

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
P.O. BOX 160 KIGALI

OPENING REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE/ATTORNEY GENERAL AT THE CONSULTATIVE MEETING WITH STAKEHOLDERS IN JUSTICE SECTOR

- ✓ Excellencies the Ambassadors and members of the Diplomatic Corps;
- ✓ Members of the various Justice Sector Institutions
- ✓ Representatives from Government Key Partner-Institutions;
- ✓ Heads of Civil Society Organizations
- ✓ Members of Civil Society Organizations;
- ✓ Ladies and Gentlemen;
- ✓ All protocols observed.

Good morning.

Allow me to welcome all of you to this important meeting. Your presence here is a commitment to continue partnering with Government to promote justice and rule of law in Rwanda. Thank you for making time to discuss the state of our partnership. It is in line with the general mission of the Ministry of Justice and is very much appreciated.

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,

In the not too distant past, our justice system had been one of the most neglected sectors in this country and for many years. Our justice institutions were almost synonymous with corruption, incompetence and inefficiency. The 1994 genocide against the Tutsi worsened an already bad situation. You all know that after the genocide Rwanda's justice system was literally unrecognizable.

After the genocide, the Government of Rwanda decided to make the best use of the limited resources available the time, and ensure that justice begins to be delivered to the people. From then to date our efforts have been geared at improving and expanding the quality and quantity of justice delivered as well as doing things that generate and sustain public confidence in the justice system.

The good news is that the effort by the Government and the useful collaboration with development partners to reconstruct the sector; have resulted in the steady stabilization of the justice sector. The same is true of other sectors. The mutual growth collaboration and contribution under the various development strategies, EDPRS I, II and NST now are highly appreciated.

Civil Society Organizations have contributed and continue to contribute to better justice service delivery. This is affirmed by the Citizen Report Card that is regularly published by the Rwanda Governance Board and reports on people's perception on various services they receive from the Justice Sector' Institutions.

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,

Despite the good faith intent, great projects and programs aimed at improving justice service delivery, there have emerged gaps in coordination and collaboration within our respective institutions. In any speedily progressing environment, when major developments are quick and fast evolving, such gaps are bound to emerge and actors must make time to recalibrate and reposition

themselves in order to continue to make smooth progress. That is why we are here today.

In the area of provision of legal aid services for example the Ministry of Justice is duty bound to report on the number of beneficiaries provided with legal aid but the numbers that are reported to the Ministry are quite different from the existing numbers as some providers do not report to the Ministry of Justice .

The structure of justice governance in Rwanda is such that the Ministry is responsible of overall coordination and direction of the delivery of justice services.

The Ministry is responsible for this activity and also accountable to Government, Parliament and the people.

Within this overall coordination and direction role are a range of partner from actors directly engaged with citizens to funding agencies providing resources essential for successful delivery.

Our traditional way of coordination, has always been entering into MoU's that spell out the mission, responsibilities, areas of engagement, reporting mechanism, monitoring and evaluation and obligations each party commits to.

A not too accurate count of CSOs engaged in delivering justice gives over 40 CSOs. We did some asking because we didn't have this information readily in our files.

Information on what exactly each of these does, to whom it reports, who does its monitoring and evaluation, what kind of human and material resources are deployed by which CSO, which areas are covered by geographical location and justice service, how to avoid duplication, whether all actors are aware of the NST, it's milestones, success and failure factors, all this information we do not have and this is the gap that we must close.

Our performance record of close to two decades has been impressive both by domestic surveys by Rwanda Government Board and others and international surveys like the World Economic Forum and others.

The explanation for this, no doubt, is the effective coordination, direction and ownership by Government coupled with the partnership and engagement of

CSOs. Through various mechanisms including Districts Justice Sector Committees, Justice Sector leadership and steering groups, the annual Sector retreat, legal aid weeks we have developed a common vision consistent with our national vision and worked towards its realization.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The main reason we are here today, is to agree how to restore our coordination, communication and collaboration framework in the various programs of justice service delivery. Good collaboration, coordination and communication will make our partnership more fruitful and productive than it is today, we will achieve results that cannot be achieved by any one of us working alone.

Let me wind up by, again, sincerely thanking all of you for your presence and participation at this meeting and your role in delivering an excellent justice service to our citizens.

Thank you for your kind attention.
