

JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY

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AT THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION LEADERSHIP

CONVENTION

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I have the pleasure to address you on this important occasion of the conference on leadership and team building for members of the Judicial Service. The conference will go a long way in aligning and realigning priorities of the Judicial Service Commission as a public institution and public service provider. The JSC plays an important and key role in our Constitutional democracy. The JSC is central to the administration of justice. It bears the responsibility of ensuring that the people have access to justice closer to their homes.

Members of the public visit the courts on a daily basis to seek justice. They want their disputes resolved in a fair manner by civil courts; victims of crime want the criminals dealt with and punished in accordance with the law. At the same time, those accused of committing criminal offences expect their rights to a fair trial respected. In all this the Judiciary plays a critical and

pivotal role. The Constitution imposes important duties on the courts and other members of the Judicial Service. It is critical that all appreciate the obligations imposed by the law. Everything that is done must be in accordance with the law as JSC is a rule-based organisation.

For members of the Judicial Service to play such important and critical roles, there is need that they understand and appreciate their functions in this critical justice delivery matrix. When legal practitioners and other players in the justice sector come to courts, they interface and interact in the first instance with you as members of the Judicial Service. You are the officers of court who ensure that court papers are filed properly, court decorum is properly observed, courts are able to sit on time. You are the people who set down matters for hearing and ensure that court orders are enforced. You are there to ensure that deceased estates

are properly administered in terms of the law. You ensure that children and other vulnerable persons such as widows and the disabled are not taken advantage of. You are there, ladies and gentlemen, to ensure that there are adequate funds and other resources for the court operations. You work tirelessly to provide logistics for the courts to function efficiently and for judicial officers to travel to circuit courts all over the country. You procure goods and services including human resources that enable cases to be heard. You ensure that courts are up to date with technology. It is you who communicate with the public on what is happening in the courts. The justice delivery system would not function without your efforts. In a nutshell, you are the cog and the engine that powers the administration of justice in this country.

I make all these comments so that you understand the important role that you play in the administration of justice. There is often the tendency to forget court administrators and the critical role they play. As the Chief Justice I acknowledge the role that you play and its importance to the justice sector. I am also here ladies and gentlemen to remind you of the trust reposed in you as public officers. You are the face of the Judiciary. Your conduct and the way you apply yourself in the course and scope of performance of your duties define what the Judiciary is all about. It may destroy or help to build, the integrity of the Judiciary. If you behave improperly and get involved in corruption, the integrity of the justice delivery system suffers as public confidence diminishes.

I congratulate you Secretary and your team for organising this leadership conference. I am aware of the fact that a great deal of

time, resources and effort were put to ensure that the event becomes a reality. I am also aware that the conference was supposed to have been held in January 2021 but had to be cancelled due to the virulent Covid 19 pandemic. The postponement may have been a blessing in disguise because a conference towards the end of the year provides an opportune time for not only planning for the year 2022 but to also carry out a post-mortem on the operations during the year 2021.

I cannot over emphasize the importance of the offices you occupy in the management of the affairs of the courts particularly, in ensuring that they operate efficiently, effectively and dispense quality justice with minimum delays. It is for this reason that I find myself in full agreement with the theme that you have adopted for this conference **“FOCUSED LEADERSHIP TO**

ENHANCE EFFICIENCY IN THE JUDICIARY”. As judicial administrators, you have a responsibility, if not an obligation, to support the courts so that every Zimbabwean is able to enforce his or her fundamental rights in terms the Constitution and access justice as close to their homes as possible. These rights include rights for people with disabilities. Each of you holds a position of responsibility. You are expected to provide leadership in ensuring provision of quality service to consumers thereof. You are also expected to exercise supervision of subordinates. You therefore need to understand and appreciate your responsibilities as a leader. What qualities are expected of you as a leader, do you know them, do you understand them and do you know how to put them into practice. Do you also know how to make use of those qualities in ensuring that the justice delivery system is efficient and effective? These are some of the questions that are to engage your minds during the course of this conference.

The most important and fundamental qualities required of a leader in a public institution such as JSC is that he or she must be a focused leader. This requires full and undisturbed concentration of his or her work. This calls for a leader who is passionate about his or her work and who is geared for the success of the organisation. A focused leader is not selfish or self-centred. A focused leader should place the interests of the organisation ahead of his or her personal interests. It is through focused leadership that one is able to fight and defeat corruption, inefficiency, laziness and lack of cooperation. A focused leader should be exemplary by leading from the front so that subordinates are able to follow the good deeds that he or she exhibits in promoting the interests of the organisation.

Holding a leadership position requires appreciation of and adherence to principles by which one defines the vision of the organisation for the direction he or she sets for all to follow. Leading must always be guided by standards, otherwise such a leader would be destined to fail.

When I became Chief Justice five years ago I posed the following CJ Asks Questions:

- 1. ARE YOU AT WORK OR ON A FROLIC OF YOUR OWN?**
- 2. IF YOU ARE AT WORK ARE YOU DOING THE RIGHT THING?**
- 3. DO YOU KNOW :-**
 - a. WHAT TO DO**
 - b. HOW TO DO IT**

c. AND WHY YOU DO IT

THEN DO IT NOW!

Those questions were important and relevant then as they are now. I'm still asking the same questions answers to which guarantee a conscientious, efficient and effective public officer have never had the opportunity of explaining the meaning and implication of these questions. You cannot expect subordinates to answer the questions if as leaders you are unable to answer them. It is bad enough for an ordinary member of staff to be on a frolic of his or her own, but it is worse when it is coming from a person in leadership. One would have been on a **“frolic of your own”**, instead of serving clients at the front office, when one is busy playing with one's cellphone or misusing organisation facilities for personal gain. When one is at work, one must do the right thing. In other words, one must perform duties and functions of

the position It is a fact that every institution needs to be goal oriented and the strategic plan is meant to engrave the essence of the JSC's vision, goals and strategic priorities. An institution without goals and ambitions is more like a ship without a compass to direct its course. Goals help us know the correct steps to take and channels to be followed. As the JSC, we have one common cause rooted in the attainment of world class justice.

There cannot be talk of focused leadership and efficiency of an organization when there is no clarity on what is to be achieved and the direction to be taken. This can only be done through a strategic plan. The current 2021-2025 strategic plan is the third strategic plan for the JSC since it came into existence in 2010. Taking time to review the institution's past performance and predicting its future performance provides a roadmap to follow.

It is imperative for every person in leadership position to study the strategic plan and act in accordance with its provisions. There is need to internalise the demands of its contents bearing in mind that it is a living document for ensuring judicial reform.

I have gone through the program that is going to occupy your minds for the next three days. I must say that it's a program which is rich in content relating to various but important aspects of the content of the duties of different offices represented. Of course the main area of discussion in which all the other topics are derived from is the strategic plan. It is vital that all of you get to be involved in the presentation by the Secretary and the discussion that will follow after the presentation. All the other topics like performance management, supporting the operations of the courts, monitoring and evaluation, disciplinary and grievance procedures and judicial training are off shoots of the

strategic plan. Your knowledge of these areas is important as it becomes part of the implementation of the JSC strategic plan.

Another important area which constitutes one of the key objectives today is that of team building. Consultants are going to lead discussions and engagements on team building. I am particularly happy that you see the importance of building a strong team JSC. JSC can only do well and be an organisation to reckon with if it is led by a good team that knows the values of the court administration and that is ready to pursue those values at the expense of personal interests. I hope that at the end of the deliberations you will have been capacitated well enough to go back to your provinces and stations with a clear understanding of the direction that this organisation is going. I also hope that you will be good ambassadors of the judiciary who will work hard and tirelessly to uphold the integrity of the Judicial Service

Commission. I want to assure you⁰ of the support and appreciation of the good work all of you are doing in your various capacities. Matters of better conditions of service particularly issues of remuneration are currently being considered by the employer.

May I take this opportunity to thank UNDP for partnering with JSC in putting together the financial resources to ensure that this conference comes into being. I further wish to thank the organisers of the conference who have worked hard in putting together the program and the resources to enable participants to attend. I'm told that there are two hundred participants who travelled from different parts of the country attesting to efficient management of matters of logistics.

Lastly I know you are here to work but I also invite you to take this opportunity to relax, to get to know each other and visit some places of interest. I hope the Secretary and his team will organise a visit to the Victoria Falls and provide all of you with the opportunity of engaging in other team building activities such as being on a boat cruise on the Zambezi river just as you travelled together by bus to this destination. With these remarks I wish you fruitful deliberations and a successful conference.