



THE UGANDA LAW SOCIETY

RULE OF LAW SYMPOSIUM HELD ON 4TH OCTOBER 2013 AT THE KAMPALA GOLF COURSE HOTEL

THEME: CONSTITUTIONALISM AND THE RULE OF LAW IN UGANDA: A REALITY OR FAÇADE

The Uganda Law Society in collaboration with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung under the aegis of the Rule of Law Program for Sub Saharan Africa held its sixth annual Rule of Law Day in Kampala Uganda. This year's theme was 'Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law in Uganda: A Reality or Façade'.

The commemoration was aimed at awakening the spirit of nationalism, defending the supreme law of Uganda as well as arousing the unwavering desire among the legal fraternity and all Ugandans alike for a better Uganda. In line with the theme of the symposium, the organizers sought to assess the state of affairs relating to Constitutionalism and Rule of Law in Uganda over the years.

The symposium brought together a wide range of stakeholders including government officials, judicial officers, legislators and politicians, legal practitioners from state and private firms, civil society representatives, the academia and the media, to *inter alia*,

- (i) Discuss the contemporary challenges facing Uganda in observing Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law with the view to reflecting on the successes, challenges and existing gaps and to proffer suggestions on the way forward.
- (ii) Promote the role of the legal profession in ensuring adherence to and observance of constitutionalism and rule of law in Uganda by enhancing the capacity of ULS membership to engage and participate in the advocacy of their realization.
- (iii) Increase networks and strengthen institutional linkages amongst the key stakeholders to promote the Rule of Law in Uganda through the creation and strengthening of synergies between the State and other stakeholders in continuous participation in governance and checking on the use of executive power by government.
- (iv) Make the appropriate recommendations on the way forward for a better Uganda and Africa in general.

From the discussions, it was apparent that Uganda like a number of post-independent African countries had changed their Constitution without necessarily achieving constitutionalism. She had a Constitution but lacked the culture of respect for established norms and especially the rule of law. It appeared that this had consistently regressed over the past decade with widespread abuse of power by the State and its agencies, consistent marauding of public resources, unbridled corruption, arbitrary arrests, excess of power and violence by security agencies, blatant stifling of citizen's rights and liberties as well as curtailing of media freedoms.

These challenges and the growing population of Uganda pose a major challenge to sustainable development of the country unless deliberate efforts are made to reverse the trend which must be anchored on constitutionalism and rule of law.

Among the key speakers at the meeting were;-

- Hon. Paul Kibugi Muite, Senior Counsel in Kenya and former presidential candidate
- Ms. Margaret Sekaggya - UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders
- Mr. David Mafabi – Uganda's Presidential Advisor on Political Affairs, and
- Mr. Peter Walubiri - Expert on Land Law



Hon. Paul Muite delivering the keynote remarks