

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
P.O. BOX 160 KIGALI**

**Speech of the Minister of Justice/Attorney General at the 8th ILPD Graduation
23rd August 2019
ILPD-NYANZA**

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

Distinguished guests,

Graduands,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is an honour and privilege to be here with you today, and to celebrate this graduation. Congratulations to our graduands!

Today is a very special day for ILPD, for the justice sector and for the country at large.

A while ago, we started this morning's celebrations with the commissioning of a new magnificent building – The Imutakara complex phase 2 that has lecture rooms, a modern library space, a Computer Lab, a modern cafeteria, guest rooms in all

categories, as well as a few office spaces. This is an all-in-one complex worth celebrating, and it is one among the many ambitious infrastructural development projects that ILPD have in the pipeline!

Regarding the graduation, after a not so long but hectic period of serious study, which for some has been in a foreign country that later became their home, our students are graduating today. This is what usually happens at the end of an academic race but whenever it happens we are happy, excited and we celebrate.

To you, our guests, who have come from different regions of Rwanda and those of you who have come from other sister African countries to attend this graduation; on the graduands' behalf, on behalf of ILPD, and on my own behalf, we say welcome and thank you; when you come to support our students you are supporting us as well.

We now know the reality that natural resources alone are not what builds a nation. Rather, it is human capital, the people. We should not be surprised that a nation that may be considered rich in natural resources may be found struggling in terms of development. The real premium is on people, talent, and expertise. This is why we should be happy spending this morning here, celebrating the training and investment in people.

We have heard from the Rector's speech that ILPD has embarked on the development of even more specialised programs of study and practice with the intention to have more skilled and specialised lawyers. We congratulate them and hope that this will in a few years, take us to another level with improved practice that positively impacts our socio-economic transformation. Besides, it is creating other opportunities for our graduands to come back home to ILPD for further specialisation.

I call upon each one of our graduands today to join the journey of building a sound and cohesive legal system and to further strengthen the legal education that is offered in our higher learning institutions. I urge you to read widely and to wisely apply your knowledge. Law is one of the professions in which you cannot avoid reading. We should know that we will be students all our lives. We always aim to have strong,

well-informed lawyers, judges and those in law enforcement including investigators prosecutors and others. We then hope that they all work together in a well-coordinated legal system.

A word of caution to our graduands. Lawyers often come under serious public scrutiny. This is partly because of instances of malpractice by some lawyers, but it is also because, the public does not fully understand the work of lawyers. The question that perplexes the public for example is how a person they “perceive to be guilty” can be entitled to legal representation, sometimes at government cost. This raises the question whether a plea of not guilty by an accused person who knows that he or she committed the offence is ethically wrong on the part of the party taking such a plea.

Those who will choose to go to the bench need to know that they, too, are not spared scrutiny. The public will always complain when those that, in their view, are guilty, are set free by courts. The public needs to know that judges are not litigants and cases belong to litigants. This is why a strong justice system must have equally competent Lawyers, Prosecutors and Judges so we have fair and just legal battles in courts and other dispute resolution fora.

As I conclude permit me to request you the graduands and others who graduated before, to do your best in educating the members of the public on the nature and essence of the work of lawyers, prosecutors and judges and the cardinal pillars of independence, impartiality, transparency and probity.

I once again congratulate the graduands, thank you all for being here and for your kind attention.