



**REMARKS BY THE HON. THE CHIEF JUSTICE AT THE OFFICIAL  
OPENNING OF THE CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON  
DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES ON LAND EVICTIONS  
HELD ON THE 31ST JULY 2019 AT IMPERIAL ROYALE HOTEL**

My Lord the Honourable the Deputy Chief Justice;

The Honourable Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development;

My Lord the Honourable the Principal Judge;

Hon. Justices and Judges of the Courts of Judicature;

The Chief Registrar;

The Permanent Secretaries present;

The Resident City Commissioner Kampala and the Deputies;

Your Worships;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and gentlemen.

Let me begin by thanking the Hon. The Principal Judge and the members of the Civil Justice Reform Committee for the work so far done on this subject and for inviting me to officiate at this function.

Unlawful and irregular eviction of people from land is widespread in Uganda. In Uganda today, the registered owners of land are estimated to be 600,000; while tenants and customary occupants are estimated to be over 20 million.

I believe everyone in the room has seen media reports concerning contentious evictions from land and the concerns raised by H.E The President, myself and other leaders about the fact and the manner in which evictions have been carried out. There is no doubt that we need to regularise the process of evictions. In the recent past, we have had the most notorious of cases like the eviction and destruction of property belonging to hundreds of people from Land in Lusanja, Wakiso District. The other such incident took place in Mukono District around the same time last year. Those just provide examples of how bad the situation can get despite existence of a law governing execution of court orders in general and eviction orders in particular.

The situation drives us to seek for solutions to such a challenge and particularly to look out for ways through which other jurisdictions have handled the challenge. At the height of the controversy last year, I had a chat with my colleague, the Chief Justice of Kenya. He let me know that on their part they had developed guidelines for the smooth handling of eviction orders. The Chief Justice transmitted to me a copy of their guidelines, copies of which I passed on to H.E The President and a few other government officials. I also asked the Hon. The Principal Judge to head a Committee to under study the Guidelines and come up with a home-made solution. I am happy that we are here today to carry forward this debate with a view of developing our own guidelines.

The proposed guidelines are intended to achieve appropriate, fair and just execution of court orders and land evictions in particular. We expect a uniform

and consistent approach thus leading to efficient and effective management of eviction orders. All of the key actors will be expected to act with certainty and to have clear knowledge of what is taking place. This will reduce complaints and make it easy to handle the few complaints that will arise. This in turn will contribute to improved public confidence in the Judiciary thereby enabling the Judiciary to play its role towards the realisation of economic development.

I would therefore like to appreciate the Committee that has put up proposals that we are here to discuss. I also thank all of you who have taken off time to take part of this discussion. I believe that the outcome of this process will lead to a strong, fair and just procedural framework that will govern future conduct in the area land evictions.

It is expected that the Rules Committee will be involved in the finalization and issuance of the final product. I wish you fruitful deliberations. I thank you so much for listening to me.

Bart M. Katureebe

**CHIEF JUSTICE**