



REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE HON THE VICE PRESIDENT, HIS  
EXCELLENCY EDWARD SEKANDI**

**AT**

**THE ANNUAL JUDGES' CONFERENCE,**

**AT**

**HOTEL AFRICANA, KAMPALA,**

**ON**

**14<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2013**

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE HON THE VICE PRESIDENT, HIS EXCELLENCY EDWARD SEKANDI, AT THE ANNUAL JUDGES' CONFERENCE, HELD AT HOTEL AFRICANA, KAMPALA, ON THE 14<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2013.**

My Lord, the Hon Chief Justice.

My Lord, the Hon Deputy Chief Justice.

My Lord, the Hon Principal Judge.

My Lords, Hon Justices of the Supreme Court.

My Lords, Hon Justices of the Court of Appeal.

My Lords, Hon Judges of the High Court.

Hon Judges from other East African Community Countries present.

Your Worships, the Registrars and other Judicial Officers present.

Members of the JLOS Development Partners Group.

All the Distinguished Invited Guests present.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to first and foremost to wish each and every one of you a Happy New Year; 2013.

I am pleased to be here this morning to open again another Judiciary's Annual Judges Conference. As the Vice President of the Republic of Uganda and also a member of the legal profession, I am honoured to be invited to interact with such a distinguished gathering of the members of the Judiciary.

The Judiciary as one of the arms of the State of Uganda is an important facet in the management the Uganda State. Therefore; while each arm of the State is independent, they must work in harmony to ensure that the State ship does not sink as a result of encroachment by one arm of the State of the other's duties and responsibility.

In this respect I must commend the Judiciary for working in harmony with all the other arms of the state without relinquishing its obligation as the judicial authority of Uganda.

The Judiciary has been holding an Annual Judges Conference since mid 1990's. The conference has therefore become an important event in the Judiciary Annual calendar of activities. The holding of the Conference regularly has enabled the Judiciary to review past performances and to plan for the year ahead. This mechanism of holding an Annual Conference by the Judiciary is something which I will recommend to other arms of State as a useful tool for planning.

I am informed that during the Conference, you are going to review Judiciary achievements and challenges of the previous year, 2012 and plan for the way forward in the current year, 2013. I encourage you to have candid discussions as well as critically examine your work so that you will be able to come out clearly with opportunities either seized or lost in the course of the last year in order to be able to plan better for the year 2013.

I am aware of the hosts of challenges which the judiciary faces in fulfilling its mandate. I will mention but a few:-

1. On Judicial Staffing, The need for more judges and other judicial officers. Many vacancies do exist.
2. The inadequate infrastructural facilities. The Judiciary continues to operate mostly in rented premises which is not only costly but renders the independence of the Judiciary a mockery. You do not even have a headquarters.
3. Poor remuneration and conditions of service. The salaries paid to Judicial Officers do not match the rising cost of living as well as society's expectation.

I would like to state that the Government is taking up these challenges seriously and is working out appropriate solutions to address these hindrances. I will follow up on these matters to ensure that they are implemented by Government.



I am, however, pleased to note that in spite of those obstacles; you have endeavored to deliver to your maximum capacity without holding the people of Uganda at ransom.

I would, therefore, like to urge you to maintain the exemplary resolve you have demonstrated in surmounting the challenges, so that Justice may continue to be dispensed to those who need it while we sort out the challenges.

I would like to reiterate what I stated in the your last Annual Judges Conference and that is, despite the continuing undeniable and visible achievements of the Judiciary in the dispensation of justice, the public perception of the Judiciary continues to suffer a poor rating. Much as this is a phenomenon which cuts across most government institutions, I would like to appeal to the heads of the Judiciary to look into the causes of this unsatisfactory rating of the institution and put in place effective remedies.

I am of course aware that the members of the public may not have a clear distinction between the roles of the Judiciary, Police, the Directorate of Public Prosecutions, and other related Justice, Law and Order (JLOS) institutions.

In some cases, actions taken by the other parties are attributed to the Judiciary, or courts. This is understandable, because the courts are at the centre of the administration of Justice. It therefore follows that any action taken in the processing of a case ultimately points to the courts.

In order to address this inadequate or poor understanding of the position of the Courts in the administration of justice machinery, I would appeal to the administration of the Judiciary to launch a vigorous campaign to sensitize the population on the functions and procedures of the judicial process. It may be necessary to be pre-emptive than to do damage control, where criticism has already been levied.

It would also be a good idea to strengthen the Judiciary Public Relations Office by setting up in every magisterial area a Judiciary spokesperson whose role would be to explain the way the Judiciary

executes its mandate and its relationship with other JLOS institutions and the rest of the government at large including the legislature.

I am confident that during this conference, you will have the opportunity to come up with ideas to improve on the administration of justice. Where you need support from the government to implement some of them count on me to seek such support on your behalf as the Vice President of the Republic of Uganda in addition to my being a senior long serving officer of the courts.

The theme of the conference, ***“Managing a Modern and Responsive Judiciary,”*** aptly captures the current state of affairs in the Judiciary. The users of court services expect to get from the Judiciary satisfactory service arising from a properly managed Judiciary. The challenge therefore for you this year 2013 is to put in place an appropriate management system which will endear you to your stakeholders.

The Judiciary launched last year, 2012, its Third Strategic Development Plan. From the briefing I have had, I am convinced that with the support of all of you and all other stakeholders, the Judiciary will be able to improve tremendously its delivery of service to the people of Uganda in the planned period of the Strategic Plan. I urge you all to play your respective roles in implementing the plan.

With those few remarks, it is now my honor and privilege to declare the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Judges’ Conference Open.

Thank you for listening to me.