



URSB, BUGANDA KINGDOM PARTNER TO STRENGTHEN TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

Bulange, Mengo, Wednesday, 29th September, 2021; The Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), the body in-charge of marriage registration in Uganda, together with the Buganda Kingdom have partnered to support traditional marriage registration and practices across communities. The two institutions are currently training a team of Buganda Kingdom Events Spokesmen (Aboogezi b'emikolo) on the different cultural and legal requirements of customary marriages.

The practice has been that once a customary marriage is officiated, the couple received a Buganda Kingdom certificate and considers the marriage registered. Majority of Ugandans, even the elites are oblivious about customary marriage registration and related practices to secure their unions. The process of registration of a customary marriage can only be considered complete once the marriage is filed with the Sub County Chief and a copy of that marriage forwarded to the Registrar of Marriages at Uganda Registration Services Bureau.

Customary marriage, termed locally as *nyomkwaro* among the Lango/Acholi, *Kuhingira* among the Bakiga/Banyankole and *Kwanjula/kukyala* among the Baganda, is one of the recognized marriages in Uganda. It is a type of marriage which is negotiated, celebrated and concluded according to specific culture and norms, celebrated according to the rites of an African community to which one is a member. By most standards, it is the basic standard of matrimonial institutionalization in Uganda. Customary Marriages are governed by the Customary Marriages (Registration) Act Cap 248 Laws of Uganda.

Speaking at the event that was also graced by the Katikiro of Buganda, Owekitiibwa Charles Peter Mayiga, the Registrar General of URSB, Mercy Kainobwiso told the trainees the values of encouraging their clients to have their unions registered. She added that registration of customary marriages should be effected not later than 6 months after the date of completion of the ceremony although registration after the expiration of 6 months is allowed upon payment of the prescribed fee. *'For any society and the Kingdom to develop, the basic unit of society, the family must be documented to support their progression. This is what marriage*

registration confers to the couples. I urge you all to support all traditional marriages to get registered. The benefits are immense' Kainobwisho said.

The Registrar General also interested the participants in the other related services provided by URSB such as recently established Security Interest in Movable Property registry which allows financial and non-financial institutions extend credit to borrowers using their movable property as collateral; intellectual property registry which protects and enforces intellectual property rights of creatives and is also an area of interest to the kingdom in protection of their traditional garb and related artifacts. URSB also formalizes businesses and handles insolvency related matters.

According to the Act, traditional marriages can be registered at districts, sub-counties, town councils and municipalities where the customary function took place. Sub-County Chiefs and Town Clerks act as marriage registrars and have in their possession a customary marriage registration book, where they also record the necessary settlements agreed and completed by the parties. Within six months, the married couple is expected to go to the office of the sub-county chief or town clerk to register the details of their traditional matrimonial union. The couple must be accompanied by two witnesses who are either parents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts of either of the parties, chiefs, clan heads or other persons of standing.

An additional prescribed fine is levied if the registration is sought six months after the date of the customary marriage ceremony. When the couple, their witnesses and the marriage registrar append their signatures on the prescribed certificate form, the registrar then issues a customary marriage certificate to the parties. The certificate acts as evidence of customary marriage for all legal purposes. In its entirety, this legislation is comprehensive blueprint for traditional marriages in Uganda.

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