

The LIBERIAN JUDICIARY



JUNE 2024



JUDICIARY LAUNCHES FIVE YEARS STRATEGIC PLAN (2024-2028)



The Supreme Court Bench Republic of Liberia

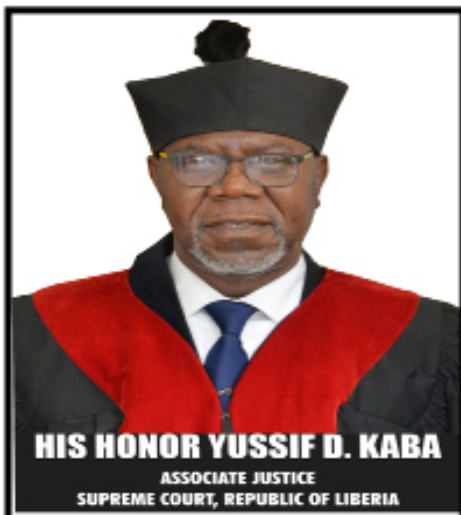


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JUDICIARY LAUNCHES FIVE YEARS (2024-2028) STRATEGIC PLAN



CHIEF JUSTICE, HER HONOR SIE-A-NYENE G. YUOH OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED THE PLAN ON BEHALF OF THE FULL BENCH OF THE SUPREME COURT OF LIBERIA.



This vision encapsulates renewal of the system through addressing systematic weaknesses that have impeded the effective function of the Judiciary over the years.

Chief Justice Yuoh on the occasion of the launch of the Judiciary’s Strategic Plan (2024-2028) on Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at the Ground Floor Hall, Temple of Justice, said the purpose of the plan is to inform the Government of Liberia, national stakeholders, and development partners of the Judiciary’s strategic direction for the next five (5) years.

Chief Justice Yuoh noted that the five years strategic objectives are laid out under the plan as follows: Development of the Judiciary’s infrastructure for improved access to justice (i.e., construction of a new Supreme Court building; construction of 7 circuit court/judicial complexes around the country; construction of 20 magisterial courts around the country; refurbishment and operationalization of 3 sexual offences courts in 3 counties; and digitization of the Supreme Court and all circuit court complexes).

Human capacity development (i. e., capacity development of relevant staff for digitization; continuing judicial education for general capacity development; recruitment and deployment of 30 additional public defenders for increased access to justice, etc.)

A strategic plan, as the name suggests, is a document that defines the vision of an organization or its leaders for the future and identifies the targeted goals and objectives to be achieved. It is a roadmap that guides the development agenda of an institution or organization.

It is public knowledge that the Judiciary over the years has been plagued with multiple challenges ranging from inadequate budgetary allocation to poor infrastructures and human capacity. These challenges have affected the overall performance of the Judiciary as a system.

Upon assuming the helm of leadership of the Judiciary in 2022, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia, Her Honor Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh said, her vision for a new Judiciary under her leadership was crafted into what she referred to as “Rebranding the Judiciary.”

Efficient Case Management for improved access to justice (i. e., development of case management policies and guidelines; rollout of modern case management system in all circuits; and training of relevant staff in case management, etc.)

Improve Administration of Criminal Justice (i. e., reform of the criminal procedure rules and practices; rollout of sexual offences division in other counties; enhanced collaboration with other actors to address issues such as pre-trial detention across the country, etc.)

Improved Constitutional Rights Litigation and Judicial Integrity (i. e. rollout of jury management offices in the remaining 7 counties; review of Supreme Court Rules and Procedures to reduce case backlogs; public awareness on the jury law; address issues of systemic or institutional corruption; developing communication policies to enhance effective judicial information dissemination to improve public confidence in the Judiciary, reviewing the current structures of the Grievance and Ethics Committee (GEC) and Judicial Inquiry Commission (JIC) to develop procedural manuals for effective operation of these two bodies, etc.).

The Chief Justice expressed conviction that the goals and objectives defined in this Strategic Plan, when actualized, will get the Judiciary on a sustained trajectory of reform, never to revert to business as usual.

She asserted that even though her tenure as Chief Justice may not allow her to see the full implementation of this vision, she is confident that those she has in her team will implement it to the fullest.

“Having made these few remarks, I am now pleased, on behalf of the Full Bench of the Supreme Court of Liberia, to declare this 5-year Strategic Plan of the Judiciary (2024-2028) officially launched. The Supreme Court looks forward to working with all of you to ensure that

this plan is fully implemented,” she concluded. The national efforts of all Liberians continue to be dedicated to reconstructing constitutional order, public institutions, and the operation of statutory laws, all of which had been destroyed by bitter years of violent conflict.

The Liberian Judiciary is equally dedicated to playing its part as witnessed in 2018 when the Supreme Court of Liberia was moved to guarantee that democratic elections for presidential office occurred peacefully and in compliance with the rule of law.

Looking ahead, the Liberian Judiciary now recognizes that demand from Liberians for more efficient, effective, and improved judicial services can only be expected to increase and very likely at a rapid pace.

Under the Constitution of Liberia (1986), the responsibility of stating what the law is in Liberia rests on the Supreme Court of Liberia and other subordinate courts of law established by statute.

A central maxim of the rule of law is that: “judicial power is exclusively exercised without impediment by an independent Judiciary.” Our mandate to impartially hear and decide upon the legal disputes brought before the courts buttresses the predictability and impartiality of the law and thereby enforces human rights and other legal entitlements.

For the rights of Liberian men and women to come at the forefront of the rapid political, social and economic changes confronting Liberians, the Judiciary must be prepared to act and serve as their bulwark and protector of fundamental rights.

There is an intrinsic relationship between the rule of law and human rights on one hand and effective administration of judicial services on the other. Under our Constitution, the Chief Justice has the responsibility to oversee the

administration of judicial services in Liberia.

Limited resources, lack of infrastructure, human capital considerations and inadequate financial allocations have perennially undermined the capacity of the Liberian Judiciary to effectively administer the justice system.

This Strategic Plan (2024 – 2028) has been launched to ensure persistent perennial challenges are systematically addressed to optimize durable successes of judicial functions.

Over the next five years, the Judiciary will strengthen its constitutional mandate and enhance the accessibility, responsiveness, and effectiveness of judicial services and operations in a crosscutting approach.

The desired result is that courts become easier, quicker and friendlier to access by court users including persons with disabilities, and other users whose needs for judicial relief are acute. Accompanying action plans set out the benchmarks and responsibilities for implementation.

Even as we are committed to its implementation, it is recognized that the action plans will require budgetary estimates and allocations, hence the plan also serves as a guide for coordination with governmental and donor support for the judiciary.

Achieving judicial excellence is not an isolated exercise or goal; it is an integral part of broader national development initiatives guided by our shared values and norms.

The Judiciary seeks to achieve its constitutional obligations over the next five (5) years, through the rebranding of the Judicial Services for efficiency and effectiveness.

The Judiciary rebranding effort is aimed at enhancing efficiency, effectiveness and professionalism in judicial service delivery as well as heightening public trust and

confidence in the work of the judiciary. The rebranding strategy is based on a two pronged approach, internal and external.

The Internal Rebranding focuses on infrastructure enhancement, legal and administrative reforms and redirecting the behavior of judicial employees on the manner and form of engagement with party litigants and other court users.

While the External Rebranding focuses on marketing and promoting the judiciary Brand through massive public awareness of the functions of the Liberian Judicial System by using the various communication methods and tools to ensure that the Liberian people and other nationals residing in this country are fully educated on the workings of the Judicial system, and its decision-making process.

Rebranding the Liberian Judiciary is expected to produce behavior change in judicial employees and other judicial actors that will lead to efficiency, effectiveness, and enhanced productivity, better engagement with party litigants and other court users thereby building confidence and public trust in the judicial system of Liberia.

This Judiciary Strategic Plan (2024-2028) builds on progress, challenges, and lessons learned from previous Judiciary Strategic plans of 2011-2013 and 2018-2023.

This plan is aligned with the Government of Liberia Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD 2018-2023), the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2020-2024), Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation with Liberia, and other Strategic documents of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Irish Aid, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Federal Republic of Germany.

This Strategic Plan with the theme: “Re-branding the Liberian Judiciary” articulates the vision, mission, and strategic direction of the Liberian Judiciary under the dynamic leadership of its Chief Justice, Her Honour Sie-A-Nyene Gyapay Yuoh, and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of Liberia.

This Plan was formulated through a three-pronged process that included document review, stakeholders (judiciary, donor partners, Ministry of Justice - MoJ, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning – MFDP, Liberia Land Authority – LLA, among others) engagement, and inputs from the Judicial Conferences.

The Plan was further validated at a later stage of the formulation process. During the strategic planning process, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analyses, GAP analyses, and cost projections from the initial project documents developed by the Judiciary.

The overall theme of the Strategic Plan is “Re-branding the Liberian Judiciary” anchored under five (5) Strategic Objectives (SOs) including (i) Quality and Expanded Infrastructure for Improved Access to Justice (ii) A more Professional and Competent Judicial Personnel, (iii) Efficient Case Management for Improved Access to Justice, (iv) Improved Administration of Criminal Justice, and (v) Improved Constitutional Rights Litigation and Judicial Integrity. The total projected cost for this plan is US\$56,347,233.

The expected Government of Liberia (GoL) contribution to the Plan is US\$10,000,000, while the international partners are expected to contribute US\$12,018,909, making a total of US\$22,018,909.

The total budget gap is US\$34,328,324 derived from the variance of the expected budget and the 2 current cash flow of the Judiciary. It is expected that the Judiciary will increase

its advocacy with the Government of Liberia to increase its Public Sector Investment Plan (PSIP) support to the Judiciary in the budget.

Moreover, the Judiciary will engage current donor partners and foster strategic partnerships with other donor organizations to increase support from the international community. These gestures will help narrow the current budget gap.

Full implementation of the Judiciary Strategic Plan (2024-2028) will require close cooperation, coordination, and information exchange between the Judiciary and its internal and external partners.

Key areas for implementation include the Results Framework (RF), Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (MER), Stakeholder Management Plan, Risk Management Plan, and Communication Management Plan.

The key risks associated with this plan are inadequate financial resources (budget gap), limited human resource capacity, political interference, and other management and implementation risks.

The Office of the Court Administrator (CA), supported by the Project and Communications Units, will lead the implementation of the plan in consultation with the Offices of the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court in strategic partnership with the Government of Liberia and its international partners.

The Project Unit will lead the monitoring and evaluation while the Communication unit will lead in communications management and stakeholders engagement.



NATJL HOSTS FIRST EVER HIGH LEVEL MEETING OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES (IAJ)



Her Honor Nancy F. Sammy, Resident Circuit Judge of the 10th Judicial Circuit, Lofa County, and President of the National Association of Trial Judges of Liberia

Trial Judges of Liberia told a news conference on Thursday, May 2, 2024 that delegates at the 2023 Meeting of the African Regional Group of the IAJ held in Bamako, Mali, unanimously selected Liberia as the next venue for its 2024 Annual Rotational Meeting.

Vice President Jeremiah Kpan Koung, at the head of an array of Liberian Government Officials, attended the opening session of the IAJ Meeting on Monday.

A five-day Annual Meeting of the African Regional Group of the International Association of Judges (IAJ) was held at the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Ministerial Complex in Congo Town on Monday, May 6, 2024.

The rotational meeting was hosted by the National Association of Trial Judges of Liberia (NATJL) under the theme: “The Judiciary in Contemporary Times: Dispensing Justice in the New Information Age.” The IAJ is a professional, non-political international organization, and its key objective is to promote the Rule of Law, Access to Justice, Independence of the Judiciary and the Protection of Human Rights.

The organization was founded in 1958 in Salzburg, Austria with headquarters in Rome, Italy. The IAJ currently comprises 98 member countries and representative groups from five continents, with the African Regional Group comprising 20 countries, including Liberia.

Her Honor Nancy F. Sammy, Resident Circuit Judge of the 10th Judicial Circuit, Lofa County, and President of the National Association of

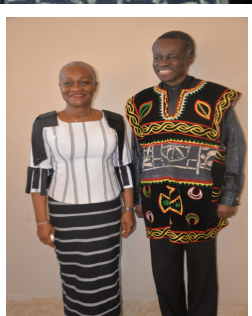
The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia, Her Honor Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh, delivered the keynote address at the Meeting on the topic: “The Impact of the Media on the Public’s Perception of Justice in the New Information Age.”

Among several African Legal Luminaries who attended the annual meeting was professor PLO Lumumba who delivered papers on the topic: “Building Integrity through Positive Actions: A Means of Ensuring an Independent Judiciary.”

Other international delegates at the annual meeting of the IAJ were Judge Marcelle, President of the African Regional Group of the International Association of Judges; Judge Giacomo Oberto, Secretary General of the IAJ.

Her Ladyship Justice Gertrude Araba Esaaba SackeyTorkornoo, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Ghana; Justice Henry Kwofie, President, Association of Magistrates and Judges of Ghana; Justice Olivia Obeng Owusu, Vice President, Association of Magistrates and Judges of Ghana.

CONFERENCE GALLERY



JUSTICE ACTORS SPEAK OUT AGAINST IMPUNITY; CALL FOR ADHERENCE TO THE RULE OF LAW AT BAR ASSEMBLY



Justice actors across Liberia gathered in Monrovia, the nation’s capital, from April 5-6, 2024, for a two-day assembly organized by the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA) to discuss and address the issue of impunity in the country and its impact on the rule of law system.

During the event, prominent justice actors in the country to include, Her Honor Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Liberia; Her Honor Nancy F. Sammy, President, National Association of Trial Judges of Liberia (NATJL); Cllr. N. Oswald Tweh, Minister of Justice & Attorney General of Liberia and Cllr. Tiawan S. Gongloe, a career lawyer and renowned human rights advocate, voiced out their concerns about the prevalent culture of impunity in the Liberian society and stressed the importance of upholding the rule of law.

Cllr. Gongloe, speaking as keynote speaker at the event on the topic: “Addressing the General Question of Impunity in Liberia: The Implication for Liberia’s Rule of Law,” said adherence to the rule of law is crucial to prevent impunity.

Cllr. Gongloe stated that the legal profession los-

es its meaning and relevance if individuals can violate people’s rights without consequences.

According to him, without the rule of law, Liberia would become a lawless society resembling a jungle, where strength dictates survival.

He emphasized that promoting adherence to the rule of law is the only way to ensure sustainable peace, progress and prosperity.

Cllr. Gongloe also asserted that there should be no debate within the legal profession regarding holding individuals accountable for their unlawful actions against citizens and residents of Liberia.

He called on all members of the Bar to support the LNBA’s effort to create awareness about impunity and promote justice throughout the country.

Her Honor Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh, Chief Justice, delivering a special statement on behalf of the Supreme Court of Liberia said it is imperative that all individuals within the country hold sacred the adherence to the rule of law at all times.

Chief Justice Yuoh averred that even when allegations of criminal offenses arise, due process must at all times be accorded those accused. “This right to due process is sacredly embedded in the Constitution,” she emphasized.

The Chief Justice also urged the prosecution arms of the government (Ministry of Justice & LACC) to diligently fulfill their responsibilities to ensure that perpetrators of offences are prosecuted regardless of their statuses or affiliations.

The Chief Justice commended the LNBA through its President Cllr. Sylvester D. Rennie, for the assembly and for also maintaining a cordial working relationship with the Supreme Court of Liberia.

Her Honor Nancy F. Sammy, President, National Association of Trial Judges of Liberia (NATJL) highlighted the public's perception that impunity thrives in the absence of the rule of law. Judge Sammy emphasized the duty of trial judges to promote justice and serve the public interest.

She contended that adherence to the rule of law, as envisioned by the LNBA, is critical to discouraging the culture of impunity and ensuring that the courts remain a forum for promoting justice.

Cllr. N. Oswald Tweh, Minister of Justice & Attorney General of Liberia called on justice actors to intensify their efforts in upholding the rule of law in society.

He expressed concern about the rise in illegal activities, including mob justice, and emphasized the need to change people's mentality towards crime.

Minister Tweh stressed the importance of creating awareness about the rule of law and individual rights, thereby fostering trust and belief in the justice system.

Cllr. Sylvester D. Rennie, National President of the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA), opened the two-day assembly, stating that it fulfilled the bar's constitutional responsibility.

Cllr. Rennie explained that the decision to consolidate several quarterly assemblies into a single gathering was made during a national convention. He expressed that the assembly aimed to address issues pertaining to the growth and development of the organization.

LNBA assembly served as platform for justice actors to unite in their condemnation of impunity and advocate for the adherence to the rule of law in Liberia. Their collective efforts aim to ensure justice, peace, progress and prosperity for all citizens and residents of the country.



JUDGE WILLIE DELIVERS CHARGE ON: “THE NEED TO ESTABLISH A JUDICIARY HONORING COMMISSION”



Resident Circuit Judge, Criminal Court “A” His Honor Roosevelt Z. Willie

The Resident Circuit Judge, Criminal Court “A” His Honor Roosevelt Z. Willie has called for the establishment of a commission/committee that will honor Judges, Magistrates and Staff who will work with distinction, honesty and integrity each year.

Judge Willie, delivering the Judges’ Charge at the opening of the February Term of Court A. D. 2024, at the Temple of Justice, said over the years, the Judiciary has only been applying sanctions to Judges, Magistrates and other staff, whose performance are not in harmony with the goals of the Judiciary; and this mandate of sanctions is carried out through the Judiciary Inquiry Commission.

Judge Willie said when a Judge, Magistrate or staff transgresses the rules governing the courts or departments; he/she is either suspended without pay or in some instances, recommended for impeachment and/or dismissal.

However, Judge Willie noted that there is no Commission established and responsible for positive reward that is known of thus far, where Judges, Magistrates and Staff who have served with distinction, honesty and integrity can be honored at a well-organized year end-program; where a certificate, gown, cash token, increment in salary or promo-

tion to a higher position will be provided as a means of inspiring them and others.

The Judge noted that during the administration of His Honor James E. Jones, President of the National Association of Trial Judges of Liberia (NATJL), in an Executive Committee meeting of the NATJL coined a phrase, “promotion from within the Judiciary” and, this phrase was explained in a communication submitted to the Supreme Court Bench; for the purpose of recommending to the Executive Branch of Government competent and honest Judges and Magistrates with integrity to be promoted to vacancy within the Judiciary.

He further stated that there was also an appeal then to the Supreme Court Bench in that communication that, they should not only forward said recommendation but should make a passionate effort to ensure that the names recommended receive the appropriate appointment from the Executive.

According to the Judge, the recommendation was heeded to; in that, some of the magistrates got promoted to judgeship, while two Judges were elevated to the Supreme Court Bench, but at some point in time, the Bench slowdown on this process.

“We therefore pray your indulgence, your honors, to resuscitate this practice,” he emphasized.

V. P. KOUNG WANTS JUDGES UPHOLD RULE OF LAW



Vice President Jeremiah Kpan Koung Speaks at the IAJ Conference.

Liberia's Vice President Jeremiah Kpan Koung at the start of the first ever high level meeting of the International Association of Judges (IAJ) on Monday, May, 6, 2024, admonished judges to uphold the rule of law and ensure that justice is administered fairly.

Vice President Koung said where the rule of law is not upheld, it breeds discontent which in turn may lead to disruption and instability.

The Vice President, delivering a statement at the 2024 Annual African Regional Group Conference in Monrovia, said judges remain critical to the function of a society, particularly in this new information age.

He said Liberia, under the leadership of President Joseph N. Boakai, has declared the implementation of the Rule of Law as one of its pillars for governance, as enshrined in the "ARREST Agenda."

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia, Sie-A-Nyene Yuoh, in a keynote address, said the low level of confidence in the justice system is due to the uncontrolled nature of social media.

Chief Justice Yuoh raised concern about the impact of social media on public confidence in the Justice system in Liberia.

She emphasized the danger of misinformation and sensationalism spread through social media platforms like Facebook, Tik-tok, Twitter and YouTube, among others.

Speaking on the topic; "The Impact of the Media on the Public's Perception of Justice in the New Information Age," Justice Yuoh said, it is the fact that not all of those reporting and posting have any formal or informal training in mass communication.



PHOTO G

OPENING OF THE MARCH TERM A. D. 2024 OF THE HONORABLE SUPREME COURT



ALLERY

THE LATE JUSTICE NAGBE LAID TO REST



CHIEF JUSTICE CHALLENGES JUSTICE ACTORS TO DISPENSE JUSTICE WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR



The Chief Justice, of the Honorable Supreme Court of Liberia, Her Honor Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh has rallied justice actors to decisively demonstrate that they are efficient, non-corruptible and trust worthy in dispensing justice without fear and favor. The Head of the Judiciary Branch of the Liberian Government made this rallying call in response to a statement made by Liberia’s President, Joseph N. Boakai, during his 2024 State of the Nation Address, that the Justice System of Liberia is corrupt, inefficient and lack public trust.

Chief Justice Yuoh, speaking Thursday, February 1, 2024 at the start of a-three day National Trial Judges Conference at the grounds of the Temple of Justice said, “I call upon all of us judicial actors to take judicial notice of an aspect of the Annual Message by His Excellency President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr., wherein he stated thus: “our justice system which is meant to protect the innocent and punish the guilty has been marred by inefficiency, corruption, and lack of public trust. I am counting on this honorable body to pass legislation and support financial appropriations that will help us win the fight against corruption.”

The Chief Justice expressed further: “we as the Judiciary Branch of Government, partic-

ularly the courts, and keepers of the law, take this statement as a challenge and decisively demonstrate that we are efficient, non-corrupt and trust worthy in dispensing justice without fear and favor.”

Chief Justice Yuoh, in a special remark recognized the judges’ organization’s continuous enhancement of the welfare and well-being of its members.

She recalled that during the formal opening of the March Term A. D. 2023 of the Supreme Court, and speaking to all stakeholders to the electoral process to include political parties, independent candidates, registered voters and the National Elections Commission (NEC), she described the election process in the following:

“...It is an undeniable fact that our election calendar is the most tumultuous and tedious in the history of the Supreme Court. Hence, even in these quiet moments, the storms of election cases/challenges are quietly brewing and gathering strength at the National Election Commission and elsewhere, and is preparing to dash upon the shore of the Supreme Court’s docket like a wave.

...But be that as it may, the Supreme Court, like a light tower in the midst of a storm is well fortified and judicially poised to hear and disposed of all and any elections disputes regardless of the magnitude or underlying currents. We are resolved to dispense justice evenly without fear and favor. The Supreme Court performed this task and duty as mandated by the Constitution and disposed of all elections matters within the time frame of the

law.”

In order to safeguard democratic values in the legal system, the Chief Justice further stated in that address, that “Article 65 of the Constitution vests in the Supreme Court and such subordinates courts as established by the Legislature the judicial power of the Republic.

The said article also provides that judgments of the Supreme Court are final and binding and that they shall not be subject to appeal or review by any other branch of Government.

This provision of the Constitution, she said, has three indispensable features; the judgment of the Supreme Court brings closure and finality to a matter; that the decision is binding on all and sundry including authorities throughout the Republic and lastly that decision of



JUDGES BRAINSTORM ON JUDICIARY & DEMOCRACY; “SAFEGUARDING DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM, ESPECIALLY DURING AND AFTER ELECTIONS”.



About 150 delegates from across Liberia consisting of Magistrates and Judges of the National Association of Trial Judges (NATJL) converged in Monrovia at the grounds of the Temple of Justice for a three-day National Trial Judges Conference from February 1-3, 2024 to brainstorm on the issue of Judiciary & Democracy; Safeguarding Democratic Values in the Legal System, Especially During and After Elections.

Prominent among the delegates attending the three days conference were Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia, Her Honor Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh, Associate Justice His Honor Yussif D. Kaba, Former Chief Justice His Honor Francis S. Korkpor, Sr., Madam Chinyelumugi Okoh, Country Manager/IDLO, Mr. Stephen Rodriguez, Resident Representative/UNDP, Ms. Johanna SuBERU Svanellind/Swedish Embassy, Cllr. Dr. Jallah A. Barbu, Dean/Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law and Cllr. Sylvester D. Rennie, President, Liberia National Bar Association.

Judge Ousman F. Feika Resident Circuit Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit, Grand Cape Mount County, presiding over the Sixth Judicial Circuit Civil Law Court of Montserrado County as the Assigned Judge, in a welcome remark to the delegates said this year the conference delved into a critical theme, “Judiciary & Democracy;

Safeguarding Democratic Values in the Legal System, Especially During and After Elections.”

Judge Feika said over the three days judges are set to engage in thought provoking discussions, exchange valuable insight and explore the pivotal role the Judiciary plays in upholding the democratic principles particularly in the context of elections.

“Our shared commitment to the rule of law and democratic values underscores the importance of this gathering. As we gathered here, let us be mindful of the significant responsibility we have as guidance of justice. The knowledge shared and relationship forge during this conference will contribute to the advancement of our legal profession and the society,” stated Judge Feika.

Cllr. T. Negbalee Warner, Senior Partner of Heritage Partners & Associates, serving as keynote speaker opined that the objective of the theme of the conference is a desire to explore and interrogate what judges and the entire Judiciary can do to safeguard democratic values in Liberia.

Cllr. Warner said reflecting on the aforementioned, there are few observations namely,

“that judges are not politicians that respond to change in political dynamic, party interest, public clamor or fear of criticism during and after elections; that the role of judges on the legal system is to be faithful to the law and fairly apply the law without undue delay; that the role of judges along with the existence of the Judiciary is to safeguard democracy and democratic values through implementation of the rule of law and lastly, judges and the judiciary simply doing their job is sufficient to safeguard democratic values.”

He said these four points of observation have led him to the conclusion that Liberian Judges need not do anything more than what is required; that is, discharging the duty of their office in a manner that promotes and preserve the integrity of the Judiciary thereby promoting public confidence in the Judiciary.

“Efficient, predictable and fair disposition of cases is indispensable to safeguarding democratic values and promotes public confidence in the Judiciary,” Cllr. T. Negbalee Warner, the keynote speaker emphasized.



The Honorable Supreme Court of the Republic of Liberia sitting in its March Term, A. D. 2024 admitted 31 Attorneys-at-Law into the Supreme Court Bar as Counselors-at-Law authorized to practice law before the Honorable Supreme Court of Liberia.

Those Attorneys-at-Law of the Republic of Liberia praying to the Honorable Supreme Court of the Republic of Liberia for admission to the Honorable Supreme Court Bar as Counselors-at-Law are Beyan G. Mulbah, Sedia Williams Wollor, Tarlo N. Wehyee, Darren L. Domah, Alvin Weagar Yellowway, Abraham B. Garpeh, Sr., Emmah W. Sumo, Lawrence Tomah, James B. Kaba, Sr., William Gbaye Saygah, Augustine Wloba Williams, Harriet Kamara Wilson and Alvin Teage Jalloh.

Others are Paul Yeenie Harry, Deddeh K. Zaza, Johnstone G. McGill, Robert G. K. Freeman, Mac John Saie, Powell M. Duahn, Korpo Sumo Tomah, Joseph M. Tegli, Adolphus Taylor, Julius Ronnie Addy, Jr., Alexandra Tonieh Talery Wiles, Garrison Doldeh Yealue, Jr., Nadia Sartus Kamara, Mayalan Keita Brown and Saifuah-Mai Gray.

The admittance of the 31 Attorneys-at-Law as Counselors-at-Law of the Supreme Court Bar took place at the Temple of Justice on Friday, June 14, 2024. In attendance at the program were Cllr. J. Fonati Koffa, Speaker of the 55th National Legislature, justice actors, families, friends and well-wishers of the Attorneys-at-Law.

Cllr. G. Moses Paegar, Chairman examination committee, thanked the Supreme Court Bench for giving the examination body the opportunity to serve the Judiciary. He presented to the High Court the thirty-one candidates who successfully passed the Supreme Court Bar test.

The Full Bench of the Honorable Supreme Court of Liberia upon receiving the candidates (Attorneys-at-Law) administered the oath to them; they were gowned and thereafter; they individually greeted the Court.

Her Honor Jamesetta H. Wolokollie Associate Justice, on behalf of the Supreme Court delivered the opinion for the admission of the thirty-one successful Attor-

neys-at-Law into the Supreme Court Bar.

Justice Wolokollie said the Supreme Court, having convened and reviewed the petitions filed on behalf of Attorneys-at-Law, and upon being satisfied, forwarded the names of sixty-three Attorneys-at-Law to the examination bodies for appropriate testing.

Justice Wolokollie further stated that sixty-three Attorneys-at-Law, having been examined by the examination bodies; the names of thirty-one successful Attorneys-at-Law were submitted for admission into the Supreme Court Bar.

“It was adjudged that the prayer contained in the petitions filed on behalf of the successful Attorneys-at-Law for admission as Counsellors-at-Law of the Supreme Court is hereby granted,” the Associate Justice noted.

The Clerk of the Court was then ordered to issue to each Counsellor-at-Law a Counsellor Certificate with signature of the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, certifying that these Counsellors-at-Law are authorized to practice law before the Honorable Supreme Court of Liberia.



SUPREME COURT ASSOCIATE JUSTICE JOSEPH N. NAGBE LAID TO REST WITH A STATE FUNERAL



The fallen Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia, His Honor Joseph N. Nagbe has been laid to rest in a state funeral organized by the Government of Liberia through the Judiciary.

The state funeral of His Honor Joseph N. Nagbe, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Republic of Liberia took place at the Trinity United Methodist Church in New Kru Town, Bushrod Island, on Thursday, April 11, 2024.

The program was well attended as President Joseph Nyumah Boakai led an array of government officials; also in attendance were past officials to include former Vice president Jewel Howard Taylor, the bereaved family members, well-wishers, sympathizers and friends.

The Resident Bishop of the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Bishop Samuel Jerome Quire Jr. delivered the funeral discourse from the text John 19:30 under the theme: “It is Finished.”

Bishop Quire in his sermon said the Associate Justice death means “It is Finished,” because he shall no longer worry over the struggles of this world.

The bishop stated that throughout Justice Nagbe’s earthly journey, he lived for mankind and positively impacted the lives of too many people.

President Joseph N. Boakai, paying tribute



on-behalf of the Executive Branch of Government, said his friendship with Justice Nagbe dated back in the 52nd National Legislature when they both worked in the House of Senate.



The Liberian leader described the fallen Justice as a kind hearted person and a servant-leader, who was committed and dedicated to serving the Liberian people.



The leadership of the Liberian Senate, representing both current and former Senators, consoled the bereaved families and the Judiciary, especially the Supreme Court Bench.



The Senate leadership speaking at the funeral of the fallen Justice revealed to the bereaved families that their father (Justice Nagbe) served as Chairman on one of the most important committees (Judiciary Committee) and ensured that good laws were passed for the betterment of the country.

The Senate Leadership than called on the bereaved families to be proud of the great work and service their father rendered to the nation before his demised.



Her Honor Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Liberia, in a tribute on behalf of the Judiciary Branch of Government recalled the good and close working relationships members (Justices) of the Court had with each other.

Chief Justice Yuoh said the fallen Associate Justice Nagbe had a positive working attitude in ensuring that justice is served to anyone who sought justice at the Supreme Court of Liberia.

The Chief Justice expressed that the Bench was saddened and heartbroken about his death, noting that the entire Judiciary will miss Justice Nagbe and his services to the Liberian Judiciary.

Justice Nagbe, a native of Sinoe County; was admitted into the Supreme Court Bar as Coun-

selor-At-Law in 1998; a practicing lawyer of twenty (23) years before the courts of Liberia.

The late Justice Nagbe prior to joining the Supreme Court Bench in 2019, served the Liberia Senate for thirteen (13) years before replacing former Associate Justice Kabina Ja'neh on the Supreme Court Bench.

Justice Nagbe, a result-driven professional, served as a Teacher, Administrator, Lawmaker, and lawyer providing over thirty-nine years of effective professional services in teaching, lawyering and lawmaking in Liberia.

Justice Nagbe was laid to rest at the St. Moses Ever Green Cemetery in Po-River, Bomi County.



LNBA PREXY: “UP GOVERNMENT’S ALLOTMENT OF A MEAGER US\$17 M TO THE JUDICIARY IS DISSERVICE TO THE RULE OF LAW”



Cllr. Sylvester D. Rennie, President of the Liberia National Bar Association (LNBA)

The Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA) has expressed concern over the US\$17million budgetary allocation for the Judiciary, describing it as a disservice to the rule of law.

LNBA’s President, Cllr. Sylvester D. Rennie indicated that the rule of law, as captured under President Joseph Nyuma Boakai’s ARREST Agenda, should have been a priority of the new administration.

However, the allotment given to the Judiciary in the 2024 national budget speaks contrary to that fact.

“To allocate such a very low amount for the Branch of Government which has compelling priorities while ordinary agencies under the Executive are allocated more money in their budgets is a disservice to the rule of law sector, which undermines access to justice,” Rennie said at a press conference in Monrovia on Monday, June 10, 2024.

Cllr. Rennie, explained that Liberia, as a constitutional system of government, with separation

of powers and check and balances, “cannot function as intended if the Judiciary Branch is not sufficiently resourced,” stated the LNBA President.

He continued: “we asked that the Legislature acknowledges the nature and importance of the work of the courts and the impact this work has on the society and our democracy by providing the third Branch with the necessary resources to carry out its activities.”

The LNBA’s president emphasized the vital role of the Judiciary in upholding the rule of law and highlighting the need for sufficient resources to support the operations of the Judiciary branch of government.

The LNBA’s boss pointed out that the Judiciary’s limited budget allocation could hinder access to justice and impede the functions of the courts throughout the country.

Cllr. Rennie underscored the need for adequate funding the Judiciary to maintain essential services, such as the Public Defenders Program, which provides legal representation to indigent clients.

“The Judiciary needs funding to maintain existing services, like the Public Defenders Program, in which lawyers are hired under its budget to cater mainly to indigent clients around the country,” he said.

He noted Public Defense lawyers have not had incentives for the past years to strengthen and capacitate themselves in the work they do and in the attempt to incentivize them; it is just proper that the budget is increased.

Also, despite the Judiciary being responsible for the salaries of all Public Defenders and the capital and recurrent expenditures of all the country’s courts and institutions, its budget cannot be a meager US\$17 million.

He raised concerns about the dispari-

ties in budget allocations among the three Branches of Government, noting the substantial difference in funding level.

President Rennie voiced the need for a more balanced and realistic budgetary appropriation to ensure the Judiciary can effectively fulfill its constitutional mandate and provide essential judicial services to the Liberian people.

The Bar’s President wonders why there is a huge gap between the amounts allotted to the three branches of government, which are equal under the law.

Cllr. Rennie stressed that to have a more functional judiciary, there must be realistic budgetary appropriation made to the Judiciary, to enable it render the kind of judicial services expected of it.

LAWYERS PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT BUILDS PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE JUDICIARY....SAYS DUX OF THE SUPREME COURT BAR EXAM



Cllr. Beyan G. Mulbah, Dux of Supreme Court Bar examination

The Dux of the Supreme Court Bar Examination 2004, Cllr. Beyan G. Mulbah admonished lawyers to exhibit high level of professionalism, noting that lawyer’s conduct and professionalism contribute to building public confidence in the rule of law and the Judiciary.

ry, thus helping in the rebranding of the Judiciary, and by extension the legal profession. Cllr. Mulbah, speaking Friday, June 14, 2024 on behalf of the lawyers admitted as members of the Supreme Court Bar, said as it has always been required; the judiciary requires a collective effort of all justice actors to keep the torch of the Judiciary burning.

“Our compliance to upholding the rule of law should be reflected in our activities so that ordinary citizen will begin to see, appreciate and trust the judicial system of our beloved country,” noted Cllr. Mulbah.

He expressed that given the tremendous and intense public scrutiny of the Judiciary, which supposedly implies loss of public trust, it is time for the Judiciary to consider rebranding.

He stated, “this rebranding process of the Judiciary depends on us, lawyers, magistrates, judges, justices and court’s staffs, as well as all ambassadors of the Judiciary. How each and every one of us perform our duties and apply the works we do in the Judiciary, not only help in dispensing justice but could help in building the people’s confidence in the judicial system.”

According to him, the rebranding process of the Judiciary, in order to gather public trust and respect for the courts, goes from a lawyer remaining civil and respectful to a court even when he/she disagrees with the ruling of the court, to a judge being temperate when he/she is addressing a lawyer and fellow member of the bar as required in Judicial Canon Ten.

He said admission to the Supreme Court’s Bar comes on the heels of the Court’s quest to rebrand the Judiciary and boost public confidence in the working of the Liberia court system by improving court administration, upholding the rule of law, harnessing judicial independence and promoting access to justice for all without fear or favor.

The Dux of the Supreme Court Bar Examination highlighted that by admission to the Court’s Bar, they have become torchbearers of the legal profession and officers of the Court as well as carry the responsibility of what their admission entails.

He called on the newly admitted counselors to obey those professional rules that will regulate their practice of the law.

Those professional rules governing the practice are based on the standards of honesty, integrity, respect and courtesy which the public, the court, and fellow practitioners are entitled to expect.

He added that nothing is more essential to the growth, stability, effectiveness and continuity of a country than the independence of the nation’s court and the ability of the independent court to uphold the rule of law.

Cllr. Mulbah therefore said lawyers and other judicial actors have the responsibility to aid the court, but with the court being the primary institution responsible for this task. He intoned that it is the running of the Judiciary with such independence, integrity, accountability and legal control that provides consistency, progress and the continued stability for the nation.

“As newly admitted Counselors-At-Law to the Supreme Court Bar, the onus equally falls on us to take up our own shares of duties, obligations and responsibilities to conduct ourselves, our practice before the courts of Liberia and our demeanor in society in such a way that the legal profession is seen and known as a reputable, dignified and prestigious profession,” Cllr. Mulbah stated.

The Dux then called on the newly admitted counselors to know, acknowledge and appreciate that the milestone achieved comes with enormous responsibility to the Judiciary and the justice system.

ADMISSION IN PICTURES



CIVIL LAW COURT MAKES MORE STRIDES IN ADJUDICATING CASES



The Assigned Judge of the 6th Judicial Circuit, Civil Law Court, Montserrado County, Her Honor Golda A. Bonah Elliott, has revealed more strides in adjudicating cases assigned to the Civil Law Court during the March Term A. D. 2024.

Judge Elliott, delivering her Charge at the opening of the June A.D. 2024 Term of Court said the number of hearings during the March Term increased by five percent (5%) from the December Term.

Judge Elliott, speaking Monday, June 17, 2024, said these hearings consisted of conferences, dispositions of laws issues, motions and trials.

“At least fifteen final judgments were entered in matters involving Ejectment, Divorce, Summary Proceeding to Recover Possession of Real Property, Cancellation Proceedings, and Declaratory Judgments amongst others,” she noted.

She stressed that notwithstanding these progresses, the court still faces many challenges which impact the speedy dispensation of justice and hinders the quest in creating an effective and efficient justice system.

The Judge intoned that ensuring an effective and efficient judicial system requires proper funding of the Judiciary to ensure that person-

nel and logistical needs of the courts are met. According to her, adequate funding of the justice system helps to improve the quality of services and the decision made.

“While we do our utmost to ensure that rights are adjudicated in a timely and speedy manner, we cannot overlook the immense workload Judges have to undertake with very minimum resources,” she emphasized.

The Judge expressed that in the current dispensation, Circuit Judges are without the aid of a law clerk and must on their own, review case files and make notes; conduct legal research, review minutes and prepare rulings; all this while ensuring that the court is being run to ensure that matters are assigned and heard on time.

She pointed out that this, quite frankly, puts a lot on the Judge and hinders the Judge’s capacity to hear and disposed of more cases within a Term.

Judge Elliot said despite the challenges, Judges of the Sixth Judicial Circuit remain committed to their duty to serve the people and dispense justice in the most efficient manner and ensure that the quality of their decisions creates and drives a positive shift in the public’s perception of the Judiciary.

Liberian Lawyers' Interest Projected At International Conferences in Washington D. C., USA & Cotonou, Benin



LNBA President, Cllr. Sylvester D. Rennie, & Secretary General, Cllr. Bornor M. Varmah.

The Leadership of the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA), has participated in two international events on rule of law in both Washington, D. C., United States of America (USA) and Cotonou, Benin respectively where Liberian lawyers' interest was projected at these events.

LNBA National President, Cllr. Sylvester D. Rennie, at the invitation of the World Bank, participated in the Justice and Rule of Law Global Forum to foster inclusive and Sustainable Development at the World Bank's Headquarters in Washington, D. C., USA.

The event was organized by the World Bank's Governance Global Practice and brought together over two hundred (200) partners, leaders and practitioners from governments, judiciaries, the private sector, academia, civil society, foundations and other international development organizations working in the areas of justice and rule of law.

The forum aimed to foster dialogue and collaboration within the broad ecosystem of stake-

holders to elevate the role of justice reform.

The LNBA in a press release says the World Bank's organized event lasted from June 25 to 26, 2024.

In a related development, the Bar also participated in the General Conference of the West African Bar Association (WABA) in Cotonou, Benin Republic.

The Bar was represented by its National Secretary General, Cllr. Bornor M. Varmah. The 2024 Annual Conference of WABA took place from June 25 to 28, 2024.

The LNBA says, the 2024 Annual Conference of the West African Bar Association was held to adopt a new constitution and hold elections for the new corps of officers of WABA.

The two events according to the LNBA's release were sponsored by the World Bank and the United Nations Regional Office for West Africa respectively.



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Web: www.judiciary.gov.lr | Email: info@judiciary.gov.lr/pio.judiciary.gov.lr | Contacts: Cllr. Darryl Ambrose Nmah, Sr. Director of Public Information&Strategic Planning /Managing Editor - 0886458993, Zito F. Slebah, Deputy Director, Public Information/Chief Editor-077648370, Paypay P. Mulbah, Public Information Officer for Media Relations/Editor-0770633504, Flomo Wolobah, Layout Artist/Web Master-0777374974, Kortee D. Smith, Media Officer-0777940758, Jandy P. Okai, Office Assistant-0775395910