



SPEECH OF THE HON. THE CHIEF JUSTICE

HON. JUSTICE DR. FLAVIAN ZEIJA (PhD)

AT THE

UGANDA MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

23RD GRADUATION CEREMONY

MAY 08, 2026

The Chancellor, Justice Bart M. Katureebe
The Hon. Minister of State for Higher Education and Sports
Honourable Members of Parliament
The Head of Public Service
Permanent Secretaries
Chairperson and Members of the UMI Governing Council
The Director General
The Graduands
Distinguished Guests in your respective capacities
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a profound honour to join you today as we celebrate the graduating Class of 2026.

To the graduands, this day belongs to you. The gowns you wear, the certificates you will hold, represent years of sacrifice, late nights, and unwavering resolve. On behalf of the Judiciary of Uganda, and on my own behalf, I congratulate you.

To the parents, spouses, and guardians, your investment of time, resources, and prayers has not been in vain. Today, Uganda reaps the fruits of your support.

To the leadership and faculty of UMI, thank you for remaining a center of excellence in management, leadership, and public administration for decades. You continue to shape the minds that shape our nation. As faculty you must occupy space in international journals, bookshops and news print with knowledge.

Graduands, you have left UMI at a pivotal moment. Uganda is young, ambitious, and digitizing fast. Our Vision 2040 and National Development Plan IV demand for leaders who can do more than just managing files. We need managers who can manage complexity, ambiguity, and change. You must be dynamic. If you are not, you may not be relevant in 10 years.

The days of straight jacket professionals are over. As observed in the World Economic Forum report 2025: An estimated 59% of the global workforce will need reskilling by 2030 to meet changing skills demands, but not all workers will ultimately receive it. The question now is, how can we future-proof workforces and adapt to these shifts? Skills gaps are emerging as a critical challenge to business transformation worldwide.

According to the 2025 Future of Jobs Report, the inability to meet evolving skills demands is slowing down progress across industries and creating new pressures for workers and employers alike. The report further indicates that, driven by technological development, the green transition, economic and demographic shifts, the global labour market is being

reshaped. The jobs created are equivalent to 14% of today's employment. Alongside, 92 million roles will be displaced by these same trends. It is projected that there will be a net employment increase of 78 million jobs. So what will those jobs be – and what skills will people need to possess to land one of them? **UMI as an institution, how are you positioning yourself for this change?**

According to the same report, the top growing jobs are; Farmworkers, labourers and other agricultural workers; Light truck or delivery service drivers; Software and applications developers, Building framers, finishers and related trade workers; Shop sales persons; Food processing and related trades workers; Car van and motorcycle drivers; Nursing professionals; Food and beverage serving workers; General and operational managers; Social worker and counselling professionals; Project managers; University and higher education teachers; Secondary education teachers and Personal care aides.

Whereas the top declining jobs are; Cashiers and ticket Clerks; Administrative Assistants and executive secretaries; Building caretakers, cleaners and housekeepers; Material recording and stock keeping clerks; Accountants and auditors; Transportation attendants and conductors; Security guards; Bank teller and related clerks; Data entry clerks; Client information and customer care service workers; Graphic designers; Business services and administration managers; Claim adjusters, examiners and investigators.

Therefore, as you graduate today, you must also never lose focus of the need for constant reskilling in order to keep relevant to the ever changing job market. Education institutions like should also position themselves to reskill our citizens with skills needed for innovations of the future.

The Constitution of Uganda in Article 1 places all power in the people. Every policy you draft, every budget you manage, every team you lead, touches the life of that ordinary Ugandan. Management is not neutral. It is either a tool for justice or a shield for inefficiency. Choose to be the former.

The Judiciary sees daily what happens when systems fail due to corruption, delay, or abuse of office. Today, you are graduating with different degrees but let the first degree for each one of you be in integrity. Sign that procurement honestly (This is the bedrock of corruption). Deliver that service without asking for a "facilitation". A single ethical decision can restore a citizen's faith in public institutions. Repeat it, and you transform a culture.

Uganda's problems will not be solved in boardrooms in upscale Kampala alone. They will be solved downtown in Kisenyi or in the rural regions of Karamoja, West Nile or the hills of Kigezi. Use the data analytics, the project management, the policy skills UMI gave you to design solutions that work for the market vendor, the bodaboda rider or the rural teacher. If

your innovation cannot survive contact with the real mwananchi, it is then the time to go back to the drawing board.

Strong institutions outlive strong individuals. Whether you are in public service, private sector or you start your own enterprise, remember, that your job is to leave the office stronger than how you found and (or) started it. Build systems. Respect the law. In the Judiciary, we speak of “justice for all.” In management, your equivalent is “service for all”

The courts depend on competent administrators just like all other institutions. Case backlog is not just a legal problem – it is a management problem. As the Judiciary rolls out the Electronic Court Case Management Information System (ECCMIS) and expand Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), we need UMI graduates who understand performance management, ICT, and change leadership. I'm happy to note that some of our own are part of this graduating class, as has been the case for many more before. I invite you all, to see the justice sector as a space where your skills can save years of a litigant's life.

The gown you wear today is not a cape. It will also not make hard decisions easy. But it is a reminder that you have been trained to think, to lead, and to serve.

Uganda does not need perfect managers. It needs honest ones. It does not need managers who know everything. It needs managers who are willing to learn, to listen, and to be held accountable.

So go forth. Build enterprises that employ. Design policies that are inclusive. Lead teams that deliver. And when you are tired, remember why you started which is to make Uganda work better for everyone.

May God bless your hands and minds as you serve.

May God bless UMI.

May God bless the Judiciary.

And may God bless the Republic of Uganda.

I thank you.

Flavian Zeija (PhD)
CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA