Client Service Charter

June, 2012
This Client Charter is in line with the current Judicial Service Commission’s Corporate Strategic Plan. It spells out the service standards and commitments that the public (Clients) and stakeholders should expect.

It lays down a framework of key activities to operationalise the plan. This is a social contract between Judicial Service Commission (JSC) and the public.

It explains the services which the Judicial Service Commission offers, sets out expected standards and gives a mechanism for feedback and handling complaints.

This Client Charter recognises the fact that JSC is a service organization whose offices we hold in public trust and therefore, we are accountable to the public.

In line with the National Development Plan (2010/11-2014/15), the JSC as part of the wider Justice, Law and Order sector (JLOS) is tasked with the mandate of improving the status of Human Rights in the administration of Justice.

The Judicial Service Commission therefore, commits itself to: achieving the objectives stated in this Charter; implementing the commitments and standards spelt out; and providing a platform for the promotion of the core values of integrity, transparency and accountability.

Come, partner with us!

Hon. Justice James Ongoola
CHAIRMAN, JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION
Preamble

The Judicial Service Commission recognizes the importance Government attaches to Client Service Charter as a means of committing the Public Service towards a more client focused approach. This is vital for improving efficiency and effectiveness.

The performance and accountability of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) are crucial for the success of Government programmes such as the National Development Plan (NDP) and individual organizational plans like the Judicial Service Commission 5 Year Strategic Plan (2010 –2014).

The need to develop a Client Charter is also in line with one of the Key strategic objectives of the third phase of Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) that is, enhanced performance, transparency and accountability by the Public Service organization.

The main functions performed by the JSC are:

a) Recruitment of Judicial Officers.
b) Disciplining Judicial Officers.
c) Conducting civic education and awareness on law and administration of Justice.
d) Conducting research and development.

The Client Service Charter defines the mandate of the Judicial Service Commission and highlights the services it offers, its stakeholders as well as mechanisms of redress where there are complaints. The Charter also outlines the key result areas, core values, and commitment to continuous improvement of its service delivery.

The Judicial Service Commission commits itself to the delivery of quality service to its stakeholders and to constantly maintaining and evaluating its performance in the quest for national development.

Kagole. E. Kivumbi
SECRETARY, JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION
Introduction

The Judicial Service Commission is an independent body established by the 1995 Constitution. It derives its mandate, functions and composition from Articles 146-151 of this Constitution.

MANDATE

The mandate of the Judicial Service Commission is derived from Article 147 of the Constitution and they include but not limited to:

- Recruitment and appointment of Judicial Officers.
- Receiving and making recommendations for appointing judicial officers.
- Preparing and implementing programs of Public education and for the dissemination of information about Law and the administration of Justice.
- Receiving and processing recommendations and complaints concerning the Judiciary and the administration of Justice.
- Advising the Government on ways of improving the administration of Justice.

VISION

Our vision is: **An effective and efficient Judiciary in Uganda and contribution to the promotion of Law and order.**

MISSION.

Our Mission is: **To establish and maintain an independent and efficient machinery for administering Justice for all through recruiting, training and disciplining Judicial officers; promoting public awareness and access to Justice.**
1. CORE VALUES

The Values that will guide the implementation of this Charter are:-

a) Independence.

We shall act independently without any directives and control of any person or authority.

b) Impartiality.

We shall serve all clients without fear, favor, ill will or prejudice.

c) Integrity

We shall provide services that are reflective of the best practices that adhere to high moral and professional standards; and the behavior and conduct of staff shall exhibit and promote high standards of confidentiality, and of judicial and personal integrity.

d) Propriety

We shall conduct ourselves in a manner consistent with a public office and as such, freely and willingly accept appropriate personal restrictions; and shall serve our Clients with openness and sincerity.

e) Equity

We shall ensure that all our clients receive equal protection before the law, and are accorded equal treatment without discrimination.

f) Competence and diligence.

We shall produce performance outputs that are of high quality, necessary for the proper and competent discharge of duty and observe professional ethics and practices while carrying out our obligation and functions in order to offer maximum satisfaction to our clients.
g) **Transparency.**

We shall be as open as possible about the decisions and actions taken.

h) **Teamwork**

We shall see to it that individuals work together to accomplish more than they could do alone but in a more exciting, enabling, satisfying and enjoyable way.

i) **Accountability**

We shall ensure that there is responsibility, accountability and liability on issues of accountability.

j) **Professionalism**

We shall adhere to the tenets of the Public Service Code of Conduct and Ethics, high degree of competence and best practices.

k) **Fairness**

We shall be just to all and ensure equity to all our clients.

## 2. THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Overall objective is:

**Ensuring that all persons in Uganda have access to justice through improved Judicial Services and civic education.**

a) **Short Term Objectives**

- Filling of the vacant posts declared by the Judiciary, with competent and disciplined officers.

- Interfacing with Judicial Officers in the promotion of Law and administration of Justice.

- Managing Public awareness programme to sensitize
the public about the administration of justice and fundamental human rights.

- Managing an accessible public complaints mechanism through which the public can easily channel their concerns and recommendations about the administration of justice.

- Research into the delivery of services within the judiciary with the aim of adequately advising the Government on the best ways of improving the administration of justice.

b) Medium Terms Objectives

- Ensuring that the terms and conditions of service of Judges and other Judicial officers are regularly reviewed.

- Professionalizing the Lower Bench by upgrading all positions of Magistrate Grade two to Magistrate Grade one.

- Developing National Standards for the administration of Justice in Uganda.

c) Long Term Objectives

- Ensuring that justice is impartial, affordable and easy to access for all persons.

- Strengthening Judicial Integrity.

- Achieving appropriate working conditions for judges and other Judicial officers.
3. KEY RESULT AREAS

The Commission’s principal services and commitments set out for its clients are as follows:-

a) Advice Tendered

We shall tender sound, timely and quality advice to;

- The President, in appointing the Chief Justice, Principal Judge, Justices of the Supreme Court, Justices of Appeal, Judges of High Court and Registrars.

- The responsible Minister, in appointing the Chairperson and Members of the Uganda Communications Commission.

- Government on the improvement of the administration of Justice.

- The Minister responsible for Energy on the appointment of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Registrar of the Electricity Disputes Tribunal.

- The Minister responsible for Finance on the person to be appointed as Chief Judge of the Industrial Court.

b) Appointments And Confirmations Made

We shall;

- Within three months of receiving complete submissions, appoint, confirm and promote Judicial officers on merit and in line with established procedures and guidelines.

- Source vacancies and advertise them both internally and externally. We shall ordinarily fill vacancies within three months from the closing date of the advertisement.
• Handle submissions for direct filling of vacancies, confirmation and study leave within two months from the date of receipt of complete submissions.

• Ensure that candidates are provided with a conducive environment, handled with respect and made to feel at home while doing interviews.

• Ensure that both successful and unsuccessful applicants/candidates are informed about the outcome of their interviews within two months after the exercise.

c) **Education And Public Affairs Enhanced.**

We shall;

• Print posters about anti – corruption and distribute them to the public once every quarter after publication.

• Review and translate citizens’ handbooks into one local language at least once every year.

• Disseminate Citizen’s Handbooks within one month after publication.

• Disseminate Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials on law and administration of Justice within two months after publication.

• Carry out one day civic education programmes in at least four Government prisons each year.

• Hold three interactive one-hour electronic media talk shows, once every quarter.

• Run spot messages on selected radios around the country, on law and administration of Justice for a minimum of three times per day and three days per week.

• Carry out five sub county workshops at least once a month.
d) Planning Research and inspection enhanced.

We shall;

- Place a suggestion box at every District head quarter within twelve months after the creation of the district.
- Place suggestion boxes in 20 Town Councils and 10 sub countries within a period of one year.
- Open and collect suggestions/complaints placed in 20 suggestion boxes once in every quarter.
- Acknowledge receipt and advise on complaints and recommendations from suggestion boxes within ten working days after receiving them.
- Inspection of at least three Chief Magisterial areas every quarter.
- Carry out research and advise Government on key result areas towards improvement of the administration of justice once every year.
- Dispose of disciplinary action against all cases reported within a period of three months and those of complex nature, within six months.
- Complete investigations on complaints within 60 working days.
- Hold disciplinary committee meetings at least two times a month.
- Communicate the final outcomes of complaints to all parties within ten working days after the decisions are made.
- Publicize the outcomes of the disciplinary action for dismissed judicial officers in print media within one month after the Commission’s decision.
- Print complaints User Manual and distribute them to the public at least once every year.
• Carry out 20-half day district based fora on corruption in the administration of justice.

• Carry out half day sub-county fora on corruption in the administration of justice at least once a year.

e) PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We shall;

• Hold Commission meetings at least once a month.

• Prepare accurate half yearly performance reports for submission to the Office of the Prime Minister.

• Prepare and submit timely quarterly reports on absenteeism to the Ministry of Public Service before the 15th day of the month after the period under review.

• Hold Heads of Department meetings every Monday.

• Hold Senior Management meetings once a month.

• Hold Top Management meetings once a quarter.

• Submit returns on JSC staff performance Appraisal to the Ministry of Public Service by the 15th day of September every year.

• Prepare and submit final annual Accounts to the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) by the 30th day of September every year.

• Prepare and submit monthly procurement reports to Public Procurement and Disposal of public Assets Authority.

• Pin on the Procurement Notice Board, a notice of the best evaluated bidder, within two days after the contract award.

• Undertake a prequalification exercise at least once every three years.
f) RECOMMENDATIONS MADE

We shall;

• Tender recommendations to the President on the constitution of any Tribunal to Investigate the removal of a Judge, within one month after the decision of the Commission.

• Assess and research the Training needs of Judges, Registrars and Magistrates.

g) DISCIPLINE AND REMOVAL OF OFFICERS FROM SERVICE

• We shall ensure that the principles of natural justice are adhered to and that cases in respect to discipline are brought to a speedy conclusion in accordance with the relevant regulations of the Judicial Service Commission.

h) FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION SERVICES PROVIDED

We shall;

• Provide optimal support services and logistics to facilitate the work of the Commission.

• Carry out impact assessment, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes of the Judicial Service Commission every quarter.

• Ensure payment for the procurements by the Judicial Service Commission within 30 days after delivery.

• Hold departmental meetings once a month.
4. GENERAL SERVICE STANDARDS

a) Zero Corruption Zone

Corruption is not tolerated by the Commission.

b) Working Hours

Public offices shall be open from 08:00 am to 12:45pm and 2:00pm to 5:00pm except on weekends and public holidays.

c) Reception

There will be signs clearly marked and posted to help our clients go around the Commission.

d) Telecommunication and Customer Care

If you email to the JSC we shall email back to you within 6 working hours, to tell you who is addressing you and how to contact that person. If you write, our response will be made within two working days.

e) Telephone

You can telephone the Commission from 8:00a.m to 12:45p.m and from 2:00pm to 5:00pm our Toll free line is 0800100222.

We shall:

- Answer your call within 30 seconds or tell you the name of the officer answering your call, or try to give a clear and helpful answer.

- If the officer you need to speak to is not available the Commission will suggest a suitable time to call back and also ask that officer to return your call.
5. COMPLAINT MECHANISM AND FEEDBACK

a) The Judicial Service Commission intends to ensure that it meets the client charter standards and welcomes any comments and suggestions for improving our services. It will;

• Act on your complaints and suggestions.
• Carry out customer satisfaction survey.
• Review the Client’s Charter standards on regular basis

b) Suggestion Box

• There is a suggestion box situated next to the reception area for your use.

c) Fees

• The Commission normally provides services free of charge, but where a fee is charged, an official receipt will be offered.

6. OUR CLIENTS

The JSC clients include but are not limited to;

• Citizens of Uganda
• The Parliament of Uganda
• All Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of the Government.
• All JLOS institutions
7. CLIENTS’ RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Our clients have a right to;

- Be treated fairly courteously and with respect
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Lodge complaints regarding the conduct of Judicial Officers, the administration of justice, and judicial services staff.
- Appeal decisions made against them in accordance with judicial service procedures.
- Receive timely and prompt responses to complaints/ appeals / submissions.

Our clients have the following obligations;

- To provide timely and accurate information
- To treat our staff with courtesy
- To abide by all legal and administrative requirements as provided in the Constitution, various Acts and the Judicial Service Act and Regulations.
- To be honest and fair in dealing with the Commission.
8. FEEDBACK FROM THE CLIENTS

a) The Commission welcomes constructive criticism and feedback about its services. It also welcomes suggestions on how it can improve service delivery. Its clients are free to give feedback in person through the telephone, email, letters, suggestion box, or post office.

b) Complaints Management System

All complaints shall be addressed to the Secretary, Judicial Service Commission. The Commission shall be guided by the Judicial Service (Complaints and Disciplinary Proceedings) Regulations 2005, as amended while attending to complainants and appeals.

9. ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

The JSC commits itself to;

- The implementation of this Charter.
- Regularly review its performance against these commitments.
- Put in place a mechanism for continuous monitoring of performance against its service commitments. The Commission encourages its clients to comment on the Commission’s performance and suggest ways to improve our services.
13. COMMITMENT TO THE CHARTER.

The Commission commits itself to:

- Achieving our objectives
- Ensuring that our clients get expected services herein spelled out.
- Upholding core values and services standards
- Ensuring that we account for our decisions, actions and directives.
For further reference or clarification, please contact the Secretary on the following address:

Judicial Service Commission
Plot 6/8 Parliament Avenue
Farmers House, Ground Floor
P.O. Box 7679
Kampala – Uganda
Tel 256-41-344154
0800100222 (Toll free line)
Email, info@jsc.go.ug

“For God and My Country”
Group photo of JSC staff and commissioners, 13th-14th June 2012