

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE****P.O. BOX 160 KIGALI****CLOSING REMARKS DURING THE 13th GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE
INSTITUTE OF LEGAL PRACTICE AND DEVELOPMENT (ILPD)****NYANZA, ON 06TH DECEMBER, 2024****BY DR UGIRASHEBUJA EMMANUEL MINISTER OF JUSTICE/ATTORNEY
GENERAL**

Honourable Chancellor and Minister of Education;

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Rwanda;

The Rector of ILPD;

Colleagues leaders in the Justice Sector;

Distinguished Guests;

ILPD Staff;

Graduates;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure for me to partake in this 13th splendid graduation of men and women who successfully fulfilled all the requirements to be awarded Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice and the 1st ever Postgraduate Diploma in Child Justice.

Allow me to congratulate each and every one of you, the Graduates, on this important achievement and thank you for having accepted to embark on this journey of continuous learning. I hope you will use the knowledge and the skills you acquired to improve the societal conditions you are called to serve and your personal capabilities, aiming to deliver quality and impactful services.

Dear graduates, It is the joy of any educator and trainer to see graduates who have thoroughly absorbed their teachings and applied them in practice. However, the greatest joy for an educator or trainer is knowing that their students have learned to think independently, to intelligently question and challenge existing frameworks, and to pursue their interests and passions.

We hope that beyond the comprehensive training you have received, you have also discovered your passions and interests in legal practice and are prepared to take the next steps as you enter the legal field.

Dear Graduates, one of the most important skills you should persistently, consistently, and continually pursue is the art of asking powerful questions in whatever you undertake. The importance of this skill is highlighted by one of the greatest geniuses to ever exist, Albert Einstein, who famously said, "If I had

an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask, for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than 5 minutes.”

It is our hope that the legal training you received has brought you to a place where you will continue to develop the skill of asking proper questions.

Dear graduates, graduating from legal training is a significant milestone. Here are some pieces of advice to help you navigate the transition and start your legal career on the right foot:

Embrace Continuous Learning

- Stay Informed: The legal field is constantly evolving. Keep up with new laws, regulations, and legal precedents.
- Specialize: Consider specializing in a particular area of law that interests you and where you can develop deep expertise.

Build Practical Skills

- Internships and Clerkships : Gain hands-on experience through internships or clerkships. Practical experience is invaluable and helps bridge the gap between theory and practice.
- Networking : Build a professional network by attending legal conferences, joining professional associations, and connecting with mentors.

Develop Soft Skills

- Communication: Hone your ability to communicate clearly and effectively, both in writing and verbally.
- Negotiation: Develop strong negotiation skills to advocate for your clients

effectively.

- Emotional Intelligence: Understand and manage your emotions, and develop empathy for your clients' situations.

Stay Ethical

- Integrity: Always maintain high ethical standards. Your reputation as a trustworthy and ethical lawyer is one of your most valuable assets.

- Professionalism: Demonstrate professionalism in all interactions, whether with clients, colleagues, or opposing counsel.

Adapt to Technology:

Humanity is already in what is known as the fourth industrial revolution which is characterized by fusion of technologies like artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, robotics and big data. To seek to argue that the legal profession can continue to function and develop unaffected by, and without response to the pressures of the fourth industrial revolution would be to consign oneself to irrelevance. It is reckless to deny the fact of the technological changes, and there can be no denying the influence that they have on the legal profession. The fourth industrial revolution will see seismic a shift in the market place of legal practice. In order to survive the forces one has to be:

- Tech-Savvy: Become proficient with legal research tools, case management software, and emerging technologies like AI.

- Innovative: Stay open to new technologies that can enhance your practice, such as e-discovery tools and automated document drafting.

Work-Life Balance

- Self-Care : Legal practice can be demanding. Prioritize your mental and physical health to avoid burnout.
- Balance: Strive to maintain a healthy work-life balance to sustain long-term career satisfaction.

Seek Mentorship

- Guidance: Find mentors who can offer advice, support, and insight based on their experience.
- Feedback: Be open to constructive feedback to continue improving your skills and knowledge.

Engage with the Community

- Pro Bono Work: Consider engaging in pro bono work to give back to the community and gain diverse legal experience.
- Public Service: Explore opportunities in public service or non-profit organizations to make a positive impact.

Among the ambitious goals that the Government set and is still pursuing include the *Promotion of the Rule of Law* and *the Provision of Excellent Justice Related Services*. However, the latter cannot be achieved without a committed and skilled work force. It is in this regard that the Government of Rwanda invested in capacity development including establishing ILPD to lead the mission of developing law practice.

As a result, this goal is progressively achieved as indicated by Rwanda Governance Scorecard, 11th edition released in November 2024, whereby the

Pillar of the Rule of Law **scored 88.51%** whilst the Citizen Report Card 2024 indicated that Rwandans were satisfied with justice related services at the **score of 81.6%**. In the most report by Mo Ibrahim Foundation, one of the most trustworthy surveys in the world, Rwanda was ranked as the third most trustworthy legal system in Africa after Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe. In the World Justice Rule of Law Index developed by the World Justice Project, Rwanda was ranked the first in Africa and 41st globally in adherence to the rule of law. Despite the efforts already mobilised, there is still room for improvement and it is our expectation that you, graduates, will contribute to the score raising, by applying the skills gained from the programs you have just concluded.

I take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the ILPD Leadership for your tireless effort in the promotion of Law Practice by investing in capacity development and research. It is non-equivocal that this effort has spurred quality service in justice delivery.

The Government also recognizes the contribution of all stakeholders towards capacity development of all actors in the Law Practice and more especially in supporting ILPD towards attainment of its mission. Enhancement of Rule of law to promote accountable governance and a culture of peace for poverty reduction is still a core pillar of NST2 (*National Strategy for Transformation Version 2*) and all of us as actors in the Law Practice, are called to contribute to the achievement of this target. I therefore, commend the work of ILPD staff and all actors who contributed to the capacity building of today graduates.

Permit me to conclude by reiterating the Government's commitment to continue working with ILPD Leadership to gradually overcome academic challenges and ensure the Institute continues to deliver to its mandate.

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The future is not what it used to be. It bristles with new challenges. This generation of graduates with all its energy, questioning, new perspectives and potential for innovation is well placed to meet those challenges. The ongoing efforts of the ILPD to shape and improve legal education are impressive. It is a great endeavor that you all undertake.

I conclude my remarks by wishing you all present a joyful day in the beautiful Nyanza, and particularly wish graduates, success in your professional life ahead.

I thank you!