



**STATEMENT MADE BY UGANDA**

**AT THE 32<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON CRIME PREVENTION  
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

**UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)**

**VIENNA, 22-26 MAY 2023**

Distinguished Chair,

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Representatives of Civil Society, ladies and gentlemen.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Uganda delegation to this 32<sup>nd</sup> Session organised under the theme: Enhancing the functioning of the criminal justice system to ensure access to justice and to realize a safe and secure society.

Sustainable Development Goal 16 aims at promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Development can only be achieved by having a safe and secure environment within which businesses can operate and flourish. This can be achieved by reduced cases/incidences of criminality. The emerging trends of crime have made it inevitable

to forge global approaches to fight crime. The ever-increasing trans-boundary nature of crime threatens not only the lives of innocent citizens but also the world market and trade.

In this regard, Uganda has made the following strides in the area of criminal justice and crime prevention in Uganda over the last one year;

- a) Uganda is at the forefront of criminal justice reform through the chain linked model implemented by the justice sector. Key to this reform agenda is leveraging information and communication technologies (ICTs) in facilitating efficient and effective business processes, improving productivity of duty bearers and creating a culture of data-driven decision making. The sector is developing e-policing mechanisms to aid reporting and investigation of crimes. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has adopted a prosecution case management information system (PROCAMIS) and the Judiciary recently rolled out the Electronic Court Case Management Information System (ECCMIS), an e-filing system for courts. The Prisons Service is currently piloting a prisoner management information system. Ultimately, the goal of Uganda's e-justice strategy is to create an integrated, people-centered digital criminal justice network that empowers institutions and stakeholders with data and information required in tackling crime and keeping our communities safe.
- b) In terms of access to justice services, the Uganda Vision 2040 prioritized improving access to justice through enhancing physical presence of institutions involved in the delivery of justice. This is being achieved through construction of Justice Centers to ensure completeness of the chain of justice across all districts. Currently the number of districts with frontline one stop service points out of the targeted 117 now stands at 82.8% from 76.3% in the previous year.
- c) Measures to enhance response to crime and capacity building for crime fighting agencies continue to be strengthened as well as initiatives around the use of scientific

evidence. These, among other interventions have resulted in an increase in rates of conviction to over 70% and a reduction in the rate of re-offending from 15.1% to 14.3%. The crime rate reduced from 502 in FY 2020/21 to 457.94 in FY 2021/22 per 100,000 population. This level of performance is attributed to the use of CCTV cameras, deployment of motorized patrols and community policing.

- d) We continue to address case back log through targeted innovations like plea bargaining, holding court sessions at juvenile facilities which will be designated as courts, extending daily hearings to the High Court level as opposed to waiting for special sessions and development of service delivery standards and policies across different criminal justice agencies to strengthen effectiveness and efficiency. We have been implementing a project to fast track the disposal of sexual violence cases through special coordinated court sessions for SGBV cases. We have seen a steady increase in the conviction rate for SGBV cases from 20% before the commencement of the sessions to 80% presently.
- e) Investments in use of scientific evidence, prosecution led investigations, increased geographical reach, and enhanced skill levels of investigators and prosecutors have also resulted in increased levels of conviction from 61% in 2017/18 to 73% in 2022/23. We registered a reduction in pretrial detainees from 53.3% at the start of the financial year of 2022 to 50.8% at the end of the financial year and by September 2022, pre-trial detainees had reduced to 48.4%.
- f) The Justice Sector is implementing a Gender and Equity Strategy. The focus is on enhancing the capacity of institutions to mainstream gender and equity in planning and budgeting as well as monitoring progress in promoting gender equality; strengthening the collection, analysis, documentation, and dissemination of information on gender issues and impact on access to justice, and strengthening measures to address justice needs of refugees and host communities. A multi-institutional Gender TaskForce has been established to steer this process.

Going forward we continue to work to strengthen adherence to the rule of law; to address policy, legal and regulatory frameworks for effective governance; strengthen business support environment; build and create awareness and appreciation for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms; develop and innovate around creating an environment for accessible and affordable justice; curtail crime rates through prevention and quicker response to incidents of crime; strengthening societal security structure and addressing issues concerning recovery rate of public funds from individuals implicated in corruption.

Some of the subsisting threat to the criminal justice system include; cybercrime, influx of foreigners and potential manipulation of citizenship, porous borders, integration and globalization, radicalization also referred to as violent extremism, natural resource conflicts, election violence, small arms and light weapons, terrorism, and transnational border crimes.

To conclude, I wish to acknowledge the excellent work of the UNODC in Uganda and the ROEA (Rest of East Africa) for the tremendous support extended to the Criminal Justice Institutions in Uganda in fighting crime.

I thank you.