

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
P.O. BOX 160 KIGALI

SPEECH FOR THE GUEST OF HONOR (MINISTER OF JUSTICE & ATTORNEY GENERAL)

The Deputy Chief Justice of Rwanda, the President of the African Prosecutors' Association and Prosecutor General of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the APA Executive Committee Members present, Prosecutors General, Directors of Public Prosecution, Deputy Prosecutors General, Deputy Directors of Public Prosecution, Excellencies Ambassadors, members of the African Prosecutors' Association, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of the His Excellency the President of the Republic of Rwanda and on my own behalf, I take this opportunity to welcome each and every one of you to Rwanda. I know the heavy work schedule ahead of you but I hope you will make time to see a bit of our city and country. As we come close to the end of the year, the holiday season is near. For those of you who celebrate Christmas, I am extending an invitation for you to stay longer and enjoy Christmas with us. And if

Christmas is not a day you celebrate, please stay with us for the New Year celebration. You will enjoy each moment of your stay.

I have been informed that at least 16 African countries are represented at this Conference. This is a good opportunity to network and create lasting relationships that will assist in the work you do. I hope the networking part will be taken as seriously as the rest of the work you'll be doing. It is very important.

It is significant and symbolic that prosecution experts and practitioners from African countries are gathered in Kigali to strengthen your institutional informal and formal collaborative networks given your collective mission of combating crime and ensuring accountability for transnational crimes. In accordance with this Conference's theme, as Africans, we should always strive to ensure the Rule of Law by fighting cross border crime. I applaud your Organization for choosing this theme. Our world is increasingly becoming a global village and when it comes to cross border crime and the combating thereof it becomes a real small village. One crime planned in any of the countries represented here easily spreads to all countries simultaneously or faster than each individual country can contain it.

The need to collaborate effectively and fast becomes more urgent each day. While our Governments get stuck in 30 year old red tape practices, spend forever negotiating and never concluding cooperation agreements, MoUs and extradition treaties, it is clear to all of us that crime is fast and furious and criminals conclude their collaboration agreements in minutes. A time like this should be for you, ladies and gentlemen, to reflect seriously on this factor of speed and efficiency in combating cross border crime. If we do not address it whatever else we are planning will always be years behind crime and criminals.

Part of the theme for this meeting is about fighting genocide. Today no genocide is taking place anywhere in our continent, but we had a genocide here in Rwanda in 1994, the genocide against the Tutsi.

25 years ago Rwandans stopped that genocide which, by that time had claimed 1 million victims and caused other devastating consequences for the country and our citizens. We have had to deal with these consequences for the past 25 years, particularly the legal consequences. The consequence that is with us today and requires our collective attention is bringing to justice fugitives from that genocide. These fugitives are in countries on this continent, probably including some represented here. Rwanda has sent indictments and extradition requests to the countries concerned. Rwanda is yet to receive sufficient cooperation. I want to urge you that while here we share with you this information and request for effective enforcement.

As we collaborate to bring genocide fugitives to justice let us remember that genocide is a culmination of a way of thinking of a people, an ideology, that promotes hate, dehumanisation, discrimination, results in a ‘we versus them’ reality which, if not confronted leads to genocide. This ideology is thought out, propagated and spread by people who do it deliberately with intent that it results in a genocide. This ideology is criminal. A number of countries have criminalized genocide ideology, hate speech etc. Let us, on our continent beware. Let us be on our guard. If such ideologies crop up anywhere let us know how to spot and confront them.

Other issues that need your attention include creating an effective permanent forum for cooperation and coordination amongst your institutions and our governments regarding the gathering of information pertinent investigations, such as the requests for assistance (RFA) and Mutual Legal Assistance, in addition to

creating *ad hoc* joint task forces to handle specific issues. Let us endeavor to facilitate the tracking of fugitives and investigation of crime across our different jurisdictions. Africa should not accept to be a safe haven for suspects of organized criminality.

Reluctance and lack of cooperation amongst our administrations only creates safe havens for fugitives, and ultimately threatens our social fabric, particularly delayed justice for victims and, eventually, impunity and failure to deliver any kind of justice.

May I call upon each one of us not to forget victims while undertaking your prosecutorial work. It is often the case that we concentrate on the search for and collection of evidence for transnational and international crimes and we forget to seriously look at the needs of the victims, particularly with regard to reparations. As prosecutors, this seems to be a quick win you can adopt and implement anytime.

Distinguished guests,

Considering our common mission and our respective areas of expertise and specialisation, it is inevitable that we team up as investigators, prosecutors as well as policy makers from Africa and beyond to ensure accountability. I hope this conference will discuss and agree better strategic partnerships that might respond effectively to some of the criminal justice challenges Africa grapples with. The Government of Rwanda reaffirms its full commitment in this partnership.

With those remarks, I want to take this opportunity to once again thank the President of the Africa Prosecutors' Association, all PG's and DPP's and all

members of the APA fraternity for ceaselessly seeking creative approaches to ensure expeditious information sharing and cooperation.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and a successful Conference.

Thank you very much.
