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PRESS STATEMENT

MARKING THE SOUTH - SOUTH COOPERATION INTERNATIONAL DAY

Today the 12th September 2021, Justice Access Point (JAP) joins the rest of World to mark the International day of the south - south cooperation. The day servers to mark the importance of South-South cooperation and to celebrate the day in 1978 when the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries adopted the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (A/C.2/66/L.48), the General Assembly proclaimed 12 September as the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation.

The great lakes remains a volatile region characterized by instability, violent conflicts or threats of violent resource- based and electoral conflicts. The region is fast emerging into a hot-bed of terrorism cells and failed transitional justice processes threaten to reignite past conflicts into new flames of violence. There are experiences in the global south that can be drawn upon to contribute to peace building and to help in the de-escalation and de-radicalization from a violent path. Therefore the need for a south to south cooperation in this regard cannot be over emphasized. It will enable both state and non-state actors to play a constructive role in peace building and prevention of atrocity crimes.

In the Ugandan context, there are legal and administrative impediments to the south to south cooperation ranging from exorbitant work permit charges, burdensome social security costs imposed on exchange fellows on short-term contracts, and restrictive requirements for foreign workers. This is often compounded by general insecurity in the region, the restrictive operating environment for NGOs and more recently the covid 19 context. The south-south cooperation offers a great potential to contributing to peace and rule of law in the region. And enables the sharing of lessons learned, good practices, and other relevant experiences in peace building in the specific countries and the implementing the African Union Transitional Justice Policy within Member States.

There is therefore a need for:

- Government of Uganda to popularize the International day for south-south cooperation;
- Government of Uganda to address the legal and administrative impediments to technical cooperation. More specifically to review and reduce of exorbitant work permit charges for experts working under the auspices of technical exchange programmes;
- Government of Uganda to review and amend the NGO act section restricting the employment of foreign staff;

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- Government to ensure a conducive operating environment for NGOs both local and international staff on technical exchange programmes. Specifically government should refrain from gregarious office raids and harassment of staff;
- The development partners to continue with the support extended to CSOs and MDAs within the framework of south-south cooperation. This could be inform of learning journeys, technical exchanges, joint research, and regional networks and alliances.

Endorsed by:



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