

Speech of the Minister of Justice in the Fourth Graduation Ceremony at ILPD

Honourable (s)Ministers;
The Representative of the Chancellor;
Deputy Chief Justice;
The Prosecutor general;
The Representative from EACJ;
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen;
Dear graduants,

We have gathered here in Nyanza, at the Institute of Legal Practice and Development for this delightful occasion- the fourth graduation ceremony for the awards of Post-Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice and Post Graduate Diploma in Legislative Drafting. From Humble beginnings in 2011, we now have hit the 575 graduand and still counting. Today, as three times before, we celebrate a moment of importance in the lives of these hardworking people, but also in the life of the Justice Sector since most of the graduates work for Justice Sector Institutions. It is also another Milestone achievement for ILPD and the Country in general.

I wish to congratulate our new graduants on your achievement. I know the journey was not easy especially when you had other responsibilities. Many of you had to leave your work places and families in order to come here to polish your knowledge.

Permit me to thank the Ministry of Education which through its Higher Education Agency (High Education Council)has supported ILPD from accreditation all the way to the present day.

The Parents, spouses and relatives of the graduands, thank you very much. Each of these graduands owes their success to his/her own hard work and obviously to the support networks established at the family level. The success therefore is a shared one.

Allow me to share with you some facts of history.

Between 1995 and 2004 in the Justice Sector Institutions, non lawyers accounted for approximately 70% and lawyers accounted for 30%.

Along the way public Universities opened as well as the National University of Rwanda changed its style of training of lawyers. It used to train 20 every 4 years. For 27 years between 1966 – 1993, the maximum number of lawyers Rwanda could boast of was 540. Many diverted after Baccalaureat and became Politicians, Bourgoumestres, Administrations Officials ect.

- ❖ It was generally believed and perceived that all Rwandans are natural judges, prosecutors, advocates!!

After the Major Sector Reforms in 2003, the Sector started afresh, this time with approximately 77% lawyers and 30% non- lawyers, with clear phase out plans. When the ILPD emerged in 2007 from the CNFJ many people in the sector were anxious and sometimes opposed.

The issue then was if one is a law graduate what more does one expect from him "for God's Sake?"

The second was a genuine fear of the; unknown. This combination could have stalled or stopped progress. Because of the amount of political will behind the idea, the conviction of some in the sector

that it was inevitable and the able leadership of the Institute, the program proved resilient. Today, 8 years on, ILPD has not only survived, it is surely a major player in the Justice Sectors of the Region.

Today the Diploma in Legal Practice is one qualification our young practitioners can't afford not to have.

This Institute will grow from Strength to strength. The Infrastructure will be expanded, renovated and the mission and vision expanded. ILPD will become the place to go for Lawyers in Rwanda and beyond.

Now allow me to scale up what I am saying to the national level. This is the progress that Rwandans, are willing and determined to hang on to as they request and demand that His Excellency Paul KAGAME continues to lead us. What they are saying is if he led us from a failed state into a future that then was so uncertain, in 2003 and we have achieved this level of progress, if he leads us now into a future that we are sure of, the sky is the limit to what we will achieve. In other words Rwandans want to be led by a specific person, with a specific identity, with a specific track record because they want to progress at a specific speed. It is that scientific and purpose driven.

We all, I trust, acknowledge the contributions of the Administration and staff members of ILPD. These people have laboured to create a special intellectual, social and physical climate at ILPD to support learning and ability to succeed.

There is often a temptation to consider the concept of graduation as the culmination of the learning process. It is impossible by the process of formal education and training for an instructor to transfer knowledge, skills and attitudes into the trainees to "completion". What

education can do is to transform the trainees into individuals with the appropriate analytical tools with which they can continue the learning process on their own afterwards. Every graduate should be a progressive learner. If such a person is equipped with the skills which can enable him or her to keep learning and act accordingly then he or she is the desired product of education. Beyond this achievement there are vast other achievements to acquire.

In the development of legal and judicial affairs, everyone, especially those with legal education and training, has a role to play. The roles range from law making and development, advocating rights and freedoms, law enforcement, judicial decision-making, rehabilitation and reform of prisoners, etc. Go forth; don't miss when you are needed most. Stand up and be counted. In particular, let me emphasize that your role in the fight for accountability, integrity, against GBV, abuse of Public Resources is irreplaceable. The country will not achieve much if prosecutors, judges and advocates aren't disciplined themselves and notwilling to apply the law to ensure that these goals are achieved.

With these remarks, I congratulate the graduands again and thank all those who gathered here on this occasion for your kind attention.