SPEAKING NOTES FOR HON.MR.JUSTICE ISAAC LENAOLA

AT THE JUDICIARY OF UGANDA JUDGES' ANNUAL RETREAT IN MUNYONYO,

KAMPALA ON 2-4 JANUARY 2026

SUBJECT: INTEGRATING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EFFECTIVE CASE MANAGEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

- The Judiciary, guided by the principles of fairness, equality, and expeditious legal processes as envisioned by the *Social Transformation through Access to Justice (STAJ)* Blueprint, is committed to upholding the rights enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya.

- Article 48 emphasizes the right to accessible and expeditious justice, while Article 159 underscores the need for the Judiciary to administer justice promptly. In line with these constitutional mandates, STAJ's mission is to ensure that no court case exceeds three (3) years in a Trial Court or one year in an Appellate court, demonstrating our unwavering dedication to transforming society through efficient access to justice.

- Notwithstanding this commitment, the Judiciary continues to face challenges related to delays in the delivery of judgments and rulings. These delays arise from a combination of systemic and institutional constraints, as well as factors specific to individual judicial officers. The resulting impact undermines access to justice, erodes public confidence in the judicial process, and affects compliance with constitutional and statutory timelines.

- Against this backdrop, this Paper proposes **strategic, ethical, responsible, and controlled adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a supportive, non-decisional tool within the judicial process.**

- **AI is not intended to replace judicial reasoning, discretion, or independence, but rather to augment judicial efficiency** in the organisation, structuring, summarisation, and retrieval of information, particularly in complex matters characterised by voluminous records, multiple parties, and interrelated legal and factual issues.

2. CHALLENGES FACED BY THE JUDICIARY NECESSITATING USE OF AI

- The Judiciary continues to experience delays attributable to both external/systemic and internal/judicial officer–specific factors, including:

2.1 External (Systemic/Institutional) Factors

i. **High caseloads and backlogs** are limiting available time for judgment writing.
ii. **Frequent adjournments** due to late filings and requests for adjournments by advocates.
iii. **Transfers and reassignments**, requiring judicial officers to familiarize themselves with new case files.
iv. **Complex and voluminous matters**, involving multiple parties, extensive records, and technical subject matter.
v. **Limited research, clerical, and ICT support**, compounded by connectivity and power challenges in some court stations.

2.2 Internal (Judicial Officer–Specific) Factors

i. **Time management constraints** between hearings, writing duties, and administrative roles.
ii. **Institutional engagements**, including committees, trainings, and representational assignments.
iii. **Prioritization challenges**, where urgent or new matters take precedence over older pending cases.
iv. **Health and well-being considerations**, including fatigue and stress impacting productivity.

- Despite ongoing administrative and policy interventions, these challenges persist, necessitating innovative, scalable, and sustainable solutions.

3. CURRENT POSITION USE OF AI IN THE JUDICIARY

- In furtherance of the STAJ transformation agenda, the Integrated Court Management Systems (ICMS) Committee has been at the forefront of championing key Artificial

Intelligence-driven initiatives aimed at enhancing judicial efficiency and decision-making. These include:

i. Development of proposed Artificial Intelligence Principles and Guidelines to ensure ethical, transparent, and accountable use of AI within the Judiciary;
ii. Ongoing development of a comprehensive Artificial Intelligence Policy to provide an overarching governance framework;
iii. Ongoing development of a Case Law Database (hakimu.ai) to strengthen legal research and ensure consistency in jurisprudence;
iv. Piloting of AI-supported transcription tools based on the Whisper technology to improve the accuracy and timeliness of court records. Whisper technology an open-source speech recognition (ASR) system trained on 680,000 hours of multi-lingual, multi-task supervised data to transcribe, translate, and identify 99 different languages near human-level accuracy. It excels at handling technical jargon, background noise, and various accents;
v. The development of an Artificial Intelligence Sandbox to facilitate controlled testing and evaluation of emerging AI solutions. An AI Sandbox is a secure, isolated, and controlled environment designed to test, validate, and experiment with AI models, Generative AI (Large Language Models-LLMs), and agents without risking production data or systems. These environments provide a safe space to mitigate security, privacy, and ethical risks while allowing developers and users to explore AI capabilities.
vi. Championing strategic partnerships through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with industry leaders in artificial intelligence to support the Judiciary's journey towards the responsible adoption and integration of AI technologies.

- Collectively, these initiatives reflect the Judiciary's **deliberate, measured, and forward-looking approach** to leveraging AI-supported technology in support of its constitutional mandate and the STAJ vision.

4. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ADOPTION OF AI TOOLS

- The increasing complexity and volume of judicial work necessitate tools that can **reduce cognitive load, administrative burden, and research time** while preserving judicial discretion. Artificial Intelligence, when properly governed, offers practical, low-risk, and high-impact support in judicial workflows without interfering with judicial independence.

AI-enabled tools can support by:

- Rapidly organizing and indexing voluminous case records.
- Summarizing pleadings, submissions, and evidence.
- Mapping issues, parties, facts, and applicable law.
- Retrieving relevant precedents and statutory provisions.
- Tracking pending judgments and aging matters.
- Reducing time spent on administrative and clerical tasks;
- Improving organization of complex case materials;
- Enhancing research efficiency;

Importantly:

- **AI will not be used to generate judgments or make decisions on behalf of the Judges/Judicial officers**;
- All outputs remain **advisory and user-controlled**;
- **Judicial accountability** remains fully with the Judge or Judicial Officer.

- These AI capabilities directly address the identified causes of delay without undermining judicial independence.

5. PROPOSED AI-ENABLED SOLUTIONS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

5.1 Intelligent Document Classification & Indexing

- **Description:**
  AI tools to automatically organize and index voluminous case records within a judicial context. The focus is on supportive, non-decisional use, aligned with judicial independence and data protection requirements.

Capabilities:

- Categorization of pleadings, affidavits, exhibits, submissions, and authorities;
- Arrange documents chronologically or procedurally.
- Auto-generate electronic bundles and pagination.
- Flag missing or incorrectly filed documents.
- Chronological timelines of events and filings;
- Party-based and issue-based document clustering.
- Auto-tag documents by case number, party, advocate, date, and subject matter.
- Detect duplicates and version histories.

Example Tools / Technologies

- AI-powered document management systems (e.g. Natural Language Processing (NLP)-based classifiers).
- Optical Character Recognition (OCR) with machine learning.
- Enterprise content management systems with AI add-ons.
- AI-assisted e-bundling tools.
- Rule-based + machine learning workflow engines.

Judicial Value

- Reduces time spent manually sorting files.
- Improves consistency and accuracy of case records.
- Addresses the complexity of cases.
- Reduces time spent navigating voluminous records.

5.2 AI-Supported Legal Research Assistance

Description:
AI tools to assist in locating relevant statutes, precedents, and comparative jurisprudence.

Capabilities:

- Rapid retrieval of authorities cited by parties;
- Identification of related precedents within Kenyan jurisprudence;
- Organization of authorities by legal issue.

Example Tools / Technologies

- **AI Legal Research Assistants**

  AI-powered search and summarization engines integrated with judicial databases- Tools that analyze statutes, case law, regulations, and precedents to retrieve relevant authorities based on judicial queries.

- **Judgment and Ruling Analysis Tools**

  AI systems that scan prior judgments to identify applicable legal principles, ratios, trends in interpretation, and comparable fact patterns.

- **Document Review and Summarization Tools**

  AI applications that summarize lengthy pleadings, submissions, records of appeal, and exhibits, highlighting key issues and arguments.

- **Citation and Authority Verification Tools**

AI tools that verify citations, flag outdated or overruled authorities, and check consistency across referenced cases.

- **Multilingual Translation and Transcription Tools**

  AI tools that assist in translating legal materials and transcribing proceedings, particularly in multilingual or voluminous records.

Judicial Value:

- Compensates for limited legal research staff;
- Improves turnaround time for judgments;
- Enhances consistency and quality of legal reasoning.

5.3 AI-Assisted Information Retrieval and Search (Semantic Search)

- **Description:**
  Advanced semantic search tools integrated into Case Tracking System, Jumuika-Enterprise Resource Planning, and e-Filing to enable fast and accurate retrieval of relevant information.

Capabilities:

- Search by legal issue, party, date, or keyword;
- Retrieval of relevant documents across large case files;
- Cross-referencing related matters.
- Search by meaning, not just keywords.
- Retrieve documents, paragraphs, or excerpts relevant to a query.
- Identify related documents across multiple filings to curb forum shopping.

Example Tools / Technologies

- Natural Language Processing (NLP) search engines
- AI-powered enterprise search tools integrated with CTS

Judicial Value

- Saves time when reviewing lengthy records.
- Improves access to critical information during hearings and writing.
- Enhances efficiency in judgment writing.
- Mitigates effects of limited research support.
- Reduces delays caused by manual file review.

5.4 AI-Generated Case Summaries and Issue Mapping

- **Description:**
  AI-enabled summarization of pleadings, proceedings, and submissions.

Capabilities:

- Neutral summaries of parties' arguments.
- Identification of key issues for determination.
- Highlighting areas of agreement and contention.
- Generate summaries of pleadings, affidavits, and submissions.
- Extract key facts, issues, dates, and parties.
- Highlight changes between versions of documents.

Example Tools / Technologies

- Large Language Model (LLM)–based summarization tools (secure, on-prem or private cloud).
- Extractive summarization engines.

Judicial Value

- Assists Judges in quickly grasping case history.
- Particularly useful in old or transferred matters.
- Supports time management.
- Assists prioritization of older cases.
- Reduces cognitive load in complex matters.

5.5 AI-Supported Transcription of Court Proceedings

- **Description:**
  AI-supported transcription tools use speech-to-text technology, enhanced with legal and contextual language models, to automatically convert spoken court proceedings into accurate, time-stamped text records.
- These tools can be deployed during hearings to generate near real-time transcripts, which can later be reviewed, corrected, and certified by authorised court staff.

Capabilities:

- Real-time and post-hearing transcription of court proceedings from live or recorded audio/video.
- Speaker identification (Judge, Advocate, Witness, Accused) with time stamps

- High-accuracy speech-to-text with support for accents and legal terminology (with training).
- Multi-source input handling (virtual court platforms, digital audio recorders, courtroom microphones).
- Digitization of handwritten notes through AI-assisted handwriting recognition (OCR/ICR).
- Searchable and editable transcripts for quick reference and corrections.
- Automated formatting aligned to court transcript standards.
- Integration with case Tracking systems (e.g., CTS) for secure storage and retrieval
- Multilingual support with translation where required.
- Audit trails and version control to preserve evidentiary integrity.
- Data security controls including encryption, access logs, and role-based access.

Example Tools / Technologies

- **Speech-to-Text AI Engines**: OpenAI Whisper, Google Cloud Speech-to-Text, Microsoft Azure Speech, Amazon Transcribe.
- **Handwriting Recognition / OCR**: Google Vision API, Tesseract OCR, Microsoft Azure Form Recognizer.
- **Virtual Court Integration**: Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Webex with AI transcription plugins.
- **Legal Transcript Management**: Case management software with AI modules (Clio, iManage, eCourt).
- **Audio & Video Processing Tools**: AI-powered noise reduction, speaker identification, and timestamping tools.
- **AI Summarization Tools**: GPT-based models or NLP libraries for summarizing proceedings.

Judicial Value:

- Improved efficiency by significantly reducing time spent on manual transcription
- Enhanced accuracy and completeness of the court record.
- Faster preparation of rulings and judgments through easy access to verbatim proceedings.
- Reduced case delays and backlogs by accelerating post-hearing processes.
- Consistency and standardisation of court records across stations.
- Improved transparency and accountability through reliable, verifiable transcripts.
- Better appellate review supported by precise and searchable records.
- Reduced administrative burden on Judges, Judicial Officers, and court staff.
- Cost savings over time compared to manual transcription services.
- Support for digital and virtual courts, strengthening continuity of judicial services.

5.6 AI-Enabled Case Progress Tracking and Alerts

Description:

- Intelligent dashboards and alerts for pending judgments and rulings.

Capabilities:

- Automated reminders for aging matters;
- Visual dashboards highlighting pending timelines;
- Prioritization support while preserving judicial discretion.

Example Tools / Technologies

- AI driven Dashboards and SMS Triggers

Judicial Value:

- Addresses prioritization challenges;
- Improves compliance with performance timelines;
  Enhances managerial oversight without interference.

6. GOVERNANCE, ETHICAL, AND LEGAL SAFEGUARDS

- To preserve judicial independence and public trust, the following safeguards are proposed:

6.1 Principles for Artificial Intelligence Adoption in the Judiciary

- The Judiciary's adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is guided by a set of core principles designed to **ensure that technology strengthens rather than undermines justice, constitutionalism, and public trust**. These principles provide a normative and operational foundation for all AI initiatives across courts and tribunals.

1. Legality and Constitutional Alignment

- AI systems must be firmly grounded in the Constitution and applicable laws, including protections for privacy, fair hearings, access to justice, and judicial authority.

- AI **may** support judicial work, but must never override constitutional safeguards or due process. Judges and judicial officers retain final decision-making authority at all times.

2. *People-Centered Access to Justice*

- AI adoption must advance a people-centered Judiciary by expanding access to justice, particularly for marginalized, vulnerable, and remote communities.
- Systems should be inclusive, user-friendly, and sensitive to local contexts, languages, disabilities, and digital constraints, while maintaining alternative non-digital pathways where necessary.

3. *Equity and Non-Discrimination*

- The Judiciary must proactively prevent algorithmic bias and discrimination. AI systems should be trained on representative data, regularly audited, and monitored to ensure equality before the law.
- Clear mechanisms must exist for litigants and court users to challenge or report perceived unfair or biased AI-supported outcomes.

4. *Transparency and Explainability*

- The use of AI in judicial processes must be transparent. Court users should be informed when AI tools are deployed, and AI outputs must be explainable in clear, plain language.
- Explainable AI (XAI) techniques and audit trails are essential to support accountability, appeals, and public confidence, consistent with the Access to Information Act.

5. *Accountability and Oversight*

- Strong governance and oversight structures must guide AI use in the Judiciary. Clear lines of responsibility are required, with judges empowered to override AI recommendations.
- Oversight mechanisms such as committees and audits ensure ethical use, address complaints, and maintain alignment with institutional values and national AI governance principles.

6. *Reliability and Security*

- AI systems must be secure, resilient, and reliable. The Judiciary must safeguard sensitive judicial data against cyber threats, unauthorized access, manipulation, or system failure.
- Regular testing, controlled pilots, cybersecurity monitoring, and compliance with the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act are mandatory.

7. *Judicial Independence and Integrity*

- AI must not erode judicial independence or integrity. Decisions remain the sole preserve of judicial officers, free from external influence by vendors, automated systems, or data providers.
- The Judiciary retains control over its data, systems, and updates, ensuring sovereignty and ethical autonomy in all AI deployments.

8. *Efficiency and Effectiveness*

- AI should be leveraged to enhance efficiency, reduce backlogs, optimize resource allocation, and improve service delivery.
- However, gains in speed and productivity must never compromise procedural fairness, quality of justice, or the right to a fair hearing. Efficiency must reinforce not dilute the rule of law.

7. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Successful implementation will require structured engagement with:

- Judges and Judicial Officers -End-users of AI tools for case support.
- Kenya Judiciary Academy – Partnership in training and capacity building
- Advocates and court users -Beneficiaries of timely judgments.
- Development partners/ Industry -Collaboration for AI tools deployment and capacity building.
- Legal Researchers and Clerical staff -Integration with AI-assisted workflows
- Directorate of ICT/Automation-Technical deployment, maintenance, and support.
- Registrars and Court Administrators -Support in rollout
- Judicial Service Commission (JSC) – AI Policy Approval
- Data protection and ethics oversight bodies – Data Governance
- Engagement will focus on **co-design, sensitization, training, policy approval, and feedback**, ensuring acceptance and responsible use.

8. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

- Artificial intelligence tools require high-performance computing resources, with outsourced cloud resources preferred. Key Components include

Component	Description
Software Licenses	AI Legal Research, Drafting, and Case Analysis Tools
Hardware & ICT Infrastructure (GPUs)	Servers, storage, secure network upgrades
Training & Capacity Building	Workshops, manuals, and support
Maintenance & Support	Annual subscription, technical support

9. CONCLUSION