

**Symposium on Access to Justice and Fighting Impunity of
Sexual Violence in the Great Lakes Region
Serena Golf Resort, July 7, 2016**

**Welcoming address by Amb. Rossette Nyirinkindi Katungye Ag.
National Coordinator -Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Hon. Peace Mutuuzo Minister of State for Gender, Labour and Culture

Hon. Justice Dr. Yorokamu Bamwine, Principal Judge

Justice Mike Chibita, Director of Public Prosecutions

Amb. Said Djinnit, United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes
Region

Prof. Ibrahim Fall, African Union Special Representative for the Great
Lakes Region

Amb. Zachary Muburi-Muita, Executive Secretary of the International
Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)

Mr. Nathan Byamukama, Ag. Director of the ICGLR Regional Training
Facility on Prevention and Suppression of Sexual and Gender Based
Violence in the Great Lakes Region

Participants, SGBV Experts, honored guests, **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good morning and a warm welcome to Uganda particularly to our
foreign guests. It is a great pleasure indeed for me to welcome you to
this symposium on access to justice and fighting impunity of sexual
violence in the Great Lakes Region.

I am happy that the experts from the Member States as well as consultants from the region and beyond have come to share their knowledge and experiences and to explore better ways of addressing misconceptions and challenges related to fighting sexual violence.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to Hon. Peace Mutuuzo representing Hon. Janat Mukwaya, for honoring us as chief guest for this symposium. I also wish to convey special thanks to Amb. Zachary Muburi-Muita for taking the time to grace this occasion. I believe this is his first external engagement in his new capacity as Executive Secretary of the ICGLR. I again congratulate him on his appointment and reiterate the support of the Government of Uganda during his tenure.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This symposium has been organized to share experiences in fighting impunity in sexual violence related cases in our respective countries. As you may be aware, the 12 member countries adopted the Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of sexual violence against women and children, with the hope that it would contribute to reducing the widespread incidence of sexual violence in the region and its destructive impact on the lives, health, physical, sexual, psychological, social and economic well-being of women and children.

The Protocol is an elaborate instrument with clear objectives and it outlines regional measures for addressing sexual violence. It is significant that the priority regional response to address sexual violence was the setting up of a regional facility for training and sensitizing judicial officers, police units, social workers, medical officers and other categories of persons who handle cases of sexual violence in the Great Lakes Region.

However, we know very well that this is just the beginning of a dedicated journey. As you are aware, the Regional Training Facility is hosted in Kampala and has been operational since 2014, a milestone we have achieved and should be proud of as a region. We are aware too, that we cannot realize our objectives if we do not harmonize our approaches.

Since the operationalization of the training Facility, a number of training sessions have been conducted. We therefore strongly hope that this facility with your active support will benefit the member countries in addressing SBGV in a comprehensive and holistic manner through research, training, sensitization, advocacy and awareness creation among others.

I would like to thank Mr. Nathan Byamukama of the ICGLR regional Training Facility and his staff for their efforts to make this happen, and all those who have generously aided the process.

I sincerely hope

that this symposium will be a great success not only as an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences but also as the beginning of a long and fruitful cooperation among fellow experts devoted to the most meaningful and worthwhile task of fighting sexual violence in our region.

I thank you for your attention.