

Welcome and introductory remarks of Honorable Minister of Justice and Attorney General ; at the 5th JRLOS Peer Review Retreat 30th March to 1st April 2016 Lake Kivu Serena Hotel-Rubavu.

Theme : Towards Modernised Justice Service Delivery

The Honourable Chief Justice;

The Honourable Deputy Chief Justice;

The Representative of Netherlands Embassy and co-chair of the JRLOS Sector;

The ONE UN Resident Coordinator;

Members of the Justice Sector leadership group and Steering Committee;

Development Partners and Stakeholders of the Justice Sector;

Representatives from the various Justice Sector Institutions;

Allow me to welcome all of you to this retreat. I must thank you individually for making the time to be here, inspite of various responsibilities towards our individual institutions and our Country as a whole. Your presence here is a committment towards the rule of law, and a strong justice Sector. I would like to especially thank the Chief Justice for agreeing to be here despite his workload.

Permit me also to welcome and most sincerely thank our development partners, represented here by the ONE UN Resident Coordinator Mr Lamin Manneh, Civil Society Organisations and all other invitees here present. Because of your partnership we can boast of an effective Justice Sector.

Honorable Chief Justice ;
Distinguished participants ;

Today is the 5th time that we meet in such a retreat to examine the health of our country's Justice sector. During this retreat, we will discuss our achievements, analyse our challenges and agree on solutions.

We shall do so by looking back and evaluating ourselves with regard to the achievement towards our set targets, improvement in service delivery, strengthened collaboration and stakeholder cooperation.

The other big reason that triggers this kind of engagement is because we are aware that there is a need to enhance effective sector performance, transparency, accountability and coordination among all stakeholders.

Honorable Chief Justice ;
Distinguished participants ;

Since the last Peer Review Retreat in February 2015, the Justice Sector has registered modest achievements especially with regards to the implementation of recommendations from previous Peer Reviews as well as targets from our strategic Plan. The following are some of the main sector achievements :

- The Justice sector secretariat was fully staffed enabling proper coordination in all sector areas
- Rehabilitation of Prisons and Police Stations is on track and we hope to improve prisoners living conditions and service delivery.
- The Office of Ombudsman was given National Prosecutors as additional capacity to track down corrupt people
- Rwanda went through another successful human rights Universal Periodic Review and came home with 50 Recommendations.

- The Integrated Electronic Case Management System (IECMS) was launched to enhance accuracy and transparency in the judicial system as well as provide timely and quality service
- Sector Thematic Working Groups are up and running as engines of the Sector
- Mediators throughout the Country were given means to communicate freely among themselves
- Other achievements will be elaborated in presentations.

No doubt we are now strong, efficient, more incorrupt and trusted by both Rwandans and the International Community.

The Effectiveness of our Justice Sector has continued to drive overall improvement in the Rule of Law, crime prevention, judicial independence, human rights protection, effective governance, media and press freedom, equitable and accountable relationship with local and international NGO's, as well as enhanced citizen confidence in and approval of the Justice Services we deliver.

Our journey together has taught us a number of lessons. If you permit me I will mention a few:

- 1) The bilateral relationship between the sector and individual countries or unions should not be defined by or through the medium of local or International NGOs.
- 2) The relationship between the sector and local or International NGOs should not be defined by or through the medium of individual countries.
- 3) Engagement, equality, mutual transparency and accountability are key to a healthy relationship
- 4) Our journey is forever in pursuit of more perfection.

Honorable Chief Justice ;

Ladies and Gentlemen ;

Our development partners and civil society stakeholders have been great contributors to our work. Permit me to thank each and all of you, both here and those not here for trusting and walking with us. Our achievements are very much a result of a great joint engagement.

Our remarkable justice, rule of law and human rights achievements continue to be registered in the context of a Rwanda that, a mere 22 years ago, experienced a genocide of unimaginable proportions, the memories of the role of Rwandans and of the International community are still fresh and that Rwanda is intent on resolving her painful past as she builds a secure future for all.

One inescapable truth that has grown out of this context , Ladies and Gentlemen, is that Rwanda continues to be a global performer in most indices of social economic development because of the citizens' continued enjoyment of ever expanding civil and political rights, key among which is the right to choose how and by whom they should be governed. Any other narrative would be as misleading as it would be unsupported by intellectual analysis.

Because the Justice Sector continues to be a major guarantor of Rwandans' enjoyment of their civil and political rights, I salute and thank each one of us for the contribution made.

It is my hope that this retreat will allow us all : Development Partners, CSOs and Private Sector partners to revitalise the Peer Review Process and obtain a first-hand insight into current issues in the JRLS institutions. Participants will take note of the achievements, acknowledge challenges and agree on

recommendations for tackling identified challenges to improved policy implementation and coordination going forward. Further, we will discuss strategies aimed at modernising Justice service delivery as provided for in EDPRS II Strategy 2013-2018 as well as in the JRLS Strategy II 2013-2018, focusing on new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Honorable Chief Justice ;

Dear participants;

This retreat is yet another opportunity for us to strengthen what we have achieved, embark on what has not been achieved and put in place corrective measures on what is on a slow pace. Legal reforms including to the penal code, bettering our engagement within ourselves and with civil society, bringing embezzlement of public funds, corruption, trafficking in drugs and human beings to zero, resolving the issues of street children and youth delinquency are some of the issues affecting our society negatively and the justice sector has key roles to play in resolving them.

Even though it looks like we have a tight agenda, let us be as interactive as possible. I believe that a great work ethic will guide us through. Once again, I welcome every one to this retreat.

It is now my honour and privilege to invite the Hon.Chief Justice of the Republic of Rwanda to deliver his keynote address.

THANK YOU, UMWIHERERO MWIZA!!!