



**SPEECH OF THE HON. THE CHIEF JUSTICE AT
THE LAUNCH OF THE GO-LIVE OF ELECTRONIC
COURT CASE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION
SYSTEM (ECCMIS)**

**HELD AT THE
JUDICIARY HEADQUARTERS**

ON TUESDAY 1ST MARCH, 2022

My Lord – The Hon. The Deputy Chief Justice;

My Lord – The Hon. The Principal Judge;

My Lords – The Hon. The Chief Justices – Emeritus;

My Lords the Justices and Judges of the Courts of Judicature;

The Lord, the Chairperson, Judiciary Technology and Law Reporting Committee

The Members of the ECCMIS Steering Committee;

Your Worship, The Chief Registrar;

The Secretary to the Judiciary;

The Members of the ECCMIS Technical Committee;

Your Worships, The Registrars and Magistrates;

Distinguished members of the Uganda Law Society;

Our esteemed Participants attending Online;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

BACKGROUND

I take the pleasure to welcome and appreciate all of you who have joined us, physically and virtually, to witness this revolution in the Judiciary life history.

Today serves as a living testimony that the advent of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) must fundamentally change the way people work, learn and interact. ICT is being adopted in all aspects of society to facilitate efficient and time-bound service delivery. Both the Government and the Private

Sector have to move in that direction and must adopt the emerging new technologies if they are to match and fit within the current global order.

As you may all know, the National Development Plan III provides, in Chapter fourteen, for *Digital Transformation* in order to harness the following key benefits:

- i) Increase in ICT penetration;
- ii) Reduction in the cost of ICT services and devices;
- iii) Creation of 150,000 direct jobs within the ICT sector;
- iv) Increase in the proportion of population accessing services online by 25 percent; and
- v) Providing at least 80 percent of Government services online.

The above NDP III key results illustrate the Government’s efforts towards the need for automation.

The Courts’ stakeholders must therefore familiarize themselves with the use of ICT in order to meaningfully deliver justice services in the *new* world. This call goes to all the Court Users especially the Lawyers, the Judicial Officers, the Court Registry staff, the Self-Represented Litigants, the Law Enforcement Officers and all other persons desiring to use Court services.

During the pre-ECCMIS Needs Assessment Survey done in 2019 and 2020, these Court Stakeholders indicated that they needed modern Court services characterized by the following:

- 1. Online access to court schedules;
- 2. Fully connected court rooms so that they remain productive while in Court;
- 3. Remote appearance in simple cases;
- 4. Digital submission of all court documents from their Chambers, offices or homes;

5. Digital access to case information including court recordings and transcripts; and
6. Less time spent at court waiting to be served.

In response to the above requirements from the Stakeholders, the Judiciary has designed, developed and implemented a number of ICT systems that include:

1. The Video Conferencing System;
2. The Digital Court Recording and Transcription System; and
3. The Electronic Display Boards in the Courts;
4. We have also equipped our Court Stations with computers to a coverage of 95% EXCEPT where we have had challenges with structural issues like power or electricity; and have
5. Provided access to online digital legal databases like *LexisNexis* and the Uganda Legal Information Institute (ULII).

The Judiciary will continue to roll-out all these ICT initiatives to cover all the Court Stations across the Country.

Today, **Tuesday 1st March, 2022**, we are here to witness and celebrate the birth of another ICT System, **the Electronic Court Case Management and Information System (ECCMIS)**.

WHAT IS ECCMIS?

ECCMIS as you have heard in the presentation by Justice Egonda- Ntende, is an IT fully-featured system that automates and tracks all aspects of a case life cycle from initial filing through disposition and appeal up to archive stage. It is founded on the Judiciary business rules, requiring minimal human intervention. It is able to facilitate efficient and reliable collection, organization, distribution and retrieval of significant amounts of case-specific data as well as the processing of payment

of relevant court fees and fines. It is also able to generate reports from the system to help in decision making.

THE MAJOR FEATURES OF THE ECCMIS ARE:

- i. The ability to digitally or electronically submit your case to the Court requiring minimum human intervention at the comfort of your Chambers or premises;
- ii. A 24/7 Access to the entire digital case file;
- iii. The ability to pay court fees online (e-payment);
- iv. The ability to receive notifications about any process or action on your case through SMS on your mobile phone and email;
- v. The ability to integrate with other Stakeholders in the administration of Justice.

The above features and abilities point to a mobile court now in your hands accessible via your mobile device. One can e-file from anywhere and at any time of the day unlike the current 8:00 am – 5:00 pm working hours.

THE BENEFITS OF ECCMIS ARE:

- 1. Improved Record-keeping**
Automating and standardizing manual procedures for enhancing record-keeping and reducing delays and case backlog;
- 2. Improved efficiency**
Automated workflow processes that guide users through their daily activities and notify users of pending actions, hence improving overall efficiency;
- 3. Decision Support**

ECCMIS provides a Business Intelligence Tool that produces a wide range of analytical performance reports and detailed case audit trails for informed decisions and better resource allocation;

4. Inter-Institutional System Integration

Data will be accessible in real-time from one Justice Sector Institution to another. (for example; from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to the Courts and to Uganda Prisons Service) thus improving communication and reducing the likelihood of processing errors.

THE ECCMIS KIOSKS

Cognizant of the fact that some of our Court Users are yet to acquire the ECCMIS required ICT equipment, the Judiciary has set up ECCMIS Kiosks at the ECCMIS Court Stations to assist the Litigants to e-File at their premises or Chambers. These will operate for only a limited period of time planned for only one month.

ALL THE SERVICES IN THE ECCMIS KIOSK ARE FREE OF CHARGE.

No payment should be made to any officer at the ECCMIS kiosk.

TRAINING OF THE USERS ON THE ECCMIS

End-User training is a very important component in the systems development life cycle. Every User to any IT System must know in detail what their roles will be, how they can use the system, and what the system will or will not do. The success or failure of well-designed and technically elegant systems depend on the way they are operated and used. Training also involves familiarization with the run procedures, which involves working through a sequence of activities needed to use a new system.

The Judiciary has for the last two months trained its Internal staff and a few external stakeholders on the ECCMIS operations. It should be observed that training is continuous and the Judiciary will continue to train both the internal and external stakeholders.

The following are the identified ECCMIS Training modes to be used: -

1. **Daily Online ECCMIS Hour: 7:30 am – 8:30 am.**
This has already started and will be conducted throughout the month of **March, 2022.**
2. Training Programs organized by the Uganda Law Society
3. Judiciary ECCMIS Service Desk and Call Centre
4. ECCMIS User Manuals
5. Staff stationed at the ECCMIS Kiosks at the Court Stations
6. Online Platforms – E.g. *YouTube* and Video clips
7. **Individual or Group/Chamber Trainings:** The Judiciary will provide a Resource Person – **FREE OF CHARGE** to conduct these trainings on request.

ECCMIS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE COURT STATIONS

Cognizant of the ECCMIS implementation requirements, a Phased ECCMIS Implementation method has been adopted. By the end of this Financial Year, ECCMIS will be operational in a total of 18 Court Stations. However, these will be clustered as follows: -

- **Cluster 1 – will cover a total of 07 Courts:** Supreme Court, Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court, Anti-Corruption Division, Commercial Court, Lands Division, Civil Division, Mengo Chief Magistrates Court.

The ECCMIS Go-Live in Cluster 1 Courts is today 1st March, 2022.

- **Cluster 2 – will include a total of 6 Courts:** Jinja High Court, Jinja CM Court, Kakira G1 Court, Bugembe G1 Court, Family Division and International Crimes Division.
- **Cluster 3 – will comprise a total of 5 Courts:** Criminal Division, Buganda Road CM Court, Nakawa CM Court, Makindye CM Court and LDC G1 Court.

NOTE:

1. There will be no more paper filing of cases in any particular Court once the ECCMIS is implemented in that Court.
2. Hence commencing today, the **1st March, 2022**, we expect no more paper filing in the Seven Cluster 1 Court Stations i.e.: -
 - i. Supreme Court;
 - ii. Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court;
 - iii. Anti-Corruption Division;
 - iv. Commercial Court;
 - v. Land Division;
 - vi. Civil Division; and
 - vii. Mengo Chief Magistrate Court.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I pay special tribute to all the Stakeholders, both Internal and External, that have actively participated in the Designing, Development and Implementation of the ECCMIS up to this far. External Stakeholders have offered us guidance on their expectations and have offered their Chambers to be used as Testing Centers for the ECCMIS.

I thank the Steering and Technical Committee for the great work they have done. I equally thank the Chief Registrar and the Secretary to the Judiciary for their tireless efforts.

I also specially thank the National Information Technology Authority – Uganda (NITA-U) for providing invaluable Technical Support to the Judiciary in the development of the ECCMIS.

The Press is appreciated for its coverage of the event. It is the Judiciary’s desire that you continue spreading the gospel of ECCMIS across all the Regions of Uganda and beyond.

CONCLUSION

It is true that we shall inevitably face challenges, at the start, as we implement the ECCMIS together. This will arise from the high cost of installing the required equipment, limited coverage of the internet, insufficient ICT knowledge and the intermittent power supply in many places. In the long run, however, the benefits of using the ECCMIS will outweigh its implementation costs and all of us shall join in the celebration that we have started today.

I once again wish to thank you for devoting your time and energies to this important game changer whose fruits we look forward to reap. I call upon all of you to embrace this new method of work in your day-to-day dealings with the Courts.

I therefore take the pleasure to launch the ECCMIS Go-Live this **1st day of March 2022**.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny – Dollo
CHIEF JUSTICE