



THE 21ST EAMJA CONFERENCE AND AGM REPORT

2ND – 7TH DECEMBER 2024, GRAN MELIÁ HOTEL, ARUSHA, TANZANIA



**THEME: STRENGTHENING JUSTICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS FOR REGIONAL
INTEGRATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	i
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	iii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iv
THE CONFERENCE	3
SESSION 1: Opening Ceremony	3
1.1 Remarks by the Hon. Justice John Eudes Keitirima, President of the East African Magistrates' & Judges' Association (EAMJA).....	4
1.2 Remarks by the Regional Commissioner-Arusha.	4
1.3 Remarks by the Minister of Constitutional and Legal Affairs.....	5
1.4 Remarks by the Hon. Justice Prof. Ibrahim Hamis Juma, Chief Justice of Tanzania	5
1.5 Opening Speech by Hon. Kassim Majaliwa Majaliwa(MP), Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania.....	6
SESSION 2: Judiciary-Led Reforms in EA as a Recipe for Court Efficiency and Economic Growth-Criminal Justice	9
2.1 Enhancing Judicial Foundations: Courts as Cornerstone of the Criminal Justice Chain.....	9
Presentation by the Hon. Mohamed Chande Othman, Former Chief Justice of Tanzania.	9
2.2 Interactive Plenary Discussion.....	10
SESSION 3: Judiciary-Led Reforms in East Africa as a Recipe for Court Efficiency and Economic. Growth-Civil Justice.....	13
3.1 Civil Justice Reforms: Re-engineering the Business Processes to enhance Efficiency in Justice Delivery.	13
Hon. Justice Ocharo Kebira, Judge of the High Court, Employment and Labour Relations Court, Appeals Division Bench in Kenya	13
3.2 Interactive Plenary Discussion.....	14
SESSION 4: Enhancing Labour Dispute Settlement Resolution Systems to Foster a Favourable Investment Environment in EA.	14
4.1 Harmonisation of Labour Laws and Court Jurisprudence in East Africa to	

Improve Dispute Resolution.	15
4.2 Interactive Plenary Discussion.....	15
SESSION 5: Leveraging Technology for Access to Justice and Legal Services in EA.	16
5.1 Interactive Plenary Discussion.....	17
SESSION 6: Strengthening Adjudication of Cases on Transnational Organized Crimes and Illicit Cash Flows in EA.....	19
6.1 Interactive Plenary Discussion.....	19
7.0 RESOLUTIONS	19
8.0 CLOSING CEREMONY	22
9.0 EAMJA Annual General Meeting and Election	23
10.0 SIDE EVENTS	26
10.1 Sports Bonanza.....	26
10.2 Cocktail and Gala Dinner	27
10.3 Excursion.	29

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADR:	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AI:	Artificial Intelligence
ATE:	Association of Tanzania Employers
CEO:	Chief Executive Officer
CJ:	Chief Justice
DR:	Deputy Registrar
E JOPRAS:	Electronic Judicial Officers Open Performance Review Appraisal System
EA:	East Africa
EAC:	East African Community
EAMJA:	East Africa Judges and Magistrates Association
eCMS:	Electronic Case Management System
Hon.:	Honourable
ICC:	International Criminal Court
IECMS:	Integrated Electronic Case Management System
IJC:	Integrated Justice Centre
IPP:	Immediate Past President
JMAT:	Judges' and Magistrates' Association of Tanzania
KMJ:	Kenya Magistrates' and Judges' Association
NPS:	National Prosecutions Services
RJRA:	Rwanda Judges and Registrars' Association
UJOA:	Uganda Judicial Officers' Association
ZAJOA:	Zanzibar Judicial Officers' Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The East African Magistrates' and Judges' Association (EAMJA) draws membership from the organizational bodies representing magistrates and judges in the four East African countries, namely; Kenya Magistrates' and Judges' Association, (KMJA), Uganda Judicial Officers' Association, (UJOA), Judges' and Magistrates' Association of Tanzania (JMAT), and Rwanda Judges and Registrars Association (RJRA).

The East African Court of Justice and Zanzibar Judicial Officers' Association (ZAJOA) are associate members of EAMJA. The association has just introduced individual membership. EAMJA organises rotational Annual Conferences for its members to meet, share and determine various issues of common interest. This year, Tanzania had a great privilege to host the 21st EAMJA Annual Conference at the Gran Meliá Hotel, in Arusha, from 2nd to 7th December 2024. The theme for this Conference was "Strengthening Justice Delivery Systems for Regional Integration and Economic Growth."

The conference comprised six experience-sharing sessions with different topics including Judiciary-Led Reforms in East Africa as a recipe for court's efficiency and economic growth – Criminal and Civil Justice. Other topics included: enhancing labour disputes settlement resolution systems to foster a favourable investment environment in East Africa (EA); leveraging technology for access to justice and legal services in EA; and strengthening adjudication of cases on transnational organised crimes and illicit cash flows in East Africa.

This year's theme was named as relevant and useful by the guests

and participants. Challenges hindering the effectiveness of the justice system were discussed such as an increasing number of non-bailable offences, resistance to change, insufficient funds, poor drafting of charge sheets, failure to bring files on time and prison overcrowding, among others. It was advised on leveraging the use of Information and Communication Technology in justice delivery, engaging in Alternative Dispute Resolution, the cautious use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to align with the legal frameworks, and improving training for judicial officers in the use of alternative sentencing options.

The resolutions from the conference were strengthening judicial independence and governance, promoting regional judicial collaboration and inclusivity, enhancing judicial capacity through technology and innovation, reforming and modernising criminal justice systems, expanding access to justice through business process reengineering, promoting judicial reform and performance metrics, and harmonization of labour law for a favourable investment environment in the EAC.

The Conference was attended by 399 delegates from the 7 Judiciaries in the East African Region with Burundi gracing the conference with their presence for the first time. The attendance was as follows: Burundi 2, EACJ 12, Kenya 83, Rwanda 43, Tanzania 116, Uganda 109 and Zanzibar 34.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st EAMJA Conference and AGM is a premier regional event that brings together judicial officers, legal practitioners, and stakeholders from East Africa. This annual gathering serves as a platform for discussions on contemporary legal challenges, judicial reforms and best practices aimed at strengthening the rule of law and justice systems within the region.

The conference typically provides a unique opportunity for networking, knowledge sharing and collaboration among member states, and fostering regional integration and cooperation in the administration of justice.

The AGM segment is dedicated to reviewing the association's achievements, discussing governance matters and planning future initiatives to enhance the judiciaries' effectiveness in East Africa. The event underscores the shared commitment to upholding justice, promoting judicial excellence, and addressing emerging legal issues in the dynamic landscape of the 21st century.

At a glance, day one began with the arrival of delegates, registration and a council members' meeting. Day two marked the first day of the conference, which commenced with a grand opening by His Excellency Hon. Majaliwa Kassim Majaliwa, the Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania, followed by panel sessions. The day was concluded with a cocktail party at Mount Meru Hotel. Day three was the second and final day of the conference, starting with presentations and discussions from the panels, followed by a closing ceremony harmoniously conducted by Her Excellency Dr. Tulia Ackson, Speaker of the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania. Again,

the day ended with a delightful dinner Gala at Mount Meru Hotel.

Day four featured the EAMJA AGM and elections, followed by the EAMJA Sports Bonanza at the Aga Khan University Sports' Ground. Day five offered an excursion, where delegates enjoyed the beauty of Tanzania by touring the magnificent Ngorongoro Crater. On the final day, delegates departed for their home countries.

THE CONFERENCE

SESSION 1: Opening Ceremony

1. 1. Remarks by the Hon. Justice John Eudes Keitirima, President of the East African Magistrates' & Judges' Association (EAMJA).



The opening ceremony commenced with remarks from the EAMJA President. He stressed the pivotal role of EAMJA in empowering judicial officers across the East African region and addressed the importance of the conference as a platform for knowledge sharing, collaboration and addressing challenges faced by judicial systems in the region. He further noted that, the EAMJA plays a crucial role in fostering judicial independence, enhancing capacity building and unifying judicial officers to address common regional challenges.

The EAMJA President, quoting Martin Luther King Jr., emphasized that *"injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere"*. He expressed his appreciation for the conference's potential to provide mentorship and foster lasting friendships. The President encouraged delegates to consider EAMJA lifetime membership. Additionally, he thanked the Association for the trust they had placed in the Council, referring to it as a *"dream team"*.

1. 2. **Remarks by the Regional Commissioner-Arusha.**



Hon. Elisha Mtengerwa, a District Commissioner of Arusha made remarks on behalf of Hon. Paul Makonda, the Regional Commissioner of Arusha Region. He accentuated the role of the judiciary in promoting peace, stability

and economic development across the EAC. Hon. Mtengerwa underscored the importance of a fair, efficient and independent judiciary as a foundation for regional integration and public trust. He urged judicial officers to uphold impartiality, professionalism and the rule of law in their daily functions.

Mr. Mtengerwa addressed the need for technological advancements in justice systems to improve access and efficiency. He called for stronger collaboration among East African nations to address transnational crimes such as human trafficking, cybercrime and corruption, which pose threats to economic growth and social stability.

1. 3. **Remarks by the Minister of Constitutional and Legal Affairs.**

On the other hand, Prof. Palamagamba Kabudi, the Tanzania's Minister of Constitutional and Legal Affairs, remarked on the judiciary's essential role in maintaining peace and ensuring public confidence. He stated that, the judiciary is a pillar of peace and trust, the society look to the courts with the



assurance that justice will prevail. This trust must remain unshaken. The Hon. Minister observed that, the Association is a furtherance of the spirit of the EAC. He pledged the Tanzania government's support to enable the judiciary to perform its duties effectively, asserting the importance of a robust justice system in fostering economic growth and regional integration within the EAC.

1. 4. Remarks by the Hon. Justice Prof. Ibrahim Hamis Juma, Chief Justice of Tanzania



In his remarks to welcome the participants before inviting the Chief Guest to deliver his opening speech, the Hon. Chief Justice urged the importance of sufficient funding for national judiciaries, stating that such support is essential for maintaining a democratic and peaceful environment conducive to political, social, cultural, economic and technological activities. He underscored the need for judiciaries to enhance their justice delivery systems, aligning with the conference theme of strengthening justice for regional integration and economic growth.

Furthermore, the Hon. Chief Justice appreciated the opportunity to host the conference and wondered

whether the biggest delegation was that of the hosts-Tanzania or Uganda. He called upon the governments to dedicate sufficient resources to the judiciaries, noting that their work leads to regional integration and economic growth. He stated that such meetings offer an opportunity to learn and exchange. While acknowledging the presence of judicial protocols, the Hon. Chief Justice encouraged the delegates to interact freely during the conference in order to share knowledge and experiences.

Moreover, he implored the judiciaries to invite Magistrates from remote and difficult areas to attend such conferences for learning and motivational purposes. He called upon delegates to use the opportunity to build professional, social and cultural ties. The Hon. Chief justice also encouraged the delegates to explore the city of Arusha by night and behold its beauty.

1. 5. Opening Speech by Hon. Kassim Majaliwa Majaliwa (MP), Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania



The Conference was officially opened by the Hon. Prime Minister on behalf of Her Excellency, the President of

the Republic of Tanzania Hon. Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan.

The Hon. Prime Minister expressed gratitude to God for enabling the participants to gather in Arusha. He conveyed heartfelt greetings from the people of the United Republic of Tanzania and extended warm regards to the presidents of the member associations, led by the President of EAMJA. The Hon. Prime Minister noted that such gatherings provide a valuable opportunity to analyse the challenges faced by judiciaries and finding joint solutions that enhance legal systems and contribute to development through integrated justice. He also encouraged the judiciaries to strengthen institutional capacity by adopting modern technologies to ensure the timely delivery of justice.

In his speech the Hon. Prime Minister also noted that, the government of Tanzania believes access to justice contributes to Vision 2025 and therefore, offers its full support to initiatives meant to foster access to justice and efficient justice delivery.

Showcasing the government's commitment, he stated that in 2023, the Hon. President of the United Republic of Tanzania appointed a Criminal Justice Commission to review and reforms in the Criminal Justice System. And, currently the Judiciary of Tanzania and the government are working on implementing the Commission's recommendations to promote economic growth and equitable development through modernizing criminal and civil justice systems. The Hon. Prime Minister ended his speech by encouraging the delegates to take the time and appreciate the beauty of Tanzania, including the Serengeti National Park, the

Ngorongoro Conservation Area, the Olduvai Gorge, the Islands of Zanzibar which are renowned for variety of spices, fish and white sandy beaches, and Mount Kilimanjaro – the highest mountain in Africa. Finally, he declared the conference open and wished the delegates a successful and fruitful conference.



SESSION 2: Judiciary-Led Reforms in EA as a Recipe for Court Efficiency and Economic Growth – Criminal Justice.

2. 1. Enhancing Judicial Foundations: Courts as Cornerstone of the Criminal Justice Chain.



Presentation by the Hon. Mohamed Chande Othman, Former Chief Justice of Tanzania.

Hon. Othman, delivered a presentation spotlighting the crucial role of an independent judiciary in upholding the rule of law and ensuring fair and impartial justice. He argued that, without judicial independence, the courts cannot effectively perform their function impartially. In his presentation, Hon. Othman addressed several challenges that threaten judicial independence, including political interference, insufficient funding and limited resources. He stressed that these obstacles must be overcome to allow the judiciaries to operate effectively.

To strengthen judicial independence, Hon. Othman proposed several strategies. These include implementing institutional reforms to protect the judiciary from external influences, enhancing capacity building through continuous training for judicial officers, and ensuring adequate financial resources are allocated to the judiciary. He then called for the need for regional collaboration among East African countries to share best practices, harmonize legal frameworks and

address common challenges collectively. In conclusion, he reiterated that ensuring judicial independence is essential for maintaining a fair and effective justice system, which is critical for regional integration and economic development.

2. 2. Interactive Plenary Discussion

During the Interactive Plenary discussion Hon. Viola Muthoni, Resident Magistrate from Kenya emphasized the importance of continuous judicial reforms to improve court efficiency and accessibility. She discussed efforts to reduce case backlogs and enhance the quality of justice. Hon. Muthoni noted the necessity of ongoing training for judicial officers to equip them with the skills needed to address emerging legal challenges effectively. She also advocated for the adoption of modern technologies such as digital case management systems, streamlining court processes, improving transparency and facilitating access to justice. She concluded by stressing the importance of regional collaboration among East African countries to share best practices, harmonize legal frameworks and collectively address common challenges faced by the judiciary.

The second discussant, Hon. Justice Tadeo Asiimwe, Judge of the High Court of Uganda also spoke on judicial reforms, the importance of continuous training for judicial officers and the role of technology in enhancing court's efficiency. He discussed the need for ongoing reforms to reduce case backlogs and improve the quality of justice. He pointed out the necessity of building judicial capacity through training to help judicial

officers address emerging legal challenges effectively. Likewise, he advocated for the integration of modern technologies.

Additionally, Hon. Asimwe focused on enhancing judicial foundations and the role of courts in the criminal justice system. He emphasized the importance of integrating community service into sentencing as a means to reduce prison congestion and promote rehabilitation. He discussed judicial reforms, advocating for the establishment of specialized courts, such as Fast Track Courts for gender-based violence cases, to expedite case resolution and minimize backlogs and the need for continuous capacity building for judicial officers to ensure that they are equipped to handle complex criminal cases. He finally called for stronger regional cooperation among East African countries to combat transnational crimes by sharing resources and best practices.

On the other hand, Hon. Justice Ruth Mukakalisa Judge of the High Court of Rwanda shared insights on Rwanda's experience with judicial reforms, particularly the integration of ADR mechanisms to enhance access to justice. She discussed the integration of ADR mechanisms into the judicial process by stating that ADR methods such as mediation and arbitration could help alleviate court congestion, expedite case resolution and make justice more accessible to the public. Hon. Mukakalisa also highlighted the importance of continuous training for judicial officers which is necessary to improve their skills to effectively handle complex legal cases. She stressed the need for building public trust and confidence in the judiciary

through transparency, accountability and public engagement.

Moreover, Hon. Mukakalisa discussed the value of regional collaboration among East African countries to share best practices, harmonize legal frameworks and collectively address common challenges faced by judiciaries. In her discussion she reaffirmed that courts have to play a vital role in delivering justice, promoting regional integration and contributing to economic growth.

The last discussant was Hon. Justice Aisha Sinda, Judge of the High Court of Tanzania. Her discussion focused on the importance of enhancing judicial foundations within the East African region. She avowed the need for continuous judicial reforms to improve court efficiency and accessibility, discussing strategies aimed at reducing case backlogs and ensuring timely justice.

Hon. Sinda brought into light the importance of capacity building, advocating for ongoing training and professional development of judicial officers to better address emerging legal challenges. She further stressed the integration of modern technologies in court operations, such as digital case management systems, streamlining processes, enhancing transparency and improving access to justice. She also underlined the importance of regional collaboration in sharing best practices, harmonizing legal frameworks and addressing common challenges.

SESSION 3: Judiciary-Led Reforms in East Africa as a Recipe for Court Efficiency and Economic. Growth – Civil Justice.

3. 1. Civil Justice Reforms: Re-engineering the Business Processes to enhance Efficiency in Justice Delivery.

Presentation by Hon. Justice Ocharo Kebira, Judge of the High Court, Employment and Labour Relations Court, Appeals Division Bench in Kenya.

In this session, Hon. Kebira presented on the vital role of the judiciary in fostering justice and regional integration. He highlighted the evolving challenges facing judicial officers in East Africa, particularly in upholding judicial independence, addressing cross-border legal issues and navigating contemporary technological and economic developments.

Hon. Kebira's presentation also focused on strategies to enhance judicial capacity and collaboration among East African states, including leveraging shared legal frameworks and emphasizing the importance of continuous education for judicial officers. He also pointed out the need for regional judiciaries to adopt innovative approaches to justice delivery to support economic growth and integration. He further underlined the judiciary's role in maintaining public trust and promoting rule-based governance across the region.

3. 2. Interactive Plenary Discussion

The first discussant was Hon. Khadija Shamte Mzee, Judge of the High Court of Zanzibar. She emphasized on the need for constant judicial reforms in East Africa to improve the efficiency and accessibility of the judicial system. Hon. Mzee rallied on the importance of simplifying procedures, reducing delays and ensuring timely delivery of justice. She discussed the necessity for ongoing professional development for judicial officers, pointing out that continuous training would help courts manage increasing caseloads and address the complexities of modern legal disputes. A major part of her contribution focused on the integration of technology in court operations.

Hon. Mzee also advocated for digitalizing court systems, such as e-filing and digital case management. She stressed on the importance of ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status have access to justice through legal aid services and making court services more accessible.

The second discussant was Hon. Justice Umugwaneza Geraldine, Judge of the Court of Appeal, Rwanda. She highlighted the importance of unity among members to strengthen the judiciary across East Africa by organizing training programs, promoting judicial independence and fostering regional cooperation.

SESSION 4: Enhancing Labour Dispute Settlement Resolution Systems to Foster a Favourable Investment Environment in EA.

4. 1. Harmonisation of Labour Laws and Court Jurisprudence in East Africa to Improve Dispute Resolution.

The presentation was made by Ms. Suzanne Ndomba, CEO – Association of Tanzania Employers.

Ms. Ndomba emphasized the importance of harmonizing labor laws among East African countries to facilitate a unified approach to resolving labor disputes. She noted that while complete uniformity may not be achievable due to the unique legal frameworks of each country, there are areas where harmonization is feasible such as maternity leave policies, which are influenced by International Labour Organization agreements. Ms. Ndomba also highlighted the benefits of harmonization in areas like employment contracts, working hours, wages, benefits, social security, non-citizen rights, termination procedures and labor rights, including freedom of association and anti-discrimination measures. She pointed out that, judges have already begun considering the laws of other countries in their decisions, citing examples from Tanzanian Court of Appeal cases.

4. 2. Interactive Plenary Discussion

Hon. Lady Justice Linda Lillian Tumusiime Mugisha, Judge of the High Court at Uganda was the first discussant. She addressed the critical need to tackle case backlogs and enhance the quality of justice, advocating for more effective systems to ensure quicker and fairer trials. Hon. Mugisha stressed the importance of consistent training and development for judicial officers to equip them with the skills necessary to

navigate emerging legal complexities. Additionally, she encouraged the adoption of modern technologies in court operations, such as digital tools for case management, which could streamline processes, improve accountability and make justice more accessible. She also pointed out the necessity for closer cooperation between East African nations to exchange best practices and harmonize legal processes, helping the region to address shared challenges more effectively.

The Second discussant was Hon. Dr. Priscah Wamucii Nyotah, Senior Resident Magistrate from Kenya who averred that, while achieving a single, uniform law across all partner states may be challenging, it is possible to harmonize specific provisions related to labor issues. For instance, she marked the importance of aligning regulations concerning the minimum working age for children, suggesting that harmonization could involve agreeing on the provisions related to such issues.

SESSION 5: Leveraging Technology for Access to Justice and Legal Services in EA.

Hon. Ingabire Solange, Court Registrar, Judiciary of Rwanda presented on the role of electronic case management systems (eCMS) in improving court efficiency. She explained that eCMS are designed to automate and digitally streamline case management, replacing manual processes. This shift helps courts process cases faster, reduce reliance on paper and improve overall efficiency.

Moreover, she stated the benefits of eCMS including enhanced court efficiency, improved access to justice through easier information

retrieval and cost savings by reducing physical storage needs. Hon. Solange also stressed the importance of planning for successful implementation, such as assessing infrastructure readiness, providing staff training and ensuring data security. While acknowledging potential challenges such as resistance to change and technical issues, Hon. Solange suggested solutions such as seeking external support among East African countries to share best practices and improve the overall effectiveness of their judicial systems.

5. 1. Interactive Plenary Discussion

Hon. Kiongo Kagenyo, Magistrate from Kenya was the first discussant in this session, whereby he discussed improvement of the case management within the East African judicial systems. He stated the importance of adopting modern case management practices, particularly the use of the IECMS, which is to streamline court processes, reduce delays and enhance efficiency.

Furthermore, Hon. Kagenyo, emphasized the necessity of continuous training for judicial officers and court staff to effectively use these systems. He advocated for establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of IECMS and make necessary adjustments. Lastly, Hon. Kagenyo focused on the importance of engaging all relevant stakeholders, including, legal practitioners and the public, to ensure a comprehensive approach to case management.

The second speaker of the session was the Hon. Desdery Kamugisha, who heads Case Management in Tanzania. With a visionary outlook, Hon. Kamugisha emphasized the urgent

necessity of embracing contemporary case management techniques. He passionately described the sweeping changes unfolding within the judiciary, such as the automation of court processes and the online availability of laws and case references. He illustrated the judiciary's support to stakeholders through innovative services like e-wakili, e-JOPRAS, and the Court Brokers and Process Servers Management System. Delving into the workings of the eCMS, he explained how every step—from case admission and docket numbering to billing, payments, hearings, and inter-court transfers—has made the leap into the digital realm. He highlighted advanced security measures in court documents with authentication features like digital seals, signatures, QR codes, and SMS notifications for stakeholders. Notably, Hon. Kamugisha pointed out that court registries are open around the clock, allowing entities like the National Prosecution Services to e-file indictments seamlessly. Moreover, he marveled at the business intelligence engine, a data hub generating valuable case statistics for judicial and non-judicial personnel. Data from eCMS and related systems are beautifully visualized in the judiciary's 'situation room', where real-time monitoring of court activities takes place. He underscored the importance of continuous training, ongoing surveillance, and evaluation of case management practices to address emerging challenges and refine operations accordingly.

The last discussant was Hon. Justice Kathurima M'Inoti Weka, Judge of Appellate Division at East African Court of Justice (EACJ) who emphasized on how the adoption of such systems can streamline court operations by automating and digitizing

case filings, tracking and management. This shift helps reduce delays and backlogs, allowing courts to handle cases more swiftly.

SESSION 6: Strengthening Adjudication of Cases on Transnational Organized Crimes and Illicit Cash Flows in EA.

Hon. Lady Justice Susan Okalany, Deputy Head, International Crime Division, Uganda presented on adjudicating transnational crimes in East African courts, focusing on the legal framework and jurisdictional challenges. She emphasized the need for a strong legal framework that aligns national laws with international standards to effectively address transnational crimes. Hon. Okalany pointed out the challenges courts face in asserting jurisdiction and highlighted the importance of clear legal provisions to guide these decisions. The presenter also shared insights into Uganda's International Crimes Division (ICD) and its role in handling transnational crime cases. She stressed the importance of specialized training for judges and court staff to manage these complex cases effectively.

6. 1. Interactive Plenary Discussion

Hon. Eugene Pascal Nabwana, Senior Resident Magistrate from Kenya discussed the challenges of adjudicating transnational crimes in East African courts. He emphasized the importance of having a strong legal framework that aligns national laws with international standards to address such crimes effectively.

Hon. Nabwana further highlighted the difficulties courts face in determining jurisdiction, particularly when crimes involve multiple countries. He pointed out that clear legal

provisions are essential to help courts assert jurisdiction in these complex cases. The presenter also discussed the role of specialized courts in handling transnational crimes and stressed the need for continuous training for judges and court staff to effectively manage these cases.

The last discussant for this session was Hon. Dr. Justice Didace Nshimiyimana, Judge of the High Court of Rwanda who discussed about the complexities courts face in determining jurisdiction, especially when a crime is committed across multiple countries. He pointed out on the importance of clear legal provisions to guide jurisdictional decisions in such cases. Hon. Nshimiyimana also discussed the role of specialized courts in handling transnational crime cases and stressed the necessity for specialized training for judges and court staff.

7.0 RESOLUTIONS

At the end of the sessions, the 21st EAMJA Conference adopted the following resolutions:

1. 0. Strengthening Judicial Independence and Governance

- Noting that in order for judiciaries to carry out their mandated constitutional duties, funding is of essence, the Conference urged governments in the EAC to ensure that Judiciaries are adequately funded.

2. 0. Promoting Regional Judicial Collaboration and Inclusivity

- Noting that the membership of EAC now stands at eight but only four judiciaries of the member states are members

of the EAMJA, the conference urged the four remaining judiciaries of member states to take steps in ensuring that they become members of EAMJA.

3. 0. Enhancing Judicial Capacity through Technology and Innovation

- Judiciaries in EAC to benchmark among themselves on the use of technology already in place to identify the suitable technology for commonality.

4. 0. Reforming and Modernising Criminal Justice Systems

- Judicial officers be trained in the use of alternative sentencing options such as community service, fines and probation with the view to decongesting prisons.

5. 0. Expanding Access to Justice through Business Process Reengineering

- Measures to be taken to simplify rules of procedure and leverage use of ADR mechanisms for case management to reduce case backlogs.

6. 0. Promoting Judicial Reform and Performance Metrics

- Each judiciary to enhance judicial performance systems for improved accountability and efficiency in justice dispensation in the region.

7. 0. Harmonization of labour law for favourable investment environment /within the EAC

- Since movement of labour from one member state to the other is common and since there are areas of differences in the labour laws, they (the laws) should be harmonized in order to improve efficiency in labour dispute resolution for the region's common economic development.

8.0 CLOSING CEREMONY



As all good things do, the Conference came to an end. The closing session was graced by Hon. Dr. Tulia Ackson, Speaker of the Parliament of Tanzania. In her closing remarks, Hon. Dr. Ackson emphasized on the importance of regional cooperation and

collaboration in strengthening judicial systems across East Africa.

She illuminated the significance of embracing technology, including eCMS, to modernize court operations and improve efficiency. Hon. Dr. Ackson encouraged all stakeholders to prioritize innovation and knowledge-sharing to address emerging issues such as transnational crimes, labor disputes and complex legal matters that require regional coordination.

She concluded by applauding the EAMJA leadership and participants for their commitment to fostering judicial excellence, calling for the continued cooperation among East African countries to ensure that judicial systems remain robust, effective and responsive to the needs of citizens. Her closing message was one of unity, progress and a shared vision for strengthening the rule of law across the region.



9.0 EAMJA Annual General Meeting and Election

The EAMJA held its AGM, which started with the President guiding members through the minutes and matters arising from the 2023 AGM held in Uganda. The minutes were confirmed and adopted after minor corrections. The next item on the agenda was the election of new council members, and the following individuals were elected as the 2024–2026 EAMJA Council Members:

1. Hon. Lady Justice Umugwaneza Geraldine (RW) - President
2. Hon. Lady Justice Lilian Jonas Itemba (TZ) - Vice President
3. Hon. Justice John Eudes Keitirima (UG) - IPP
4. Hon. Justice Kizito Magare (KE) - Secretary General
5. Hon. Meshack Rurangwa (RW) - Vice Secretary General
6. Hon. Dorothy Sempala Lwanga (UG) - Treasurer
7. Hon. Charles Nchore Ondieki (KE) - Vice Treasurer

8. Hon. Mutandzi Matovelo (TZ) - Publicity Secretary
9. Hon. Jonard Tusasirwe (UG) - Vice Publicity Secretary
10. Hon. Justice Ilvin Mugeta (TZ) - CMJA Representative
11. Hon. Justice Yohane Masara (TZ)- EACJ Representative
12. Hon. Justice Radido Stephen (KE) - President, KMJA
13. Hon. Justice John Kahyoza (TZ) - President, JMAT
14. Hon. Justice Harrison Mutabazi (RW) - President, RJOA
15. Hon. Lady Justice Olive Kazaarwe Mukwaya (UG) -
President, UJOA
16. Hon. Lady Justice Salma Ali Hassan (ZnZ) - President,
ZAJOA
17. Hon. Muktar Salat Billow (KE) - Council Member
18. Hon. Ingabire Sophie (RW) - Council Member
19. Hon. Justice Dr. Angelo Rumisha (TZ) - Council Member
20. Hon. Patience Koburunga (UG) - Council Member

SECRETARIAT

1. Hon. Theresia Sedoyeka (TZ) - Head of Secretariat



After the election, the new President of EAMJA, Hon. Lady Justice Umugwaneza Geraldine, Judge of the Court of Appeal - Rwanda, expressed her gratitude to the delegates for their trust, emphasising her commitment to advancing the association's objectives.

She also discussed plans to enhance the association's activities, including organising training programmes, promoting judicial independence, and fostering regional cooperation. She implored the newly elected leaders to guide EAMJA in its mission to improve the administration of justice across the East African region.

Her remarks were concluded with the presentation of awards to the outgoing council members for their outstanding work during their term (2022 –2024). At the AGM, the EAMJA delegates resolved that the next Conference and Annual General Meeting would be hosted by Kenya.

10.0 SIDE EVENTS

10.1. Sports Bonanza

The delegates also participated in a sports bonanza featuring games of football, netball, tug of war, African mancala (bao), chicken chase and card games. An egg and spoon race was part of the events as were track and field events such as sprints, middle-distance and a relay race.





10. 2. Cocktail and Gala Dinner

The Organising Committee, under the excellent leadership of the Hon. Chief Justice of the United Republic of Tanzania, hosted a cocktail and gala dinner at Mount Meru Hotel. This event provided delegates with the opportunity to meet in a relaxed environment, enjoy nyama choma, drinks, and music, while mingling and getting to know each other.





10. 3. Excursion.

The EAMJA delegates took part in an excursion to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA), renowned for being home to the big five and a revered UNESCO heritage site. Established in 1959, the area is a multiple land-use zone where wildlife coexists with semi-nomadic Maasai pastoralists practising traditional livestock grazing. The delegates were fascinated by the magnificent views of the landscape and the diverse wildlife in the region. Many described the excursion as nothing short of spectacular and breathtaking.

Moreover, the delegates expressed their satisfaction and shared their thoughts. One delegate remarked, "I have always dreamed of visiting the Caldera, known as the Ngorongoro Crater. It has been a wonderful experience to visit it with you, following an excellent EAMJA Conference and a successful AGM. I will cherish these memories and hope we meet again soon. Thank you for your dedicated service to EAMJA and its members."

Another delegate shared additional kind words, saying, "It was truly refreshing and the winding roads, both ascending and descending, were breathtaking—especially for those of us with a fear of heights. A special thanks to JMAT and CJ for making this possible."





