



SPEECH BY

**THE HON. THE CHIEF JUSTICE
HON. JUSTICE DR. FLAVIAN ZEIJA (PHD)**

**AT THE
COURT OF APPEAL LUNCHEON FOR HONOURABLE JUSTICE FREDERICK
MARTIN STEPHEN EGONDA-NTENDE**

MAY 14, 2026

My Lord, the Hon. The Principal Judge
The Hon. Learned Attorney General,
My Lords the Justices and Judges of the Courts of Judicature,
The Director of Public Prosecutions,
The Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Judiciary,
Your worships present,
The Learned Solicitor General,
Members of the Bar,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good afternoon to you all.

We are gathered here this afternoon to celebrate a long and highly impactful judicial career of Honourable Justice Frederick Martin Stephen Egonda-Ntende as he will be reaching the constitutionally mandated retirement age of 70, very soon.

My Lord, Justice Egonda-Ntende, your retirement in a few months from now, is not merely your personal transition. It is also a moment of deep institutional reflection for the entire legal fraternity.

For over 40 years, you been an active participant in the evolution of Uganda's legal landscape. Your career spans several distinct eras in our nation's history. You served through periods of profound constitutional rebuilding, legal reform, and institutional modernization.

Today we celebrate deep jurisprudence you have built in your long and illustrious judicial career spanning for three and a half decades. From your early days as a High Court Judge and later as a Justice of the Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court, Justice Egonda-Ntende demonstrated a strict adherence to statutory clarity and constitutional boundaries. His approach to the law has always been methodical, analytical, and firmly grounded in the text of the law.

His courtroom has always been managed with a high degree of professionalism. Those who have appeared with him on a panel or appeared before him as practitioners before his court-both senior counsel and young advocates, knew that Justice Egonda-Ntende required thorough preparation, a clear understanding of the facts, and precise legal arguments. He did not tolerate mediocrity nor did he encourage procedural delays. Through this disciplined

approach, he helped raise the standard of legal practice in Uganda, demonstrating that the integrity of the judicial process depends entirely on the discipline of its actors.

The true measure of a judge's career lies in the permanent record of their written judgments. Justice Egonda-Ntende achieved this, with distinction. He has always timely delivered all his judgment throughout his judicial career and his contributions to Ugandan jurisprudence are recorded in the law reports, where his decisions continue to guide students, practitioners, and judges alike. The cases that he determined demonstrate that Justice Egonda-Ntende did not view the law as a static set of rules, but as a living instrument for order, clarity and structural balance.

As you may have heard, the professional life of Justice Egonda-Ntende is notable not only for its domestic impact but also for its international reach. He has been a prominent ambassador for the Ugandan legal tradition, serving in highly complex international judicial missions. He has served as Chief Justice of the Seychelles, Court of Appeal Judge in East Timor and an International Judge in Kosovo. These deployments required him to adapt to diverse legal systems, navigate sensitive political realities, and manage complex administrative challenges, which he did with ease, determination and distinction. This in turn opened many more doors for more Ugandan Judicial officers on regional and international stages.

Long before terms like "e-justice," "virtual courts," and "digital case management" became standard parts of our institutional vocabulary, Justice Egonda-Ntende was already advocating for the integration of technology into the law. His forward-thinking approach was supported by formal academic training, having earned an LLM in Information Technology and Telecommunications.

Justice Egonda-Ntende understood early on, that a modern judiciary cannot operate effectively using 19th-century administrative methods. He recognized that the manual recording of proceedings, physical filing systems, and archaic communication methods were primary causes of court delays and missing files. Throughout his career, he quietly but consistently championed legal informatics, urging the judiciary to adopt automated systems to track cases, store records, and deliver judgments.

Even as he approached the conclusion of his formal service on the bench, Justice Egonda-Ntende has remained an active observer of institutional standards. He has never hesitated to offer constructive critiques regarding the administration of justice in our lower courts.

His Lordship has repeatedly reminded the legal community that procedural guidelines are not mere recommendations; they are constitutional mandates. He has consistently argued that the integrity of the judicial branch is maintained when courts remain fair, predictable neutral zones where the rights of the accused are protected just as firmly as the interests of the state.

My Lord, Justice Egonda-Ntende, although your retirement from the Uganda Judiciary will mark the end of an era, it also establishes a permanent standard for those who follow in your footsteps. You leave behind a clean professional record, a wealth of published jurisprudence, and an institutional legacy defined by discipline, intellect, and international respect. You have completed your statutory course with dignity.

As you step away from the daily demands of the Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court, the Judiciary will continue to look to your published works for guidance. A judge's active service may have a time limit, but their written wisdom does not expire. I request you to remain in the Judiciary home and now help us to reinforce Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) among others.

On behalf of the Judiciary of Uganda, I express our profound gratitude to you for your decades of excellent judicial service. We also extend our thanks to your family, whose support allowed you to serve both Uganda and the international community with such distinction.

We wish you a restful, healthy, and highly productive retirement. We hope you will continue to contribute to legal scholarship and mentor the next generation of African jurists.

I say this, for God and My Country

Flavian Zeija (PhD)
CHIEF JUSTICE