

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT - ULS AT THE ENROLLMENT OF ADVOCATES ON 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

Her Worship **Sarah Langa Siu**, the Chief Registrar, the Representative from the Law Council, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. Good morning!

Thinking about today's momentous occasion, I hoped my words would strike a chord with each one of you as you start your journey as advocates. It is therefore my honor and special privilege to address you today as President of the Uganda Law Society. My mind settled at thought of the reason of why we are gathered here today. I implore all of you to take a step back and let that reason sink not only in our minds but, in our hearts too.

Looking back, I am certain that you have a lot to be thankful for. For starters, we owe our presence here to the Almighty. Coming in a strong second, is the recognition of the sacrifices made by all those that supported you. For you will remain ineffably grateful for their choice to invest in you, your education until this memorable point.

As you close this chapter of your lives and move on to the next, there is a lot you risk. You risk oblivion, you risk making the wrong choices, risk disappointing those you care about; but more than that, you risk failing by not trying. Despite having reached this far in your career, I implore you to remain teachable. The truth is that having such a qualification neither means your lives are figured out nor are you infallible. So, as these mistakes challenge you, always look for the lesson to be learned in such circumstances.

I'd like to refer to the words of **Ralph Waldo Emerson**, "**The good lawyer is not the man who has an eye to every side and angle of contingency, and qualifies all his qualifications, but who throws himself on your part so heartily, that he can get you out of a scrape.**" So why are our quality services still required in this date and era? A brief synopsis at Uganda's justice system shows that the number of cases under case backlog was at **155,400** cases pending and of this **90,000** cases have been tackled under the case backlog reduction program. However, the balance still remains and with the emergency of the current COVID-19, case backlog is set to increase given the fall backs caused by the pandemic. Case backlog aside; the number of prison inmates in various prisons is also increasing at an outstanding rate for instance the total number of prisoners in the country stands at **48,689** inmates all of whom are parked in a meagre **249** prison facilities around the country. This therefore places our prison density at **293%**. What is your role as an advocate and why should this be important to you? One of our core objectives as advocates is to ensure that we are available to our clients. This, I extend to you as young advocates, to ensure that anyone who seeks justice benefits from you as a professional. **William Scott Downey** rightly states that, "**Law without justice is a wound without a cure.**" As advocates can we be the efficient implementation cure of the injustice that prevails in our Country as we avail ourselves to all those that need the necessary aid from our side.

As enrolled advocates, you now have the opportunity to be part of the Uganda Law Society (ULS) a prestigious and modern bar association. What, therefore, makes us exceptional in our service? We have the Legal Aid Project (LAP) of the ULS which runs a total number of **23** clinics spread all over the country in a bid to promote access to justice to the marginalized communities. ULS also runs the Pro-bono Scheme

wherein advocates voluntarily take on files to give legal assistance to the marginalized people and with a wealth of over **1,000** registered advocates for this service, our impact has been and still is far reaching. So, why not come and be a part of this life enriching challenge as a professional.

ULS also runs the Duty Counsel Scheme wherein we're able to visit various inmates at prisons, we aid suspects at designated police stations and advise suspects as they prepare for Court proceedings. With various duty Counsel Stations spread over the country, we are able to reach at the grassroots to empower those vulnerable persons that don't understand their legal rights and duties. This is also a great rewarding opportunity for you as young advocates. So, why then should you wait when opportunities lay right before your eyes? In addition to the above, we offer various litigation schemes under which you can volunteer as young advocates to gain legal expertise and we have opened up numerous up country opportunities that I would love to see you exploit as young professionals.

As Uganda Law Society and your President what are we looking to offer in this new era? We are currently working to ensure the regionalizing of member affairs services so that we can ably attend to our membership efficiently. We're exploring avenues of subsidizing rates for medical insurance, hotel services at various locations which will in effect make your work as an advocate more rewarding, and comfortable. The issue of Continuous Legal Education is a crux of one's education as an advocate. This is why as young lawyers access to these trainings is essential to boost your potential. It is in this same spirit that we'd like to dissect the issue of Free Continuous Legal Education trainings where possible. Another crucial element of this profession is the valor of social networking. As young advocates you

have a lot to learn as you develop in your career. This is why the issue of secondments and exploration of scholarship opportunities is crucial in this development.

In the same spirit I accordingly implore you to join the Uganda Law Society Clusters on the various social media channels as well as the ULS young lawyers Mentorship Program. Armed with the above, our idea is to ensure that you're exposed to a wealth of knowledge from all corners such that at the time of execution you can fully represent your clients to their satisfaction. The ULS has also constituted a Young Lawyers Committee that looks out for the needs of young advocates. I therefore beseech you to actively participate in the society's activities once you become members such that you do not miss out on these great opportunities.

Going forth, I'd like you all to define success on our own terms; Rise with even more grit after every challenge, and actualize the ambition cradled in you. I'd like to close by echoing **Napoleon Hill's** words - **Do not wait: the time will never be 'just right'. Start where you stand, and work whatever tools you may have at your command and better tools will be found as you go along.**

Let's be the same entrusted faithful professionals as our clients heed to our competences. And may we be the available front fighters in every battle against injustice. As the challenges continue, let's not lose our ability to be teachable for, **"A lawyer without books would be like a workman without tools."** —**Thomas Jefferson**. Success is defined in a myriad of ways and you will find it and people will no longer be grading you. It'll come from your own internal sense of decency. And so, your opus isn't just what you do, it'll be the legacy of what you've become.

Thank you.

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