

ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE, THE HONOURABLE

G.G. CHIDYAUSIKU

ON

THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE JSC-ICJ-EU SUPPORT

PROGRAMME

AND THE INTERIM REVIEW OF THE JSC STRATEGIC PLAN

AT

HARARE

ON

15 MAY 2015

Your Excellency, Head of Delegation of the European Union,

The Deputy Chief Justice.

Judges of the Constitutional and Supreme Courts,

The Judge President, Judges,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Commissioners ,

Members of the Judicial Service,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today marks yet another happy day in the calendar of the Judicial Service Commission. We celebrate today the cementing of relations between the Judicial Service Commission and the European Union.

As I was preparing for today, I had occasion to walk down memory lane and looked back to June 2010 when the Commission received its current mandate.

Then, we were not quite clear as to how we were going to achieve the various goals and objectives that we had in mind. We were, however, very clear that the Judicial Service Commission had to provide efficient and effective administration to the judiciary and to the courts.

Funding then, as is still the position today, was not readily available. When the International Commission of Jurists, which was sponsoring the SADC Chief Justices Forum, of which I am a founder member, offered to assist us with the financing of our training programs, I readily welcomed the idea. That was the beginning of a relationship that has grown stronger each year.

The International Commission of Jurists has assisted among other issues with funding to develop rules for the various courts and I am happy to say that we are well on our way to coming up with Rules for the Constitutional Court. As you all know, this is a court that was created as a separate court by the Constitution in

2013 with a broader mandate than was enjoyed by the Constitutional Court under the repealed Constitution. It is therefore important that we define the rules that govern not only access to that court but the procedures that need to be adopted in that court.

After developing Rules for the Constitutional Court, it is our intention to align the rules of all the courts to the new Constitution. The ICJ has assured us of continued funding for this very necessary exercise.

I cannot enumerate the many exchange programmes and visits that our judges and court administrators have benefitted from through facilitation by the ICJ. You have heard the full details of our engagement with the ICJ from the representative of the ICJ who has spoken before me.

I concur with all his remarks.

I have given this long narration of the relationship between the Judicial Service Commission and the ICJ not to embarrass the ICJ but to explain that is because of this cordial relationship, based on trust and mutual respect, that has resulted in today's events.

In 2014 the ICJ approached the Judicial Service Commission and indicated that the European Union had some funding that it could make available, through their mediation, for the implementation of the JSC Strategic Plan. I then directed the secretariat to indicate the areas of priority within the Strategic Plan that needed to be addressed. As usual, the list presented to me was very long but we finally agreed on three areas. These were:

- The interim review of the Strategic Plan;
- Resuscitation of the Judicial College; and

- Structured training of judicial and non-judicial officers by the Judicial

College of Zimbabwe, of which I happen to be the Chairperson.

You have now heard the full details of the co-operation between the Judicial Service Commission and the European Union from His Excellency the Head of the European Union Delegation.

Your Excellency, allow me on behalf of the Judicial Service Commission, the Judiciary and on my own behalf, to express our sincere gratitude to you and to the European Union for your generosity. What is heartwarming about the program that we are launching today is not necessarily the monetary value of the support program, which is quite generous, but the realisation by the European Union that of the players in the Justice Sector the Judicial Service Commission is worthy of support. This support by the European Union is being availed to us

notwithstanding that we are already in receipt of handsome support from Denmark, itself a member of the European Union.

Your Excellency, allow me to digress a little and say something about the Judicial College.

The Judicial Service Commission views the Judicial College as a strategic and pivotal institution for improving the technical capacity of all Judicial and non-Judicial members through continuous training and development. The College will always play an important role in the Justice Sector, through the provision of knowledge and skills development to members in the sector.

For the period ranging from 2000 to 2007 the Judicial College received budgetary support from Treasury through the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. Due to the constrained economic environment Treasury has been unable to fund the College, rendering it dormant for the past 7 or 8 years. Resuscitation of

the College will not only benefit the Judicial Service but will also benefit but other key players like the National Prosecuting Authority, Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services, the Attorney-General's Office and the Zimbabwe Republic Police.

It is my fervent hope that the resuscitation process will start sooner rather than later now that funding has been made available. We in the Judicial Service Commission have always cherished the position where all the key stakeholders in the Justice Sector are equally empowered and resourced.

I must also mention one significant aspect on the relationship between the Judicial Service Commission and the European Union through the mediation of the ICJ.

We were asked to identify our own priority areas. These were not imposed on us. This gesture Your Excellency, which shows respect for our independence, lays a

solid foundation for the successful implementation of the project and any future relationships that we may contemplate.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that we cherish the generous and well-meaning support that the European Union has agreed to provide us. We in turn wish to assure our partners that we will put such support to good use and add value to the administration of Justice in the country.

The first priority area of co-operation between us and the European Union has already borne fruit. The five year Strategic Plan that we developed in 2012 has been reviewed.

I take this opportunity to thank all of you who participated in the review process in one way or another. Your contributions validated our key priority areas and sharpened our focus on those areas where we may have been lagging behind.

With these few remarks, it is my honour to launch the Judicial Service
Commission Interim Review of the Strategic Plan.

I THANK YOU