



PERCEPTIONS ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN UGANDA

PRESENTED BY

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AT THE 23rd ANNUAL JUDGES CONFERENCE, 2022

**Theme: The Administration of the Judiciary Act and Sustainable
Transformation of the Judiciary**

1st February 2022

MESTIL HOTEL - KAMPALA

- **The Hon. Chief Justice, Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny-Dollo,**
- **The Hon. Deputy Chief Justice, Richard Buteera,**
- **The Hon. Principal Judge Dr. Flavian Zeija,**
- **The Hon. Director of Public Prosecution**
- **Justices of the Supreme & High Court,**
- **Judges of the Court of Appeal, Rtd. Justices and Judges,**
- **Registrars and Magistrates,**
- **President Uganda Law Society,**
- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good morning to you all!

1.0 INTRODUCTION

I am profoundly honored to have been invited by the Judiciary to present on behalf of CSOs, a paper on ***"The Perceptions on the Administration of Justice in Uganda"*** at the 23rd Annual Judges Conference 2022. I am equally glad that the topic I was given to discuss is very dear to me having served before as a Judicial Officer and now a CSO leader a position that renders me with wider balanced perspective towards the gist of the matter.

In this presentation I make a case of positive and negative perceptions against the administration of justice in Uganda especially focusing on the poor and vulnerable. The paper is further geared towards adding and strengthening on what is already being implemented by the Judiciary. However, and before delving into detail, I have labored to extract and define the salient terms which underpin what administration of justice encompasses.

1.1 Interpretation of Key words

a) Administration of Justice: which according to the Judicial Service Commission citizen handbook is defined as the management and control of the enforcement of laws and dispensation of justice through a judicial system. As you are aware the Judiciary is established under **Article 126 (1) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (as amended)** as the custodian of the rule of Law and protector of human rights and freedoms. This Article and clause states that; ***"Judicial power is derived from the people and shall be exercised by the courts established under this constitution in the name of the people and in conformity with the law and with the values, norms and aspiration of the people."***

At the heart of dispensation of justice, Article 126 (2) lays out the principles that the Judiciary should follow when exercising its power, for instance; ***Justice must be done to all irrespective of their social or economic status; Justice must not be delayed; Adequate compensation must be awarded to victims of wrongs; Reconciliation between parties should be promoted; and, Substantive justice must be administered without undue regard to technicalities.*** The principle of administering substantive justice without undue regard to technicalities was in fact underpinned in the case of **Horizon Coaches v Edward Rurangaranga and Mbarara Municipal Council Justice Bart Katureebe (JSC)**, as he then was, ruled that technicalities such as language, lines and numbering that were questioned not to be in conformity with rules of court could be dispensed away within certain circumstances to effectively deliver substantive justice.

Furthermore, in administering justice, judicial officers are duty bound to religiously adhere to the Judicial Oath provided for under Article 149 of the 1995 Constitution (as amended) stating that ***"Every judicial officer shall, before assuming the duties of his or her office take and subscribe the oath of allegiance and the judicial oath..."***

The above tenants of administration of justice have all been operationalized under the recently transformative legislation known as the Administration of Judiciary Act of 2020 which guarantees independence of the Judiciary with self-financing and accountability mechanisms. This piece of legislation will therefore go a long way in strengthening administration of justice since the law has empowered the Chief Justice and Judiciary as an autonomous arm of Government as it ought to be.

b) Perception: is defined according to the Merriam Webster dictionary as ***the ability to think, comprehend or understand behaviors and practices by an individual or an institution for this matter.*** Perceptions are therefore subjective and can either be positive or negative. In the context of administration of justice in Uganda, there are positive perceptions that the public holds of the Judiciary, equally so are negative perceptions. Since Judiciary is a service-oriented institution, it must at all times, find out what these perceptions are for purposes of self-appraisal and reflection in order to strengthen the positive and address the negative in a bid to improve and transform delivery of justice in Uganda.

However, it is crucial to note that while dispensing justice, the Judiciary works closely with a chain of other justice institutions and actors including the Police, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), Uganda Prison Services and Lawyers among others. This implies that as we discuss the perceptions and or performance of the Judiciary, we should not lose sight of the implication and impact by the other actors on them.

2.0 THE POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS ON ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN UGANDA

Drawing from experiences of working with the poor and vulnerable communities in Uganda, there is no doubt the Judiciary and or justice actors in Uganda have made legal reforms, policies and practice that have greatly impacted on the administration of justice in Uganda. Due to the above positive strides, the Judiciary and its sister institutions have raised the scorecard on administration of justice thereby increasing its trust to acceptable levels as reported the Justice Law and order Annual performance Report of 2020/2021. This paper may not be exhaustive but I will endeavor to speak some areas that stand out as highlighted below;

2.1 Enactment of the Administration of Judiciary Act (2020); The enactment of this law to facilitate the functions of administration of justice in Uganda has been a game changer in the transformation of the Judiciary as noted in the Key note speech by Rtd. Hon. Justice James Ogoola Munange. This piece of legislation had been for a long time the missing link for recognition and operationalization of the Judiciary as an independent arm of Government just like the Executive and Parliament. The Act gives full autonomy to the Judiciary and the Chief Justice in particular in terms of a refined structure; novel authority and independence; funding and accountability; performance management system as an effective tool of appraising Judicial Officers as well as effecting the Retirement benefits system of judicial officers which will contribute towards a motivated workforce.

The most celebrated structure especially on side of court users and the public is Section 4(1) of the Administration of Justice Act which provides for the establishment of the Judiciary Council which among others is responsible for advising the Chief Justice on policies for planning and development of the Judiciary; ethics and integrity within the Judiciary as well as improvement of the administration of justice. LASPNET is privileged to have been involved by the Judiciary in the nomination of Mr. Samuel Herbert Nsubuga, the CEO of African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV) and former LASPNET Board Chairperson to represent the public on the Judiciary Council.

It is no doubt that the enactment and operationalization of the Administration of Judiciary Act is a very welcome development in the administration of justice in Uganda. It empowers the Chief Justice to be in charge of the institution, free of any external influence, enhances self- accountability of the Judiciary ready and facilitated to innovate and meet the justice demands of the day to all manner of people in Uganda. Furthermore, the involvement of the public on the Judiciary Council demonstrates Judiciary's appreciation towards the

relevance of inclusive justice in matters of transforming administration of justice. This is in addition to bridging the gap between the public and the Judiciary as an arm of Government thereby increasing the public trust in the administration of justice in Uganda.

2.2 Adaptation to Innovative Practices for enhancing Access to Justice; The Judiciary has endeavored to transform its services through innovating and applying ICT to dispense justice. This has enabled and improved delivery of justice through expediting the process and responding to emerging situations such as the current pandemic of COVID 19. The innovations include among others Plea Bargain that has facilitated prison decongestion; Small Claims Procedure that has enabled access to justice even without lawyers; Mobile and Special session courts like SGBV as well as putting in place complaints handling mechanisms such as Toll-free lines. Most importantly, in this fast-paced technological advancement era, we have seen Uganda's Judiciary moving by the trend and embracing E-justice through establishment of the Electronic Court Case Management Information System (ECCMIS) which is intended to simplify court processes and eliminate opportunistic corruption through reducing human interaction between the public and court officials and making litigants to be in charge of their cases.

Still at the height of the COVID 19 lockdown, the Judiciary fast tracked the introduction of the video conferencing to aid dispensation of justice. This facilitated the prisoners to continue appearing before judicial officers despite the lockdown. Prior the Judiciary in a bid to adopt child justice friendly services introduced the "**Audio-Visual Link**" in a number of High court circuits such as High Court Kampala, Gulu, Masaka, Mbarara, Arua and Mbale.

Whereas some of these innovations still have their own limitations such high costs of internet; poor internet connectivity as well as limited geographical spread, nonetheless they have restored hope in the public that the Judiciary is alive to changing trends aimed at strengthening the administration of justice.

The perception we have therefore in this regard is that the Judiciary infrastructure as one of the key enablers of administration of justice is being transformed from analog to a digitalized justice system which is a welcome development in the Fourth industrial revolution era.

2.3. Application of Judicial Activism as a tool for effective and responsive Justice; In line with application of Art 126 (1) of the Constitution (as amended) which provides for people-centered justice, various Judicial Officers have been acknowledged by the public for exercising judicial activism in handling cases of public interest nature

which have enhanced the jurisprudence and helped resolve disputes and grievances that have a multiplier effect on people. Accordingly, we have witnessed public interest cases where judicial activism has been applied by various judicial officers like in the case of **Muhindo James & 4 ors v AG MISC Cause 127 of 2016** where the Hon. Justice Musa Sekaana ordered Government to enact a comprehensive legal framework and procedure for land evictions. The other public interest cases worth mentioning include; **CEHURD v Mulago National Referral Hospital and AG (Civil Suit No 212 of 2013)** where the Hon. Justice Lydia Mugambe ordered the Government to prioritize investment in health systems and particularly to devote special attention and resources to women whose circumstances make them vulnerable under the health system. This case was recognized internationally and earned Justice Mugambe **"The People's Choice Gavel Award"**. Another ruling worth mentioning is of **Mulumba Moses, CEHURD v AG & 2 ors MISC 489 of 2021** where Hon. Justice Phillip Odoki ruled and ordered government and professional councils to regulate fees for COVID treatment services in private hospitals to facilitate access to health especially for the poor persons.

The bottom-line to the above examples is that judicial activism is an indication of a responsive justice system that interprets cases appropriately to enrich jurisprudence, facilitate law reform and or address injustices that ideally and under normal circumstances would not easily have a quick remedy under the existing legislations. Such proactive judgements duly change perceptions and restore public trust in the administration of justice in Uganda. In addition, public interest and judicial activism strengthens compliance to international laws and treaties to which Uganda is a signatory.

It is therefore important to entrench judicial activism across all levels of court through skilling and training because it portrays the administration of justice in Uganda as more relevant, compliant and responsive to the constitution and the justice needs of the people.

2.4 Public engagements and awareness sessions on Administration of Justice in Uganda; The Judiciary has maintained the practice of conducting public related activities across the country such as holding Court Open days where the leadership of the Judiciary has appeared and interacted with the public to share and receive their experiences about the administration of justice. In 2019, the Rtd Hon. Chief Justice Bart Katureebe featured in HiiL's documentary titled **"Justice Leaders"** which unveiled access to justice problems faced by the ordinary person in the quest to access justice. In this documentary the Chief Justice Emeritus desired to see a people-centered justice system in Uganda. This was a good gesture to have the highest authority of the Judiciary mooting for a Judiciary that works for all Ugandans. On other occasions, various judicial officers have been invited to preside over the ULS Annual Pro-bono day, Legal Aid Open

days and other public forums organized by CSOs like LASPNET, ULS, FIDA and PILAC. Worth noting is that the continued participation of judicial officers in public engagements and awareness sessions has aroused more public trust in the Judiciary through facilitating open interaction between judicial officers and the public. Furthermore, in operationalizing the requirement under the Administration of the Judiciary Act, the Judiciary released its inaugural Annual Performance Report of 2020/2021 as part of its public accountability.

The sharing of information therefore provides and presents administration of justice in Uganda as available; accessible and with open door policy.

2.5 Partnership with state and non-state actors in Administration of Justice;

In a bid to strengthen the administration of justice, the Judiciary has opened its doors to work and collaborate with like-minded stakeholders such; LASPNET, ACCU, ActionAid FHRI, CEPTIL among others. Specifically, LASPNET has partnered with the Judiciary on implementation of the Corruption Monitoring project aimed at contributing to the JLOS anti-corruption strategy through documenting both good and bad practices within the Judiciary. Since project inception, the Judiciary has been commended for various good practices such as; wearing of name tags by judicial officers and court staff for easy identification; establishment of customer desks in courts such as Buganda Road; Mengo and Nakawa Chief Magistrates courts; sharing and pinning of cause lists on the notice board in High courts of Lira, Mbale, Masaka and Arua. Accordingly, several judicial officers at all levels from Magistrates to Supreme court have been identified and recommended to superiors for promotion while others have been recognized under the scorecard released annually by CEPIL for their good performance in quick dispensation of justice, professionalism, punctuality and sensitization of litigants prior to hearing of cases.

This therefore positions the Judiciary as a transparent and accountable institution that welcomes constructive feedback to enhance reforms and practice change.

3.0. NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

The positive perceptions notwithstanding, oftentimes the Judiciary has been in the eyes of court users and the public displayed levels of mistrust which greatly erodes the public trust hence being considered as one of the inaccessible government service delivery institutions especially for the poor vulnerable and marginalized.

The UNDP Spotlight initiative project report¹, notes that for many years, perception surveys have ranked the Judiciary as one of the most difficult institutions to navigate in

¹ <https://www.ug.undp.org/content/uganda/en/home/blog/2021/spotlight-initiative--demystifying-the-judicial-system.html> Accessed on 19th January 2022

Uganda with the general perception being that a poor person can never win a case literally translated in Luganda as "***Omwaavu tasinga musango.***" Despite the enormous efforts invested in the administration of justice, unfortunately, these perceptions continue to exist especially among those who may not have the resources (knowledge, finances or time) to navigate through the complicated system by themselves. ***This is simply because the administration of justice focuses on reforms in terms of legislation, procedures, investments (structural, financial and human) and oftentimes pays less attention on who and how they are delivering justice on the day today basis especially for those marginalized, vulnerable and poor that interface with justice system.***

In this presentation I make efforts to explain and give examples to clarify in these negative perceptions;

3.1. Delays in dispensation of Justice; Meaningful justice requires that justice should be prompt, quicker, fair, adequate and impartial for all manner of people. As Judicial officers and Lawyers we are not alien to the legal doctrine which says "***Justice delayed is Justice denied'***" and "***Justice should not only be done but seen to be done."*** Therefore, among the obstacles faced by the public in accessing justice that portrays negatively to the administration of justice in Uganda is the outrageously protracted period of handling cases which has precipitated congestion in prisons; unnecessary denial of procedural rights like bail; preferential treatment for high profile cases against the poor who are unrepresented, application of outdated delivery models like the criminal sessions; absenteeism and delayed judgement delivery among others. Speaking to this challenge, I am fully aware that judicial officers remain few compared to what Parliament approved and or those recruited and deployed hence the reason why we are turning away from case backlog to caseload. However, the public is not blind to the fact that some judicial officers are not performing to the expected standards often being part and parcel of the delayed justice we are alluding to here. For instance, and recently, the BBC News² published an article of a ***Ugandan Lawyer named Jordan Kinyera whose family lost their land when he was six years of age only for the High Court to deliver judgement 23 years later when Mr. Kinyera had finished law school.*** Similarly, and in reference to the above, a recent court of appeal decision of ***Sseremba Dennis v Uganda (Criminal Appeal No.480 of 2017), Hon. Justice Egonda Ntende and Hon Justice Catherine Bamugemereire*** both agreed and noted the glaring delay in the criminal justice system to conclude cases and in particular pointed out that the

² <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-47801008> Accessed on 21st January, 2022

appellant in that case had spent ten **(10) years** in custody only to be pronounced by the appellate court that he was wrongly convicted by the trial court.

Allow me to further note that the criminal sessions although looked at as mechanisms for justice delivery through harnessing resources for all actors (Police, ODPP, Lawyers and Witnesses etc.) have been criticized as archaic criminal procedures causing delayed dispensation of justice and creating backlog in itself. This is due to the fact that the criminal trial of the accused in capital offences stems from the Chief Magistrates court with no jurisdiction until a suspect is committed to the High court and later cause listed, many have stayed as long as over 5 years awaiting for the next convenient High court session for trial. It is not guarantee that even their cause list will be heard to conclusion. The model instead of being a facilitator of prompt justice ends up being a facilitator of justice delayed and denied hence violating the right to fair and speedy trial as enshrined in Article 28. Responding to this kind of scenarios one human rights activist and blogger had this to say "**Judiciary is in intensive care unit suffering from multi-organ body failure.**"³ Whereas one may perceive the writer's opinion as insensitive and brutal and ignoring all efforts by the Judiciary, such statements are fillers and pointers to a dissatisfied public and taint the image and brand of the institution. It's therefore important to use them to reflect on how the judicial system can be reformed to avert such damaging statements from influencers.

More still, the delay in the administration of justice is not only a condemnation towards the criminal justice system but is also a demonstration that there is a lot more to be done to transform the Judiciary. In most cases such unnecessary delays are a result of technicalities and unknowingly to many they enlist negative public perception in the Judiciary hence facilitating acts of mob justice and other forms of lawlessness in dispute resolution hence "**A justice system which is unfriendly; a justice system which is technical and complicated, an expensive justice system,**" just to give you a sneak peek on what the people say and or perceive in such scenarios of delayed justice.

3.2. Perceived Infringement on the Independence of the Judiciary; Judicial officers and all officers of court (Lawyers and Attorneys) are obliged to act professionally, observe the judicial oath and administer justice to all manner of people without fear or favour and with impartiality. However, this question often arises when the Judiciary is handling cases of high-profile nature and or with political connotation where their allegiance to this oath is put on a balance of scales and or test wherein sometimes it is inferred in relation to the decision made that probably the presiding officer is subject to the control of other state agencies especially in politically charged matters. The loss of

³ <https://masakeonline.wordpress.com/2017/08/25/ugandas-criminal-justice-system-is-failing-heres-how-to-make-it-work/> posted on 25 August 2017 and accessed 31st January 2022

judicial independence has manifested itself in the abuse of judicial power and or processes evidenced in some cases as miscarriage of justice. For instance, where orders for evictions are impacting a bigger community; where bail is denied even in situations without convincing justifiable reasons and or where a judicial hides behind technicalities to delay or deny justice.

I wish to share the public uproar and concern when bail was denied in the case of the two (2) MPs **Hon. Ssewanyana Allan and Ssegirinya Muhammad** who were charged with terrorism and murder following the Masaka extra-judicial killings. The suspects filed an application for which bail was granted by the Masaka Resident Judge Hon. Justice Victoria Katamba only to be rearrested and remanded in Kitalya. In the subsequent application, another Judge on contrary refused to grant bail, the expectation would be to retaliate the reason as advanced in the first applicant and grant bail no matter how many times the suspects would be rearrested. This would send a signal to security forces and reinforce the independence of the Judiciary in handling such cases of similar nature.

The most recent candidate of arbitrary re-arrest upon being granted bail was satirical writer and **Novelist Kakwenza Rukirabashaija**. Prior to his release and on day he was arraigned before court the presiding judicial officer failed to put into consideration the information which had been availed to court including an order to release the suspect unconditionally which had been disregarded by security. Imperative to note is that sensitivity in such matter would for instance require the handling judicial officer to provide an adjournment in situations where a suspect was stealthily brought before court to enable him reach out to his lawyers and or even order for immediate release and medical examination.

To emphasize this point I wish to quote tweet from a concerned citizen following the remand of the suspect ***"Hurriedly done to defeat the writ that was issued by the same judiciary yesterday. But I can confirm without fear of contradiction the judicial officer carried on proceedings with clear conscience of the judicial oath."***

These and many more approaches to handling of cases have portrayed the Judiciary as a system whose independence is under attack or compromised by the external forces; a Judiciary that is not inclined to serving the expectation of the people of Uganda under whom the judicial power is derived and administered."

3.3 An expensive and technically driven Justice System; It is historical perception which I would say and confirm that the formal justice system is expensive to navigate and yet majority of the population is poor and cannot access legal fees for Private Lawyers

and other associated costs for litigation such as filing fees among others. This assertion is underpinned by the Hiil Justice Needs Survey Report of (2016 and 2020) where it's argued that formal justice institutions like courts are less accessible by poor people. Despite the provision of legal services in form State Briefs, this is only limited to civil cases. This has further exacerbated by the technical approaches in justice delivery that seem to be more of deterring mechanisms than enablers especially when it comes to rules of procedures and engagement of court. The official court language is English which is highly technical for understanding of the ordinary person; this is compounded by the adversarial nature and approaches of litigation. In addition, the LASPNET Justice Trends Analysis reports (2017 & 2018), still alluded to lack of a state funded legal aid scheme to guarantee access to legal aid services for the poor and vulnerable. Furthermore, the LASPNET Access to Justice Trends report of 2020 while alluding to technical barriers the duty bearers identified cost as the greatest barrier to accessing formal justice systems. Although LASPNET has invested efforts in advocating for fast tracking the enactment of a National Legal Aid Bill, its progress was taken aback when the current Speaker of Parliament suspended all pending legislations spilling over from the 10th Parliament. Therefore, all these state of affairs continue to raise a negative perception in relation to administration of justice that is to say without money the poor person cannot navigate the justice system. The perception therefore remains that "***Justice is for the rich and the poor cannot access it***" which has reduced the public trust in formal justice institutions to 44% according to the 2016 Hiil report.

3.4. Corruption and its impact on Administration of Justice; Despite the ongoing efforts to professionalize the bench, fight corruption and strengthen systems to reduce on corruption tendencies, the Judiciary's public image continues to be tainted by acts of corruption whether real or perceived. Due to stagnancy in the fight against corruption which of course cuts across board, the Judiciary just like Uganda Police Force remains the majorly victimized corrupt institutions. For instance, the public continues to bear the assumption that justice is for sale in Uganda on top of the already high cost of litigation. LASPNET has had the benefit of monitoring corruption within the Judiciary as part of its recently concluded Democratic Governance Project and findings have revealed that corruption in the Judiciary is manifested in extortion practices of court clerks; bargaining for favorable bail conditions; kickbacks to receive favorable judgements; absenteeism and other forms of maladministration. On other occasions we have heard about bushy lawyers who act as conduits assisting the non-suspecting litigants to find their way through the system to get favorable outcomes. This has often contributed to obstruction of justice in disfavor of the poor and vulnerable and later blamed on the non-responsiveness of the Judiciary. We hope that the Judiciary in partnership with anti-corruption agencies and

non-state actors can walk the talk and ensure that corruption is whipped out since this was the same call echoed by H.E. the President of Uganda while officiating the new Law Year at the High Court in 2021.

3.5 Mainstreaming gender in the Administration of Justice; Despite the efforts taken up by the Judiciary to recruit more judicial officers, the stakeholders are concerned about the existing unequal gender representation in the Judiciary. The leadership at the helm remains dominated by men with 98% of the divisions within the Judiciary are headed by men. This raises a question as to whether there are no competent female judicial officers that can take up such managerial positions. This situation is complicated by the fact that the senior management of the Judiciary is also largely composed of men save for the position of Chief Registrar. This in away affects decision making that is not alive to gender roles and functions that distinguish men and women. Whereas the male counterparts would be well intentioned, often time, they need a more detail from female counterparts to make responsive polices intended to mainstream gender functions in the administration of justice.

Whereas the GBV sessions are a step in the right direction, we see minimal efforts invested especially in the constructed structures putting at the fore the maternal functions of the judicial officers as well as female litigants. We need to see courts with nursing rooms for breastfeeding mothers, affirmative action through prioritizing gender related cases putting into consideration the unique function of women as laid down under Article 33 of the Constitution.

Therefore, such unintended gender biases in the Judiciary poises negative perception that our judicial system is not gender sensitive as its mainly male dominated.

4.0 Recommendation to transform and minimize the negative perceptions in administration of justice

In line with the negative and positive perceptions alluded to above, the following recommendations are being made towards adding to what the Judiciary is doing to strengthen and transform administration of justice in Uganda

4.1 On delayed justice the following recommendations are prescribed

- There need to continue advocating for recruitment and skilling of more judicial officers at all levels. This can be done line with fulfilment of the Parliamentary approved Judiciary structure.
- Adapting the caseload reduction approach through implementation of the performance-based management system to promote judicial accountability.

- Amending the law to remove the criminal session model and increase the jurisdiction of Magistrates court.
- Extension of justice services closer to the people through conducting mobile courts and special court sessions for SGBV survivors in prisons, remand homes, refugee settlements and hard to reach areas with no justice structures.

4.2 Promotion of independence of the judiciary: In a bid to combat overriding of judicial powers by external forces the following is recommended;

- The leadership should continue to empower and encourage judicial officers to stand by their oath and refrain from external pressures.
- Adapt the team work spirit without compromising the individual judicial independence, speak with one voice as a team to reinforce each other's decisions, have peer review amongst each other rather than blame games.
- Continue to undertake specialized capacity building trainings especially in the area of judicial activism.

4.3 Elimination of corruption: This can be dealt away with through many ways including;

- Adapting and entrenching digital and ICT technologies aimed at minimizing opportunistic corruption facilitated by human beings;
- Rationalization of salaries and facilitation for judicial actors across the board to limit on brain drain especially from Judiciary to ODPP;
- Encouraging professionalism; strengthening internal anti-corruption policies and systems as well as encouraging the public to report corruption incidents.
- Adopt the zero tolerance to corruption, make corruption expensive venture for personal and career advancement.

4.4 Promotion of people centered justice: This can be achieved through many fronts including;

- Removal of technicalities in the justice system as provided under Article 126 of the constitution such as simplifying court language and procedural aspects to enhance access to courts.
- Judicial officers giving priority legal aid cases aware of their unique barriers as well as joining efforts to advocate for the enactment of the National Legal Aid law.

4.5. Mainstreaming gender in the administration of Justice: This can be handled through several interventions including;

- Building gender responsive infrastructure with child care centres for judicial staff, children and female litigants. The ongoing construction should have such facilities

- A deliberate rationalization of leadership positions in the Judiciary, we would like to see more women at the helm especially heading and not deputizing divisions Facilitating special sessions for gender related cases as well as training and skilling.

5.0 Conclusion

Strengthening administration of justice is a key tenet for the realization of human rights, rule of law and security as enshrined in Constitution (as amended) and the National Development Plan III. I wish to observe that the journey towards transforming and improving administration of justice in Uganda will necessitate a painful surgery where the Judiciary must raise up to the occasion to promote professionalism of the Bench; elimination of procedural and technical obstacles in the administration of justice; lobbying and advocating for the enactment of the National Legal Aid Bill as well as adoption of a more people-centered justice system.

We take note that the enabling environment has been provided including the enactment of the Administration of Judiciary Act (2020), increased budget allocation, appointment of more judicial officers especially at lower bench. Therefore, what needs to be done is to amplify the performance indicators to focus more on prompt, quick, adequate and fair justice.

Our humble appeal and contention is that improving the administration of justice should be resident and embedded in every judicial officer no matter the rank. My final appeal to you all in your respective capacities is that as we deliver justice for all, we must be conscious of the poorest and vulnerable. Let's reflect on my poor grandmother in Kikuba mutwe and my sister in Kaberamaido facing gender-based violence who is in your court but has no ability to get legal representation. How do you invite your discretionary power to ensure this person doesn't only get justice but is able to see justice being done? This is when we will have transformed and enhanced positive perception of the administration of justice in Uganda wholesomely.

***THANK YOU FOR LISTENING TO ME
FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY***
