

Closing ceremony of the Applied Correctional Sciences Training Course for Officers from Eastern Africa organized by UNAFRI: 3-19 May 2009

The two weeks Applied Correctional Sciences Course for Correctional Officers from East Africa has ended at UNAFRI Secretariat in Kampala, Uganda with a call to the officers to promote and disseminate the human rights based care for the people in custody. This was perceived as a very effective measure to facilitate social rehabilitation and reintegration of the inmates back to society to live a normal life for the purpose of Community safety and decongestion of the already overstretched prisons facilities.

The course which had 19 participants from Burundi, Kenya, The Sudan and Uganda was closed by Mr. Med. S. Kaggwa, Chairman, Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) on Tuesday 19 May, 2009.

While declaring the course closed, Mr Kaggwa praised the timeliness of the course, adding that it had been an avenue to share the best practices in the management of correctional services to ensure offenders detained in correctional services have dignity. He said the focus of this course was the application of the knowledge and skills attained that can help to find innovative ways to face and resolve challenges.

The UHRC boss noted the close link between the judicial process and the detention of citizens; where he noted, the role of national (local) initiatives should be prominent because solutions that are home grown are the basis of fundamental change.

Mr. Kaggwa said, the Uganda Human Rights Commission, as a national mechanism has the mandate to promote and protect human rights. And in fulfilling this, it plays a dual role in the Criminal Justice System as an oversight body over institutions in the Criminal Justice System and as an implementing institution to ensure the integration of the rights based approach within the Justice, Law and Order Sector which includes the Uganda Prisons Service.

He concluded that instilling a human rights culture goes hand in hand with training of staff that are employed in the correctional services, where high personal and professional standards have a direct impact on policy and programming implicating inevitably the respect of human rights.

Dignitaries at the ceremony included: Mr. Gibbie. Namakando Nawa, President of the Association of Correctional Services in Africa (ACSA) and Commissioner of Prisons, Zambia; his counterpart from Uganda; Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Uganda; and other invited guests.

Certificates of participation were given to participants after the course, and during the Closing Ceremony.

Earlier in the course of the training, some professional and prominent personalities had given lectures to the participants, related expertise and experiences based on their work

situations. They included Mr. Richard Buteera, the Director, Public Prosecutions, Uganda; Mr. Nalasata of Uganda Prison Service; Mr. Samuel Nkouli, an international Lawyer and staff at the Transnational Law Institute of Washington and Lee University, USA;

Dr. David Onen of Makerere University and Mr. Gibbie Namakando Nawa, President ACSA; in addition to UNAFRI experts such as Dr Masamba Sita, Dr. Alhas Maicibi and Mr. John Kitembo