

THE ROLE OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

**A PRESENTATION BY DORCAS W.
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**SECRETARY TO THE JUDICIARY TO NEWLY
APPOINTED MAGISTRATES AT THE
ORIENTATION WORKSHOP ON 24TH
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I take this opportunity to congratulate all of you upon your successful appointment as Magistrates grade I.

In the Judiciary we work as a family and I invite you to the family and look forward to building the family together for the provision of justice to the people of Uganda

I wish to draw your attention to the fact that the Judiciary has a dual system of administration.

There is one headed by the Secretary to the Judiciary and the other by the Chief Registrar. Both of them are at the level of Permanent Secretary.

INTRODUCTION

The Judiciary as one of the three arms of government has a primary role to spearhead the administration of Justice in the country. To effectively play this critical role the Judiciary must have a competent professional manpower force of Lawyers(Magistrates, Registrars and Judges). This category of staff must however be provided with the necessary support services to enable them perform their professional work with minimum disruption.

It is therefore for this reason that a specialized but non- legal manpower force is employed to work hand in hand with the Judicial Officers to provide support services to the Judiciary.

The category of staff that provides support services include what is known as common cadres and are supervised under the department of Finance and Administration. Essentially, the department plays the role of co-ordination and provision of support services to enable the integral parts of Judiciary run smoothly.

ADMINISTRATION:

- The Secretary to the Judiciary is Permanent Secretary and the Accounting Officer of the Institution and therefore all matters related to finance are directly under her. She is also the overall head of the Administration staff. The Chief Registrar is responsible for Judicial matters including Judicial Officers.
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- The role of the Finance and Administration Department is to offer logistical support for effective and efficient delivery of Justice in all Courts. This is done by ensuring that the required resources especially financial resources are available. It also ensure that the tools of trade are made available promptly and in sufficient quantities to enable the Courts to function. The department is also responsible for provision of other facilities and logistics all of which are required for an efficient machinery of justice delivery.
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- Below the Secretary to Judiciary, there is the Under Secretary who is the head of Finance and Administration Department. Below him are other Administrative Officers i.e. the Principal Assistant Secretary, Senior Assistant Secretaries, and Assistant Secretary
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- All these provide day to day administrative services to the Judiciary like transport management, travel inland and abroad, welfare of staff and general coordination.

OTHER SECTIONS IN FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION ARE:

- **Planning, Development and Research**

This section is cross cutting. It is headed by the **Registrar Planning and Development** who works hand in hand with the Senior Economist. This section is responsible for strategic planning and policy development. It is responsible for budget preparation, formulation of the policy statements and coordinates the review and implementation of the Institutional Strategic Plan.

PERSONNEL

- This section is headed by the **Principal Personnel Officer**.
- The role of this section is to manage the entry, stay and exit of administrative/support staff of the Judiciary and ensuring that they are well motivated, developed and compensated (within the provisions offered by Government) to enable them deliver high quality service to support the delivery of justice in a timely manner. A new role to do with employees welfare has had extra emphasis by handling HIV and Counseling services to staff who need it.

ACCOUNTS

- This section is headed by the **Principal Accountant**. The role of the section is to secure acquisition of funds as budgeted and approved by Parliament from MFPED and to disburse those funds in accordance with the law, rules and guidelines and standing instructions issued from time to time and maintenance of financial records. This section provides technical guidance to the Accounting Officer on financial matters.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

This section is headed by the **Principal Information Technology Officer**. It handles the overall management and implementation of information systems (technology) in the Judiciary. Specifically, the section has been tasked with:

Managing the Court case Administration System (CCAS)

Management Information Systems (MIS)

Court Recording systems

Management of the Judiciary Website and Intranet System

Ensuring office Automation Systems.

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AND DISPOSAL OF PUBLIC ASSETS

UNIT:

This section is headed by the **Senior Procurement Officer**.

Its main role is to provide procurement guidance to the Contracts Committee, prepares contract documents and prepare and maintain records of procurement and disposal process. The unit is the clearing House for all procurements and disposal within the Judiciary.

TRANSPORT:

This section is headed by the **Principal Assistant Secretary** but handled on a day to day basis by the Assistant Secretary.

Its role is to ensure a road worthy fleet of vehicles capable of facilitating the Judiciary staff to deliver services.

Travel Abroad

Travel abroad by Public Officers must be cleared by the Office of the Hon. Prime Minister. The reason behind this is that in case of calamities like death, the Government of Uganda will take responsibility and accord special treatment to whoever that has been affected.

ESTATES

The section is headed by the **Estates Manager**. The role of the section is to ensure adequate accommodation on a sustainable basis that will enhance physical access to centres of Justice delivery. Specifically, the section helps in the acquisition of land and supervision of Court buildings, maintenance of structures, furniture and assists the Contracts Committee with technical knowledge during tendering processes.

OFFICE SUPPLIES AND SUPERVISION SECTION:

Headed by the **Senior Principal Office Supervisor** (SPOS). The main roles are to provide office supplies like stationery etc., keep track of stock movement and ensure general cleanliness of premises (Court, offices etc.)

The other roles are repairs and servicing of equipment and to ensure prompt settlement of utility bills (Electricity, water, telephone.)

STORES SECTION:

It is headed by **Senior Principal Stores Assistant**. This section is responsible for the safe custody of all stores e.g. tyres, Stationery and all newly purchased equipment and furniture.

SECURITY:

This Section is headed by a **Divisional Police Commander**. Its role is to ensure maximum security for all the Courts/residences of the entitled judicial officers and provide close body guard services.

INTERNAL AUDIT:

This section is currently headed by an **Ag. Principal Internal Auditor**. Its role is to ensure compliance with Internal control Systems. The section tenders expert advice to the Accounting officer more specifically, to ensure value for money in procurement, to safeguard assets and records of government; accountability of funds advanced to staff (operations funds, Imprests and travel etc.) and to review Judiciary Final Accounts. It also performs the function of advising management on the proper accounting procedures.

ACCOUNTBAILITY IN THE JUDICIARY

As you are no doubt aware, government collects its revenue from various sources which include

1. Direct taxes
2. Grants
3. Non Tax revenue

As magistrates entering services, you should be aware that there are various laws and regulations that govern the management of government resources and these are;

- a) The Constitution of Uganda 1995
- b) The Public Finance & Accountability Act 2003
- c) Treasury Accounting Instructions part 1 & II

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- d) Government Standing Orders – stipulate the conditions of service of various categories of staff, entitlements, eligibility and how to enjoy access to them without causing loss to Government.
- e) Circular No.4 for the Reform Programme of Non-tax Revenue beginning Financial year 2001/2002.

For the case of Judiciary, it is also involved in tax collection and collects **NON TAX REVENUE**. This revenue is collected in form of court fees and fines, interest earned on accounts, etc. At some

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Other appropriate time, I will delve into the details of all these revenues. As Judicial officers, you are also involved in collecting this non tax revenue but remember that all these collections are remitted to the consolidated fund.

THE MANAGEMENT OF FUNDS

In addition to getting involved in collecting non tax revenue, you will also be involved in handling the following funds;

- a) Deposits/ Revenue
- b) Operational funds
- c) Session funds
- d) State briefs
- e) Maintenance funds
- f) Office supervisors imprest

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For all the monies/finances you receive or collect, you are solely responsible for. This responsibility is what is commonly termed the accountability of resources. All funds that you collect must not be spent at source, it must be banked intact and the Uganda Revenue Authority has established a mechanism of banking these funds. I suppose during the short time of your stay, you have experienced this . The funds as enumerated above which you receive for your operations must always be utilised for the purposes they were released and subsequently accounted for . There have been challenges in accountability for ...

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Funds and I pray that you do not experience them. To avoid them, utilise the funds for the purposes they intended. Experience has showed that Judicial Officers pose to be less concerned with financial accountabilities. I encourage you to have keen interest in it as you are solely responsible for any funds advanced to you as at your station, those of you who will soon head stations.

KEY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES:

Planning and Development Committee

- this committee is comprised of:

- The Chief Justice
 - The Deputy Chief Justice
 - The Principal Judge
 - The Secretary to the Judiciary
 - The Chief Registrar.
 - Solicitor General
 - Registrar, Planning and Development
- Its role is policy formation and review.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

– comprised of:

- The Chief Justice
- The Deputy Chief Justice
- The Principal Judge
- The Secretary to the Judiciary
- The Chief Registrar
- Undersecretary
- All Registrars

Its role is to give managerial direction

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE/PLANNING TEAM

- ❖ comprised of:
 - The Secretary to the Judiciary
 - The Chief Registrar
 - All Registrars
 - All Deputy Registrars
 - All Heads of sections in Administration

HOW COURTS ARE FACILITATED TO DO THEIR WORK

- - this is by:
- Provision of funds for sessions for trial and disposal of cases
- For Operational Funds to Magistrates to run the Courts
- For State Briefs
- Travel inland and abroad
- Maintenance Funds
- General Imprests
- Payment of utility bills
- For inspection and monitoring
- Construction of courts and renting of office premises for courts to operate from.
- Provision of equipment like computers, printers, court recording equipment and furniture.
- Provision and maintenance of vehicles for judges, Registrars, Magistrates.
- Provision of stationery
- Recruitment and retention of required support staff.

- **Finance Committee – Its role is to allocate and disburse funds on a monthly basis**
- **Judicial integrity Committee**
- **Peer Committees**
- **Judicial Training Committee**
- **ICT Committee/ Technical Committee**
- **M & E**

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE JUDICIARY

Inadequate funding particularly the non-wage and Development Components which cater for amongst other things:

- Purchase of vehicles and other equipments
- Conducting Court Sessions
- Provision of office accommodation and Court rooms e.g. Supreme Court and Court of Appeal in rented premises.
- Inadequate staffing especially for Judicial Officers