had they been convicted will get a chance to finally be free.

POLICE

- ▶ **Community policing** is one of the models adopted by police in execution of its mandate. **Article 212(d) of the constitution emphasizes** cooperation between the police with the public, other security organs and the population generally.
- ▶ It is a joint effort between the citizen and the police in addressing the local crime problems through defining their problems, getting involved in the planning of the solutions, assisting in implementing the plans and deciding if they feel their needs are being satisfied.

Conclusion

- ▶ In a nutshell, the concept of Administration of Justice is one that should evolve on the notion that Justice must not only be done but be seen to be done as well. These perceptions have looked at some of the key undertakings by various stake holders in the administration of Justice



THANK YOU VERY MUCH