

**REMARKS BY THE HON. THE CHIEF JUSTICE AT A MEETING
WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FROM SWEDEN HELD AT
THE HIGH COURT BUILDING ON 3RD APRIL 2012**

Honourable Members of Parliament from Sweden

Your Excellency the Swedish Ambassador to Uganda

The Director of Public Prosecutions

Your Worship the Ag. Chief Registrar

Members of the Swedish Embassy in Uganda

The Senior Technical Advisor

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the Judiciary and the Justice Law and Order Sector of Uganda.

I thank you for finding time to attend the Inter Parliamentary Union Meeting and to visit us.

I hope that you have had opportunity to visit places of interest in Uganda and in case you have not, I urge you to take some time to visit various parts of Uganda, which collectively make up the Pearl of Africa.

I would like to thank Sweden for the generous support it has given to Uganda and the Justice Law and Order Sector. Your support, as highlighted in the short film you have just watched has been responsible for tremendous improvements in the administration of justice, human rights and maintenance of law and order.

I commend Sweden and the other JLOS Development Partners for helping JLOS to achieve the following milestones:

1. Establishment of a customized anti corruption Division, International Crimes Division and Commercial Divisions of the High Court, which are model courts in sub Saharan Africa.
2. Improved climate for doing business in Uganda
3. Increased disposal of cases, which now stands at 101% of the registered cases.
4. Rationalized presence of JLOS institutions with 70% of the rural Ugandan being able to access JLOS services with ease.
5. Reduced lead times for accessing JLOS services at the Companies Registry, Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control. It takes five minutes to clear through Immigration points as opposed to thirty minutes five years ago.
6. The crime rate has fallen from a high of 800 persons every 100,000 in 2006 to a low of 300 persons for every 100,000 in 2010.
7. Decline in prison congestion from a scale factor of 5 to a scale factor of 1.92
8. Strengthened monitoring and evaluation capacity across all sector institutions.

I hope that Sweden will now join the other active Development Partners to support the JLOS third Strategic Investment Plan whose overarching objective is to enhance the rule of law through:

1. Strengthened policy and regulatory frameworks;
2. Deepened access to JLOS Services, and;
3. Greater respect for human rights and accountability.

Uganda's Judiciary has experienced mixed fortunes like Uganda. The Judiciary, performed very well during the first ten years of our independence. However, with the entry of Idi Amin Dada and the affront on the rule of law, the Judiciary like the other institutions of Government, suffered from the general malaise that plagued the country. What is surprising is that the Judiciary, unlike the other institutions, was not totally destroyed. The Judiciary limped on with its constraints!

However, with the return of the rule of law and democracy in Uganda, Uganda's Judiciary has been transformed into one of the most effective Judiciaries in Africa. In the last fifteen years, we have concentrated our efforts in building an effective and independent Judiciary.

1. By ensuring that those who are appointed to serve as Judges and other judicial officers are appointed on merit through a rigorous and transparent process. I am satisfied with the appointment process for judges because a number of Ugandan Judges are currently serving on international tribunals and Justice Julia Sebutinde has just been appointed to the International Court of Justice.
2. We have expanded the Judiciary estate by building courthouses with the support of Development Partners in upcountry stations. 70% of the rural population is able to access court services in less than one hour.

3. We are taking strong measures to deal with corruption, which has dented the image of the Judiciary. We have set up an Internal Disciplinary Committee, the Judiciary Integrity Committee and strengthened the inspectorate of courts to mop out acts of indiscipline and corruption within the Judiciary.
4. We are in the process of implementing performance management in the Judiciary to improve service delivery.
5. In concert with others, we have defended the independence of the Judiciary from interference by mainly the Executive. We have made it clear to the other organs of the Government that the Judiciary is an equal member of the Trinity and that no meaningful democracy can take place in Uganda without a strong Judiciary.
6. Last but not least we would like to take advantage of technology to enhance judicial processes, speed up the delivery of justice through heightened use of court recording equipment and better management of information for decision making.

I would like to urge Sweden to continue supporting the Justice Law and Order Sector to promote the rule of law in Uganda, which is an indispensable tool for accelerated development in Uganda and maintaining world peace.

Swedish support should also be directed at supporting the JLOS third sector investment plan; strengthening the observance and respect for human rights;

land justice reforms in Uganda; mainstreaming of gender and performance management across all JLOS institutions.

Last but not least there is urgent need to support the provision of legal aid in Uganda to deepen access to justice especially for the most vulnerable, who are excluded from the legal system by the burdens of poverty, ignorance and discrimination.

I have no doubt that Uganda and Sweden can work as partners to improve the well being of humankind.

I thank you for your kind attention.

BJ Odoki
CHIEF JUSTICE