

**REMARKS BY PRESIDENT AT THE HIGH COURT CIVIL DIVISION
BAR - BENCH ONLINE ENGAGEMENT**

My Lord, the Principal Judge, Hon. Justice Dr. Flavian Zveiija;

Hon. Justice Musa Sekaana, the Head Civil Division;

Fellow Learned Colleagues;

Good morning,

- I bring you warm greetings from the Executive Council, Management, and the Entire Membership of the Uganda Law Society. I thank their Lordships for accepting to engage with us in this bar-bench engagement.
- As members of the Bar and Bench, commitment to the pursuit of justice is a joint effort. **Hon. Justice Shri J.S. Verma a former Chief Justice of India** described the Bench and Bar as **“two sides of the same coin, and if one of it gets defaced, the coin goes out of circulation.”** The strength of the bench is the ultimate success of the bar and vice versa. Similarly, the degeneration of one will surely cause the downfall of the other. This relationship has also been described as equal partners as two wheels of a chariot. To provide smooth-running, both wheels must run in coordination.
- It is why we, as the Bar, are committed to working towards the numerous challenges that lie in this road to justice as well as achieving greater milestones along with the relevant stakeholders like the judiciary. I would like to thank the judiciary for their contributions through these engagements to discuss the crucial relationship between the Bench and Bar, especially in this dire pandemic time. Such efforts are not taken lightly and we stand humbled by your contributions.

- I commend the Judiciary for its passion for innovation in a bid to extend justice to the public. This is a big challenge to other players in the Justice sector. Some of these include; - The most notable being the video teleconferencing initiative which has been instrumental during the COVID19 period, Special High Court Sessions on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence that have disposed of cases for instance in Tororo, Enrollments were conducted in 2021 so far and the recent decentralization of the executions and bailiffs division of the High Court which is going to improve the efficiency of service. Today, we seek to have a discussion between the Bar and the Bench regarding the Court operations during and after this COVID-19 pandemic and the way forward on best pathways to improve service delivery to both Court and our clients.
- As the ULS, we are committed to working closely with the Courts of Law to ensure access to justice in this period. This applies as one of the initiatives of trying to avoid a lot of contact given the COVID situation but also promote our mandate as a teachable and adaptable bar association. **Caroline Kennedy a former first lady of the USA** rightly stated that **“the bedrock of our democracy is the rule of law and that means we have to have an independent judiciary, judges who can make decisions independent of the political winds that are blowing.”** We continue to appreciate all judicial officers at their various courts for the work they do so diligently and their dedication towards the promotion of transformative jurisprudence in the country. As the bar, we shall continue to support you in all of your endeavors and we pledge to work towards having an ethical bar association that stands for the rule of law and the Independence of the Judiciary in our country.

- In conclusion, to achieve even more in 2021, we need to strengthen our partnerships as key stakeholders in the justice sector. **Earl Nightingale** once stated that *“Integrity is the seed for achievement and a principle that never fails”*. I am a firm believer that the journey upon which we set today, is one in the right direction. It may not be all that smooth with all the challenges laying ahead.
- I wish you all fruitful deliberations

PHEONA WALL
PRESIDENT