

MINUTES OF THE POST CONFERENCE TASKFORCE MEETING

7TH JULY 2014 (03:00pm – 05:00pm)

Members Present

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| 1. Mrs. Elinor Chemonges Wanyama | National Coordinator, Paralegal Advisory Services |
| 2. Mrs. Theodora B. Webale | Clinic Manager, LAC/LDC |
| 3. Ms. Ladawn Burnett | Associate Attorney/Public Sector Liaison , ILI/ACLE |
| 4. Mr. Andrew Mwayi | Manager Justice Centres, Mmengo |
| 5. Ms. Diana Natukunda | Rapporteur |
| 6. Mrs. Berna Bakkidde Kiberu | Programmes Manager, LASPNET |
| 7. Mr. Jolly Mukooyo | Research & Advocacy Officer, LASPNET |

Agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. Communication from the Chairperson
3. Evaluation of Conference
4. Review of Conference resolutions
5. Discussion on Action Plan/way forward and assigning tasks
6. A.O.B

Min No 1/7/14 Opening Prayer

The opening prayer was led by Mr. Jolly Mukooyo – Research and Advocacy Officer, LASPNET

Min No 2/7/14 Communication from Chairperson

The meeting commenced with remarks from the Chairperson whose communication underscored the following;

That all members of the taskforce had confirmed attendance although some had failed to turn up for the meeting.

Our funding partners, DGF were concerned about the need to co-opt other stakeholders to the post conference activities' taskforce for purposes of making the process highly consultative and strategic going forward. She also informed the meeting that DGF has expressed willingness to support the activities of this taskforce with a view to maintaining the momentum as we push for the policy and law.

That according to reliable information received from a member of LASPNET who met with the First Parliamentary Counsel charged with drafting the Legal Aid Bill, the drafting process will be informed by the existing format and content of the proposed policy. However, she reminded the members that the proposed policy in its current state does not fully cater for all the concerns of legal aid service providers and therefore encouraged members to seize this opportunity to have their concerns addressed in the draft Bill.

Meeting objectives:

- To evaluate the impact of the 2nd National Legal Aid Conference
- To propose a post conference road map towards achieving a legal aid policy and law
- To assign post conference responsibilities to various stakeholders guided by their level of expertise and influence in different areas
- To set time lines for the implementation of planned activities

Min No 3/7/14 Evaluation of Conference

Members appreciated the efforts of all stakeholders towards achieving a successful conference. They thanked the State and non state legal aid service providers for the excellent organization and collaboration.

They noted that the conference presentations were viewed by participants as very valuable and insightful.

The meeting particularly commended the organizers for ensuring the high profile attendance from the Judiciary led by the Acting Hon. Chief Justice

It was noteworthy that the Conference was well attended by both state and non state legal aid service providers.

Summary of specific concerns raised and agreed action points

1) Invitations and Attendance

While the meeting was happy about the attendance and vibrant participation by the Legal aid service providers, they were concerned that we were simply preaching to the converted as far as the national legal aid agenda is concerned. We needed to have more of other key Government policy movers like the Members of Parliament on board.

The meeting attributed the low attendance on the part of Government largely due to failure to adequately engage the JLOS Secretariat right from the start of the conference preparations.

In terms of invitations, the meeting noted that the Justice Centers Uganda was allowed opportunity to invite all their center managers for the conference and that the same opportunity should have been extended to other non state legal aid service providers in order to further build the pool of the ‘converted’ in the terms of the legal aid agenda. It was explained however, that the Conference Budget was constrained.

Action point:

The taskforce emphasized that we must work very closely with the Justice, Law and Order Sector Secretariat because they are the ones spear heading the process of pushing for the adoption of the proposed legal aid policy and Law.

2) Protocol Issues

Members expressed concerns that protocol issues were poorly managed especially in relation to facilitation, sitting arrangements and other logistics for the Judges

Action point:

For similar activities in the future where persons of high profile such as the Judges are invited, protocol issues should be considered as high priority. A protocol committee should be in place under the stewardship of the JLOS Secretariat since they have a better understanding of protocol in relation to judicial officers.

3) Publicity

The meeting was of the view that the publicity drive should have been boosted by proper orientation of the media teams. Experiences shared by LASPs who engaged with the media indicate that the journalists did not have adequate knowledge regarding the purpose of the conference and the role of Legal aid generally in order to relay the key issues appropriately. The taskforce also expressed regret regarding the missed opportunity of showcasing legal aid issues through social media with a view to increasing public awareness and debate.

On a positive note however, the meeting applauded LASPNET for the production and launch of the first directory of legal aid service providers in Uganda which they believe will go a long way in increasing awareness about Legal Aid Services.

Members also commended the initiative taken to produce a quality documentary highlighting the state of legal aid service provision in Uganda.

Action points:

- It was proposed that a legal aid public education campaign should be considered with the aim of securing a buy in towards advocacy efforts for the proposed Legal Aid Policy and Law from the general public especially the indigent, marginalized and vulnerable persons.
- The LASPNET Secretariat should explore the option of engaging a full time intern to support the design and management of a social media campaign.
- Soft copies of the documentary and the directory of legal aid service providers in Uganda should to be disseminated amongst all stakeholders.

4) Engagement of Taskforce members

The meeting expressed disappointment that in the course of the conference preparations, the task force was narrowed down to a smaller working group; other members were only invited at the tail end of things which could have equally affected the flow of things at the Conference. The meeting emphasized that in future, activities that LASPNET is involved in should not be narrowed down to focus simply on the Secretariat without adequate regard to involvement of the wider membership.

Action points:

- It was resolved that as a matter of urgency, a team of twelve (12) LASPs who have been closely involved in processes related to the development of proposed Legal Aid Policy, should be set up to develop a fundable concept note for the advocacy roadmap of the policy and bill.
- The meeting agreed that we must co-opt other strategic partners to re-enforce the taskforce as we prepare to engage the Hon. Minister of Justice and Constitutional affairs, the first Parliamentary Counsel and key movers of the process in Parliament among other stakeholders. It was agreed that the new team should be composed of among other persons, Judges who are passionate about legal aid, the JLOS Secretariat, the Uganda Law Council, state and non state legal aid service providers that have the required clout and experience to strategically move this process.
- Members resolved that the task force should also consider engaging with the Ministry of Finance in order to expedite issuance of the certificate of financial implication because it seems to be one of the key reasons why Cabinet is unable to proceed.

5) Limited focus on the proposed Legal Aid Policy

The contents of the proposed legal aid policy were not adequately discussed at the conference which makes advocacy for the same difficult. Equally, the closing session of the conference did not dedicate sufficient time and focus towards deliberating on the key undertakings from the conference and assigning responsibilities there from.

Action Point:

- The Secretariat should secure copies of the final versions of the proposed Legal Aid Policy and Bill for members to acquaint themselves with the issues therein in order to inform advocacy efforts.

Min No 4/7/14 Review of Conference resolutions

The meeting noted that the Conference Undertakings as captured by the rapportuer were not properly detailed to ably inform follow up actions.

Action points:

- Review the general recommendations from the conference and make them smart and brief with a clear theme - highlighting the commitments sought from Government and other stakeholders, timelines and a road map leading towards a legal aid policy and law.
- PILAC should take lead in identifying interns to transcribe the conference video in order to further enrich the conference report.
- In future, rapportueing should be handled by a team of persons who have the capacity to analyze the discussions and provide a report that is properly focused on the issues.

Min No 5/7/14 Discussion on Action Plan /Way forward and assigning tasks**Proposed Road Map/Action Plan**

No.	PLANNED ACTIVITY	PROPOSED DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION
1.	Meeting of the (12) LASPs/partners who are closely involved in the development of the National Legal Aid Policy, to develop a fundable concept note for the advocacy roadmap of the policy and bill.	18th July 2014
2.	Convene a consensus building meeting of all LASPs and Partners, in order to develop ONE position paper on the nature of Policy and Bill required from government.	21st July 2014
3.	LASPNET to organize a Half day CEOs/ Executive Directors and Chairpersons Meeting to interest them in the NLAP advocacy roadmap.	22nd July 2014
4.	Meeting with the JLOS secretariat and Uganda Law Council, as the department spearheading the adoption of the Policy and as the current regulator of legal aid services respectively.	TBA
5.	Schedule meetings with the Hon. Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, The first Parliamentary Counsel, Chair of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee in Parliament, Human rights Committee of Parliament, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, among other stakeholders.	TBA

Min No 6/7/14 A.O.B

There being no further business to deliberate upon, the Chairperson thanked all members for attending and for the active participation. The meeting was adjourned on this note.