



THE JUDICIARY
JUDICIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE
**REPORT ON THE NATIONAL
ADR/AJS SUMMIT 2025**



THEME:

**STRENGTHENING ALTERNATIVE
JUSTICE SYSTEMS AND ALTERNATIVE
DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN UGANDA**

**11TH - 12TH, JUNE 2025
HELD AT SPEKE RESORT MUNYONYO
KAMPALA, UGANDA**



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Hon. Justice Prof. Andrew Khaukha

Executive Director, Judicial Training Institute.

FOREWORD

Hon. Justice Prof. Andrew Khaukha
Executive Director, Judicial Training Institute



It is with profound honor that I present this report, which outlines the proceedings and key outcomes of the national summit on Alternative Justice Systems (AJS), a landmark gathering convened under the auspices of the Judicial Training Institute in collaboration with the International Development Law Organization (IDLO).

The summit represented a timely and progressive step in Uganda's ongoing pursuit of a justice system that is not only accessible but also reflective of the lived realities of its people. It brought together judicial officers, cultural and religious leaders, and civil society actors to reflect on the current place and the potential of the AJS within Uganda's justice architecture.

For many Ugandans, especially those in rural and underserved communities, justice is not found in formal courtrooms but in clan meetings, religious gatherings, and community-based processes that are trusted, accessible, and culturally grounded. The Hill Report, 2024, shows that only 10% of the disputes end up in formal courts. This translates into 9 out of 10 disputes being resolved outside the formal justice sector. Recognising this reality, the summit sought to elevate the role of AJS from the margins of informality to a complementary pillar within the formal justice system, one that is aligned with constitutional values, particularly fairness, gender equality, and human rights.

The summit served as a platform to share experiences, voice concerns, and develop consensus on how AJS can decongest formal courts, promote restorative justice, and empower communities while remaining accountable and inclusive. It also highlighted the challenges posed by a

lack of regulation, gender imbalances within traditional structures, and unclear boundaries in criminal matters, particularly where spiritual or cultural practices are invoked.

I extend sincere appreciation to the International Development Law Organisation (IDLO), which made this summit possible. IDLO provided both financial and technical support. This report documents the rich discussions held and the agreed action points for the implementation of AJS strategies toward a justice system that reflects the lived experiences of all Ugandans.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY!



ACRONYMS

AJS	Alternative Justice Systems
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
JTI	Judicial Training Institute
JSC	Judicial Service Commission
IDLO	International Development Law Organisation
LASPNET	Legal Aid Service Providers Network
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
CJ	Chief Justice
DCJ	Deputy Chief Justice
DPP	Director of Public Prosecutions
IRCU	Inter-Religious Council of Uganda
UMSC	Uganda Muslim Supreme Council

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DAY ONE

11th June, 2025

1.0. OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony was presided over by the Chief Justice of the Republic of Uganda, Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny-Dollo.

Bishop Joshua Lwere, the general overseer of the National Fellowship of born-again Pentecostal (NFBPC) and Kagiiko Imam Shaffi of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda, led the prayers.



The opening prayers at the summit

1.1. REMARKS BY DR. KATJA KERSCHBAUMER - HEAD OF THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY/DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND THE CHAIRPERSON JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS GROUP

Dr. Katja Kerschbaumer expressed gratitude to the Chief Justice and the Judiciary for the invitation and reaffirmed Austria's commitment to strengthening justice delivery in Uganda.

She emphasised Austria's support, through the Justice Sector Development Partners Group, for making justice systems more accessible, efficient, and responsive to marginalised groups.

Highlighting that over 80% of Ugandans resolve disputes outside formal courts, she underscored the critical role of Alternative Justice Systems (AJS), including customary, religious, and clan-based mechanisms, as the primary access point to justice for most citizens.

Dr. Katja noted that despite their widespread use, AJS strategies have mainly remained informal and unregulated, leading to issues in consistency, accountability, and protection of rights. She described the AJS Strategy as a transformative step toward integrating these informal mechanisms into the national justice framework, provided they adhere to constitutional values such as fairness, gender equality, and dignity.

AJS, she said, can play key roles in decongesting formal courts, restoring social harmony, bridging the justice gap, and promoting restorative justice. Dr. Katja concluded by applauding Uganda's bold recognition of AJS and pledged Austria's continued support for a justice system that thrives not only in courts but also within communities.



Dr. Katja Kerschbaumer

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1.2. WELCOME REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON, GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE JUDICIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HON JUSTICE MIKE CHIBITA (JSC)

Hon. Justice Mike Chibita welcomed guests to the summit and acknowledged the Judicial Training Institute for organising the summit. He extended appreciation to the International Development Law Organisation for the financial support that enabled the summit to take place. He welcomed the keynote speaker, Hon. Justice Professor Joel Ngugi, Justice of the Court of Appeal of Kenya and Chairperson of the National Implementation Committee on AJS in Kenya.

Justice Chibita observed that because of the nature of leadership in many cultural and religious institutions, the summit appeared to be unbalanced in favour of males. He noted the gender inequality prevalent in cultural institutions and its implications for inclusive and equitable justice delivery.

He raised critical reflections on the interface between cultural practices and justice, especially concerning criminal matters. He shared a real-life example of a delayed cultural ritual that led to community conflict.



Hon. Justice Mike Chibita

1.3. WELCOME REMARKS BY THE HON. THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA - HIS LORDSHIP ALFONSE CHIGAMOY OWINY - DOLLO

The Chief Justice formally opened the conference by expressing gratitude to all participants and key partners, including the Austrian Embassy, IDLO, and keynote speaker Hon. Justice Prof. Joel Ngugi, for their continued support of Uganda's judiciary.

He underscored the significance of Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Africa, noting that these mechanisms are deeply rooted in the continent's pre-colonial traditions.

He pointed out that colonial impositions undermined indigenous justice models, branding them as satanic and replacing them with foreign structures. He cited Acholi traditional practices such as 'colokuol', which focuses on restorative rather than punitive justice, and 'matoput' as cultural mechanisms for resolving disputes and healing communities.

Citing the 2024 Justice Needs and Satisfaction Report, he noted that only 10% of Ugandans resolve their disputes using formal courts, while the overwhelming majority (90%) preferred informal and community-based dispute resolution mechanisms due to accessibility, cost, and cultural relevance.



His Lordship Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny - Dollo

The report highlights land disputes as the most prevalent at 42%, especially land grabbing and boundary disputes. The Chief Justice highlighted the Judiciary’s recent efforts to incorporate ADR mechanisms into the criminal justice system, especially for non-felony and personal disputes. He explained that tools like reconciliation, plea bargaining, community service and compensation are increasingly being used, guided by constitutional and statutory provisions.

He called for a transformative return to Africa’s indigenous justice systems, asserting that they are the foundation of the African continent’s legal heritage, anchored in the traditional values of dialogue and communal harmony. He encouraged all participants to share freely and contribute to building a broader understanding and appreciation of AJS as a legitimate and necessary justice pathway.

1.4. KEYNOTE ADDRESS PRESENTATION: “AJS: A MECHANISM OF ACCELERATING A PEOPLE CENTERED JUSTICE: THE KENYA EXPERIENCE”

Speaker: Hon. Justice Prof. Joel Ngugi, Justice of the Court of Appeal of Kenya and Chairperson, National AJS Steering Committee, Kenya

Justice Prof. Ngugi shared the Kenyan experience in mainstreaming AJS, beginning with a successful pilot that resolved a 30-year-old dispute in a single afternoon. He distinguished between adjudication by judges and dispute resolution through AJS, noting that communities often engage more truthfully and effectively with traditional mechanisms.

Highlighting Kenya’s transformative Constitution, he emphasised two key modalities: civic autonomy and increased access to justice. Civic independence, he noted, enables citizens to take ownership of justice processes, while access to justice ensures the enjoyment of broader constitutional rights.

Quoting Archbishop Desmond Tutu, he called for preventive justice approaches that address the root causes of disputes. He referenced Kenyan survey data showing that while 17% of people opt for courts, 64% prefer AJS, reflecting its practicality and cultural fit.



Justice Prof. Ngugi

Although the judiciary holds the constitutional mandate to administer justice, it warned that failing to ensure the quality of justice in AJS processes amounts to a dereliction of this duty. He identified AJS as accessible, affordable, participatory, and suited to local contexts, and called on judiciaries to respect, protect, educate about, and transform AJS in collaboration with communities.

He concluded by categorising AJS models as autonomous, court-annexed, third-party, and state-regulated and redefining the role of judges as not just arbiters but also facilitators of justice dialogues, connectors of justice actors, and promoters of social cohesion.

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PLENARY



Participant asks a question during the plenary

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RESPONSES

In response, speakers stressed the importance of long-term public awareness, education, and narrative change as preconditions for AJS adoption.

Kenya's approach, which includes a ten-year strategic roadmap with concentric engagement, was shared as a model. On gender inclusion, it was acknowledged that early AJS forums were male-dominated. Instead of confrontation, Kenyan practitioners revised their invitation practices to explicitly require women's participation, which gradually reshaped community expectations and outcomes.

Speakers reaffirmed that deliberate, inclusive approaches, grounded in cultural sensitivity and practical adaptation, are vital to transforming AJS into a credible component of national justice systems.



2.1. PRESENTATION: UNPACKING THE JUDICIARY AJS STRATEGY

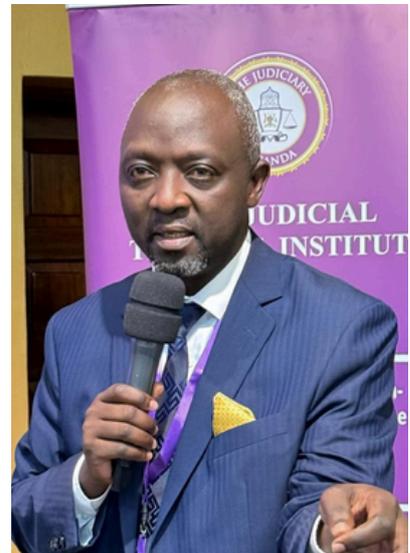
Speaker: Hon. Justice Prof. Andrew Khaukha – Justice of the High Court and Executive Director, Judicial Training Institute

Justice Khaukha commenced his presentation by defining the Alternative Justice System (AJS) as a set of traditional, informal, and community-based mechanisms used to resolve disputes outside the formal court structure.

He explained that AJS derives its legitimacy from cultural norms, religious values, and communal consensus, often offering more accessible, affordable, and timely justice, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised populations.

The rationale behind promoting AJS lies in addressing the limitations of the formal justice system, such as case backlog, high costs, and inaccessibility for rural communities, by leveraging indigenous knowledge systems and local actors.

Justice Khaukha emphasised the importance of integrating AJS with the formal justice framework to create a cohesive and people-centred justice system that reflects Uganda’s legal pluralism. He noted that the summit was intended to explore avenues for harmonising these two systems through experience sharing, documentation of best practices, and the development of structured frameworks to guide AJS implementation and support access to justice for all Ugandans.



Hon. Justice Prof. Andrew Khaukha

“
AJS derives its legitimacy from cultural norms, religious values, and communal consensus, often offering more accessible, affordable, and timely justice, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised populations - Justice Prof. Andrew Khaukha
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Session chair, Hon. Lady Justice Jane Okuo Kajuga

2.2. BREAKAWAY SESSIONS AND PANEL DISCUSSION

Participants were divided into thematic groups comprising religious leaders, cultural institutions, government agencies, civil society, and judicial officers. These breakaway sessions aimed to foster in-depth dialogue on the roles of different actors in the implementation of AJS. Each group later presented during a plenary session, contributing unique perspectives and actionable proposals.



Panelists during the breakaway session

PANEL DISCUSSION SUMMARY: ROLES OF VARIOUS ACTORS IN AJS

Group 1 – MDAs and Judicial Officers

Led by Ms. Susan Wakabala, this group underscored the role of government agencies and judicial officers in sensitising communities about AJS, integrating human rights principles, and implementing Article 126 of the Constitution to reduce case duplication. They also advocated for the development of an appropriate theoretical and doctrinal framework for AJS, the creation of effective referral mechanisms, jurisprudence building, and the establishment of a robust monitoring, evaluation, and reporting system.



Group 2 – Cultural Institutions

Comprising representatives from three cultural institutions, this group based their roles on Article 246 of the Constitution and the Traditional Leaders Act. They advocated for strategic engagement to reclaim traditional leadership spaces, fostering collaboration with the judiciary, and raising awareness about the cultural role in AJS. Emphasis was also placed on transitioning from oral traditions to written documentation, seeking capacity-building support, and actively lobbying for the inclusion of artistic leaders in AJS implementation.

Group 3 – Kingdoms and Traditional Authorities

Led by Mr. Kimbowa Francis, Minister of Information from the Buganda Kingdom, this group highlighted the importance of documenting and sharing successful community-based dispute resolutions. They advocated for budget allocations from the central government to support AJS, training of traditional leaders, and ensuring inclusivity by protecting the dignity of all disputants. They proposed the use of media platforms for widespread sensitisation and the formation of a joint AJS committee comprising the judiciary and cultural leaders.



Group 4 – Civil Society Organisations

Represented by Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa, Executive Director of LASPNET, the group noted that over 80% of Ugandans cannot afford private legal services. Civil society's role was described as advisory, focused on raising awareness, empowering communities, simplifying legal information, and providing training. They promote a human rights-based approach to dispute resolution and support AJS through direct participation, paralegal development, advocacy for the marginalised, and extensive documentation and research to inform practice and policy.



Group 5 – Religious Institutions

Representatives from the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda shared experiences across various faiths. The Uganda Muslim Supreme Council applies Sharia law in marriage and divorce, with structured dispute handling from district Khads to the Sharia Directorate. Orthodox, Catholic, and Born-Again churches have internal dispute resolution systems ranging from local priests to church tribunals, guided by religious laws such as Canon Law and Biblical teachings (e.g., 1 Corinthians 6). The group recommended formal recognition of these structures, judiciary partnerships, training of faith-based mediators, and comprehensive information dissemination.

END OF DAY 1



DAY TWO

12th June, 2025

2.3. RECAP OF DAY 1

Hon. Justice Richard Buteera led the participants through a reflective recap of the previous day's proceedings. From the discussions and presentations of Day 1, several lessons were drawn. First, it was acknowledged that AJS is already widely used and trusted by the majority of Ugandans, particularly in rural areas, due to its accessibility, familiarity, and cultural relevance.

Second, the integration of AJS into the formal justice system requires a deliberate and structured approach, with an emphasis on preserving its informal, people-centred nature while aligning it with constitutional values such as equality, fairness, and human dignity.

Third, participants recognised the need for institutional support, including the development of legal frameworks, training for both judicial officers and community leaders, and public education.

Finally, it was agreed that inclusive participation, particularly of women and youth, is essential to ensure that AJS processes reflect and serve the needs of all community members. These insights provided a strong foundation for the second day's discussions on implementation strategies, policy development, and stakeholder coordination.

2.4. REMARKS BY LADY JUSTICE JANE FRANCES ABODO, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

Justice Abodo affirmed her strong interest in AJS and noted that the audience was well-suited for this critical discussion. She highlighted Karamoja as a region where most disputes are resolved locally, and only a few are reported formally, typically following police involvement.

Justice Abodo acknowledged the limitations of formal prosecution and stressed the need for broader justice options. She emphasised that AJS reflects African traditions, where most cases are resolved outside formal courts.

She praised the success of plea bargaining in maintaining social balance and shared that Karamoja's community-based courts allow for direct witness engagement and effective local dispute resolution.

While supporting AJS, she cautioned against informal practices that violate human rights and advocated for clear boundaries between informal systems and the formal judiciary. She concluded by reiterating the DPP's commitment to supporting AJS and expressed confidence that Uganda is prepared for its full implementation.



Lady Justice Jane Frances Abodo

2.4. APPLYING PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL JUSTICE IN AJS BY MS. BARBARA KILEI

Ms. Barbara Kilei illustrated the application of natural justice through a land dispute in the Teso sub-region, where clan elders resolved the case using inclusive and documented processes.

She cautioned against allowing aggrieved individuals to be part of decision-making panels, stressing the need for impartiality and avoiding conflicts of interest.

Ms. Kilei emphasised the importance of the right to a fair hearing and encouraged cultural leaders to provide adequate notice to parties. A representative from Acholi noted that they typically allow two weeks' notice. She advised cultural leaders to ensure that accused persons are given a reasonable time to prepare for their cases before hearings commence.



Ms. Barbara Kilei

PLENARY DISCUSSION SUMMARY

The DPP shared insights from her culture's approach to dispute resolution, particularly concerning women's issues.

The Tooro Kingdom representative described how matters involving women and children are referred to the Isenkati Baana, with further escalation mechanisms if needed. Rwoths from Western Acholi outlined a tiered structure in which women's issues are handled by designated women groups within chiefdoms, with appeals going up to the Chief depending on the dispute's severity.

A representative from the Bamasaba highlighted traditional approaches to matters of childbirth and fertility, reflecting the cultural integration of women's concerns within AJS.



Ms. Kilei concluded that the diverse cultural examples presented demonstrate that many communities have already embedded natural justice principles within their AJS practices; however, the policies must be strengthened.

2.5. THEME: THE STAR APPROACH AND THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF AJS

Hon. Justice Prof. Joel Ngugi, Court Of Appeal, Kenya

Hon. Justice Prof. Joel Ngugi shared a comparative perspective on how Kenya has approached jurisdiction under Alternative Justice Systems (AJS). Using practical scenarios, he challenged common assumptions that AJS cannot handle criminal matters or cases involving large sums of money. He clarified that the Kenyan Constitution does not explicitly restrict AJS in this way, and that jurisdiction should be determined by broader constitutional values rather than rigid rules.

He introduced the “agency theory,” emphasising the citizen’s autonomy to choose AJS voluntarily. This theory is applied through two tests: The positive test, which acknowledges that while courts are the default forum, citizens may opt for AJS without coercion. The negative test, which excludes AJS from hearing matters that are expressly prohibited by the Constitution or public policy, such as presidential election petitions.

Justice Ngugi advised against rigid classifications of cases suited for AJS and called for case-by-case analysis. He then examined how formal courts interact with AJS outcomes, recommending a facilitative approach where court deference is guided by proportionality and due process, thereby validating AJS while staying within constitutional limits.

He outlined key dos and don'ts for AJS implementation. These included avoiding formalisation, rejecting typological hierarchies, resisting linear models of justice evolution, and avoiding the use of statistical measures to evaluate AJS. He called for policy alignment with constitutional provisions protecting equality, human dignity, children’s rights, and access to justice.



2.6. BREAKAWAY SESSION SUMMARY: STAKEHOLDER ROLES IN AJS IMPLEMENTATION

Chair: Hon. Justice Richard Buteera | Moderator: HW Lillian Bucyana

Participants were grouped by sector to reflect on their roles in advancing AJS: Judges, academics, and MDAs highlighted that AJS and formal courts can operate complementarily. They emphasised voluntary participation, adherence to constitutional values, documentation, monitoring, and respect for AJS decisions.

Inter-Religious Council proposed a national sensitisation campaign led by the President, encouraged judicial support for AJS, recommended making plea bargaining mandatory, and called for legal recognition and local language translation of AJS guidelines.

Cultural leaders advocated for popularising AJS across social spaces, positioning cultural leaders as first-instance dispute resolvers, ensuring impartiality, and recognising AJS as a tool to reduce case backlog.

Legal educators, represented by Prof. Christopher Mbazira, stressed the role of legal education in challenging judicial imperialism and recommended integrating AJS studies into law school curricula.



Hon. Justice Richard Buteera

Plenary

During the plenary, participants strongly emphasised that AJS must be treated as a serious and central component of the justice system. They called for mandatory training for all judicial officers on AJS principles and approaches.

Participants underscored the value of AJS in addressing the growing court backlog and affirmed its role as a restorative justice mechanism that draws from community wisdom and cultural legitimacy.

Responses

Responses during the plenary reflected agreement on the need for systemic integration of AJS into Uganda's justice framework. There was a shared commitment to institutional support for AJS, with calls for strategic deployment, training, and alignment with constitutional norms. Participants welcomed the comparative insights from Kenya and expressed readiness to replicate adaptable elements within Uganda's context.

2.7. BREAKAWAY SESSION SUMMARY: STAKEHOLDER ROLES IN AJS IMPLEMENTATION

His Lordship, Hon. Justice Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny-Dollo, affirmed the superiority of Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) over colonial-era legal frameworks, highlighting their restorative nature that encourages individuals to take responsibility, even in cases of criminal negligence. He emphasised the value of cultural practices, where responsibility is shared among clans for roles such as mediation and leadership, as a model for justice delivery.

While reiterating his stance against corporal punishment, he maintained that practical, non-violent consequences are essential for reform. The Chief Justice advocated for the development of a national policy framework to institutionalise AJS and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) within the formal justice system, calling for regional stakeholder engagement and designating the Judicial Training Institute (JTI) as the coordinating body.



He proposed forming a National AJS Implementation Committee drawn from summit participants. He urged all present to champion the AJS movement with sincerity, courage, and inclusivity, recognising the wisdom of community actors often overlooked by formal institutions. He concluded the session with a presentation of gifts to the keynote speaker and a commemorative group photo with key justice sector leaders.

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The Chief Justice advocated for the development of a national policy framework to institutionalise AJS and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) within the formal justice system

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3.0. RESOLUTIONS

In the 2nd NATIONAL AJS/ADR SUMMIT held on 11th and 12th June 2025, under the theme, “Strengthening Alternative Justice Systems for Land Disputes Resolution”, we, the undersigned participants, resolve as follows;

RESOLUTIONS

Operationalise the AJS Strategy by, among others, focusing on developing and disseminating the theory of agency and jurisdiction.

The participants in this engagement will be transformed into the National AJS Movement.

Undertake to conduct AJS Stakeholder engagement to promote awareness of AJS.

Establish a national AJS Implementation Committee with representatives from across the nation.

Individual Courts may divert cases to AJS, especially land cases, because it has been established that the delay in resolving land disputes is linked to criminal activity, especially murder, criminal trespass and manslaughter.

The Judiciary Training Institute coordinates all AJS Implementation efforts.

4.0. CLOSING CEREMONY AND AWARDING OF CERTIFICATES

4.1. CLOSING REMARKS BY THE HON. NOBERT MAO, MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Nobert Mao started his address by expressing gratitude to the Chief Justice of Uganda for convening the summit and bringing together cultural leaders and other institutions. He acknowledged the constitutional principle that sovereignty resides with the people, appreciating the Chief Justice’s recognition of this by including traditional leaders in the justice dialogue.

He observed that while the formal justice system had historically displaced Alternative Justice Systems (AJS), it is now evident that the formal system alone has gaps that need to be addressed. The invitation extended to traditional leaders and other participants was an explicit acknowledgement of their indispensable role in the delivery of justice. Using a powerful metaphor, he likened traditional leaders to a strong tree in the compound, an enduring presence that cannot simply be removed. He commended the Chief Justice for bringing conventional leaders to the forefront of justice discourse. He emphasised that their involvement should not be symbolic but integral to the institution of justice.



Hon. Nobert Mao

He noted that this summit was intended to foster listening and mutual engagement. He clarified that judicial officers are not parties to disputes and do not summon people to court, yet the judiciary is often blamed. AJS, he explained, offers a people-centred approach to dispute resolution that bridges this misunderstanding.

Drawing from personal experience, he shared that he comes from the Acholi community, which upholds traditional leadership. He referenced an earlier introduction in which a speaker had highlighted a leadership dispute in Lango, noting that such disputes are part of life and cannot be entirely eradicated. He called upon participants to engage in the summit with humility and openness, affirming that collaborative approaches are not only necessary but also workable.

He encouraged the Chief Justice to continue motivating judicial officers to work in partnership with traditional leaders, reiterating that the judiciary is the one arm of government that has embraced AJS rather than resisted it. He advocated for closer cooperation between formal and traditional systems, stressing that there is no harm in traditional leaders engaging with judicial officers.

In conclusion, he pledged his continued support for the judicial transformation agenda and committed to consistently urging the state to enforce judicial decisions fairly. He then invited the Chief Justice to deliver his remarks

4.1. CLOSING REMARKS BY THE HON. THE DEPUTY CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA- HON. JUSTICE DR. FLAVIAN ZEIJA

The Summit concluded on a high note, reaffirming Uganda’s commitment to advancing access to justice through community-rooted and culturally appropriate systems.

In his closing remarks, the Hon. Deputy Chief Justice, Dr. Flavian Zeija, commended participants for their active engagement and expressed gratitude to the Chief Justice, the Deputy Chief Justice Emeritus, keynote speaker Prof. Joel Ngugi, and IDLO for their respective contributions.

They emphasised the timeliness of the summit’s theme on structuring Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) for land and commercial matters, noting its relevance to Uganda’s current judicial challenges. Reflecting on the summit’s discussions, he underscored the importance of harnessing AJS and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms to improve justice delivery, reduce case backlog, and support the socio-economic development of the country.



Drawing from the Judiciary's Strategic Plan V, he highlighted the strategic emphasis on ADR. He called for the development of a national AJS policy framework, regional stakeholder engagements, and the formation of a national AJS implementation committee, to be coordinated by the Judicial Training Institute. He concluded by urging participants to become ambassadors of AJS and ADR, and praised JTI for organising a productive and impactful summit.

He appreciated the participants for accepting the invitations and their active participation and thanked the CJ for opening the summit and the DCJ emeritus for taking charge because he is the engine of all these ideas and the Executive Director and staff of JTI for organizing this summit and putting together a good training programme and called upon the participants to join efforts with the Judiciary to have AJS and ADR effectively implemented and encouraged them to be the ambassadors.

5.0. CONCLUSION

The Hills Report indicates that 90% of cases in Uganda are resolved outside the formal court system, highlighting the vital role Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) play in delivering timely, community-based dispute resolution. This was strongly echoed in the summit's recommendations, which acknowledged AJS as a key mechanism for reducing court backlogs, improving efficiency, and expanding access to justice for underserved populations.

However, the summit also revealed that despite AJS being deeply rooted in Ugandan culture, its integration into the national justice framework remains fragmented and informal. A major challenge is the lack of a comprehensive legal and administrative framework to guide the interface between AJS and formal justice systems. Moreover, many traditional justice structures operate without sufficient safeguards for fundamental rights, and gender exclusion continues to limit participation in decision-making, particularly where male elders dominate.

It was further noted that capacity gaps persist among both formal and informal justice actors. Judicial officers require enhanced training on AJS principles, ethics, and constitutional boundaries, while traditional and religious leaders need sensitisation on natural justice, human rights, and proper documentation. Additionally, the absence of standardised procedures, clear referral pathways, and robust data systems undermines the credibility and effectiveness of AJS processes. These issues are further complicated by limited public awareness and occasional resistance within the formal legal sector.

To address these challenges, the summit strongly recommended that the Judicial Training Institute (JTI) develop and implement a nationwide training and advocacy program targeting judicial officers, cultural and faith-based leaders, civil society, and the broader public, and this program should prioritise:

- Clearly defining the jurisdictional scope of AJS mechanisms;
- Strengthening adherence to constitutional and human rights standards;
- Deepening understanding of the rule of law within informal and traditional justice contexts;
- Aligning AJS practices with national legal frameworks; and
- Establishing documentation tools, referral mechanisms, and gender-responsive guidelines.



HW. Lilian Bucyana, The Ag Registrar, Human Resource, development & Training, JTI

Implementing these measures will enhance the legitimacy and credibility of AJS, build public confidence, promote accountability, and uphold constitutionalism. By embedding these principles into policy and practice, Uganda can advance toward a more inclusive, rights-based, and responsive justice system.

Looking ahead, strategic partnerships and collaborative efforts will be essential to realise these objectives and support a transformative justice agenda in Uganda.



6.0. APPENDIX

- List of participants
- Pictorial

List of participants

AJS PARTICIPANTS/ATTENDANCE SHEET—11th & 12th JUNE 2025

Hon. Justice Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny-Dollo	Judiciary-Chief Justice
Hon Justice Dr. Flavian Zeija	Judiciary-Deputy Chief Justice
Hon Lady Justice Jane Okuo Kajuga	Judiciary-Ag. Principal Judge
HW Pamela Lamunu Ocaya	Ag. Chief Registrar
Hon Lady Justice Jane Francis Abodo	Judge/DPP
Hon Justice Prof. Andrew Khaukha	Judge/ ED-JTI
Hon Justice Phillip Odoki	Senior Resident Judge, High Court Gulu
Hon. Lady Justice Lillian Alum Omara	Resident Judge, High Court Gulu
Hon Justice Phillip Mwaka	Resident Judge, Kitgum
Hon. Lady Justice Harriet Grace [Magala	Resident Judge, Arua
Hon. Lady Justice Birungi Kalibbalala	Resident Judge Lira
Hon. Nibert Mao	Min. of Justice & Constitutional Affairs
Dr. Katja Kerschbaumer	Chairperson, Dev. Partners Group.
Ms. Barbara Kilei	Country Director, IDLO
Ms. Racheal Odoi Musoke	Senior Technical Advisor Governance & Security Program.
Mr. Isreal Kazibwe Kitooke	Buganda Kingdom Spokesperson
Nakyanzi Nadia	Buganda Kingdom
Kimbowa Francis Assisi	Buganda Kingdom
Luganda Alex	Busoga Kingdom
Mr. Kalege Ernest	Tooro Kingdom
Masiga steven	Bugisu Cultural Institution

Kutio Moses	Minister of Culture & Heritage Bugisu Cultural Institution
Irene Khainza Mangali	Comm. Kingdom of Bugisu
Robert Rukahemura	Bunyoro-Kitala Kingdom
Benson Baritazale Kule	Prime Min. Rwenzururu Kingdom
Hon. Geoffrey Kanyonyi	Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu Kingdom Spokesperson & Min of information
Asineya Muhindo	Obisinga Bwa Rwenzururu
Hon Makasi K. Alfred	Att. General Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu
Rwot Otira Obol Godfrey	Padibe sub-county, Lamwo District
Rwot Nyeko George	Lokung Sub-county, Lamwo District
Rwot Ogenga John Obita	Labongo Amida, Kitgum District
Rwot Opobo Celestino	Nyekidi, Pader
Rwot Samuel Anywar	Pagol, Pader
Rwot Odwar George	Adilang, Agago
Rwot Ongom Kasimiro	Patong, Agago
Otim Micheal	Prime Minister Ker Kwaro, Acholi
Mr. Martin Okumu	Deputy Prime Minister in Charge of Finance & Investment
Stella Kijange Lajiri	Minister of Gender, Culture & youth
Openy Samuel	Minister of Justice
Rwot Arop Poppy Paul	Ker Kwaro Acholi 0782331739
Rwot Oywak Ywakamoi Joseph	Ker Kwaro Acholi, koyo
Okello John Samuel	Personal Assistant to His Royal Highness, the Paramount Chief of Acholi.

Mr. Eton Rashid	Chairman, Itogo Elders
Mrs. Adoch Lucy Owino	Member, Itogo Elders
Mr. Opio Okori Jurubabel	Awitong of Adok Clan Min. Land Rights & Management
Mr. Odoo Simon Peter	Awitong of Atek Odyek Owidi Clan/ Min. of Justice and Const. Affairs
Canon Richard Ogwang Odyero	Awitong of Ogora Clan Min. of Peace Building and Gov. Liaison
Prince L. Opar Angala	Prime Minister, Alur Kingdom
Prince Lawrence Opar Angala	Prime Minister-Alur Kingdom
Adupa Alex George	LCF
Adupa Ongwech Felix	LCF
Andrew Lugolobi	IRCU/Born again
Amb. Julius Peter Moto	LCF
Rwot Atiko Collins Muttu	11 Chief of Patiko in Gulu
Rwot John Peko Lugai	Chief of Palwo-Pajule in Pader
Rwot Latim Baptist	Chief Pawel in Amuru
Rwot Justin Ochitti Biny	Chief of Pagak in Amuru
Rwot Ojara Justine	Chief of Bwobo in Nwoya
Mr. Adongakulu Robert	Prime Minister, Ker Kwaro
Ms. Nantambi Aidah	Orthodox Church

Bishop Joshua Lwere	National Overseer, Association of Pentecostals & Evangelicals Co-President IRCU
Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda	President Born Again Faith in Uganda Co-President IRCU
Fr. Dennis Mujambere	IRC
Eugene Kisakye	IRCU
Apo Paska Gladys	Uganda Episcopal Conference
Msgr. Charles Kasibanti	Chairperson IRCU Executive Board
Fr. Vincent Raratunge	U.C.S-Nsambya
Bishop Mark Wamala	Secretary General Association of Pentecostals and
George Kamuremere	Religious leader
Kagiiko Immam Shaffi	Religious leader
Mr. John Osapiri	Manager Legal, Policy, Advocacy and Partnerships Inter-Religious Council of Uganda
Dr. Henry Onoria	Makerere University
Prof. Mbazira Christopher	Makerere University
Ms. Susan Sylvia Wakabala	Advocate
Mutesi Patricia	Advocate

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