



JUSTICE LAW AND ORDER SECTOR

Welcome Remarks

By

The Hon. Maj. Gen. Kahinda Otafiire

Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs

At The 19th Joint Gou-Development Partners' JLOS Annual Review

Speke Resort Munyonyo

30th October 2014

The Hon. The Acting Chief Justice of Uganda

Honourable Ministers

The Honorable Principal Judge

Your Excellency, Chairperson of the JLOS Development Partners' Group

Honourable Members of Parliament

My Lords, Justices of the Courts of Judicature

Heads of JLOS Institutions

Members of the JLOS Leadership and Steering Committee

Members of the District Coordination Committees

Distinguished invited guests in your respective capacities

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to officially welcome you to the 19th JLOS Joint Government of Uganda-Development Partners' Annual Review. And on behalf of the Justice Law and Order Sector I would like to thank each and every one of you for responding so graciously to our invitation to be part of the Annual Review for the Financial Year 2013/2014.

The Annual Review is an opportunity for us to take stock of the work that we have been doing over the year and to track our progress on achieving our set goals. It is an opportunity to reflect, appreciate the successes and acknowledge the areas that require further attention. It is important that we take this time to reflect and where necessary lay out new strategies to meet the challenges that we still face.

Access to justice is a cornerstone of the Rule of Law. JLOS continues to initiate and drive policies and interventions that will enhance access to justice. The performance of JLOS is a major factor for the promotion of the rule of law and good governance which are necessary for social economic transformation and prosperity. The theme of the review has aptly been coined 'BUILDING PUBLIC TRUST IN JLOS SERVICE DELIVERY'. Trust and confidence are built through a commitment to deliver results. The Government of Uganda and the Justice Law and Order Sector in particular, are fully committed to delivering results that will have an impact of the people of Uganda and several initiatives and programmes are on-going to ensure that our work impacts positively on society.

As a Sector, we are spearheading the development of the framework for Legal Aid. The draft Legal Aid Policy has been finalized for consideration by Cabinet. It is our view that a strong national legal aid system is essential for leveling the field for all Ugandans in their interactions with the justice system and will in particular provide the necessary support to the most vulnerable members of society, particularly women, children and persons with disability, to enforce their rights. The policy seeks to create a national legal aid scheme to be implemented by a Government entity in partnership with civil society legal aid service providers. The draft Transitional Justice policy which was approved by the Sector leadership is also being finalized for consideration by Cabinet. These policy proposals are key instruments for the development and implementation of strategies to address the needs of the most vulnerable members of society.

We are also taking measures to strengthen the autonomy and independence of JLOS institutions to enable them discharge their

functions more effectively. Legislation has been developed to implement the Constitutional mandate of the Directorate of Public Prosecutions. This will provide greater clarity on the role and operations of the DPP and lead to a stronger prosecution and better management of criminal cases. The Sector has also worked on the Judiciary Administration Bill which seeks to operationalise the provisions of the Constitution on the Judiciary. The Bill is currently under consideration by Cabinet for approval of principles. This bill seeks to provide for the effective administration of the Judiciary as well as avenues for participation of stakeholders in the operations of the Judiciary.

While we work at improving the operations of the formal courts, we are also attending to the informal dispute resolution structures. Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms are being rolled out throughout the Judiciary and in other Sector institutions that have a dispute resolution function such as the Tax Appeals Tribunal, Judicial Service Commission, Human Rights Commission and Law Council. We are also engaging in training and capacity building for the Local Council Courts. Our initial focus is on the Local Council Courts III. We have however also devised strategies for capacity building for Local Council Courts I and II once they are duly elected. Measures are underway by Government to prepare for the elections of Local Councils at the village and parish levels and in turn for the operationalization of the village and parish council courts. As a Sector, we are ready with strategies to support them in the implementation of their roles.

As we seek to improve service delivery, my call to the Sector institutions is to start thinking outside of the box. Look for innovative ways to use the resources that we have to meet our goals. Let us emulate our partners in the private sector and adopt best practices in service delivery

and customer care. It is important also that we reach out to the public and take the services to them rather than waiting for them to come to us. This requires increased publicity and civic awareness as well as strengthened performance management. These are areas that we are committed to working on in the coming years.

I call on our partners in the private sector, civil society and the general public to support these programmes and initiatives. Engage with us openly and freely but avoid engaging in corrupt and unethical practices that raise the cost of business and hamper the effective delivery of Justice.

I wish to thank our development partners for the continued support, commitment and partnership that they have demonstrated, not only by way of financial support, but with the constant dialogue, sharing of ideas and joint monitoring of the Sector programmes. We look forward to continuing this partnership in the years to come.

I once again thank you all for joining us in this review.

It is now my honour to invite the Honourable Acting Chief Justice, Justice Steven Kavuma to come and address the gathering.

For God and My Country

Hon. Maj. Gen. Kahinda Otafiire, MP

The Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs,

October 30th, 2014