Rwanda’s Judiciary Spokesperson, Harrison Mutabazi, has urged lawyers and law students across Africa to prioritize mediation and reconciliation in resolving disputes, saying dialogue offers a more effective and peaceful solution than lengthy court battles.

Mutabazi made the call on August 15 during the closing of the 16th Advocates Africa Conference, which brought together judges, prosecutors, lawyers and law students from across the continent in Kigali.

“Justice is not only about winning cases in court,” Mutabazi said. “Mediation is one of the best ways to deliver justice, and it allows people to reconcile and move forward together. As Christian lawyers, we must set an example by fostering peace and understanding.”

He pointed to Rwanda’s experience with Gacaca courts, introduced in 2002 to handle the massive backlog of cases following the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. The community-based tribunals processed nearly two million cases before closing in 2012. Since then, Rwanda has expanded alternative dispute resolution programs that help communities settle conflicts outside formal courts.

Mutabazi said many disputes that once tore families and neighbors apart were resolved through dialogue, allowing people to rebuild relationships and contribute to the nation’s development.

Advocates Africa, founded in 1998, is a network that promotes Christian values in the legal profession while advancing justice and human rights. The Kigali meeting focused on sharing knowledge and experiences in areas including conflict resolution, international business law and human rights.

Mutabazi urged participants to take the lessons home. “We ask you to do everything possible to help people coexist peacefully,” he said. “We must be role models not only for other Christian lawyers but also for those who come to us with conflicts, guiding them toward peaceful solutions.”