

The Ministry of Justice has announced the implementation of a plea bargaining policy over the past two years, successfully resolving between 13,000 and 15,000 cases without the need for court proceedings.

During the opening of a two-day retreat for members of the justice sector in Nyagatare District, it was emphasized that strengthening this policy is vital, as it provides a sustainable solution to the growing backlog of cases in the courts.

This retreat marks the 10th gathering of stakeholders in Rwanda's justice sector.

The high number of pending cases in the courts has been identified as a significant challenge for the judicial sector. For the 2023/2024 judicial year, the backlog percentage stands at 59%, a decrease from 62% the previous year.



Andrew Kananga, the head of the Legal Aid Forum, acknowledged the progress made but emphasized the need for sustainable solutions. Meanwhile, it has been over two years since the Plea Bargaining policy was launched to address the backlog of cases between the prosecution and the accused.

According to the Ministry of Justice, over 13,000 cases have been resolved without going to court since the introduction of this policy.

Dr. Ugirashebuja Emmanuel, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, stressed that this policy requires special attention.

Ozonnia Ojielo, the United Nations Coordinator in Rwanda, commended the country's advancements in providing justice and facilitating access to justice without requiring court appearances.

Dr. Faustin Ntezilyayo, President of the Supreme Court, called on members of the Rwandan justice sector to work more diligently and innovatively to ensure proper justice for all Rwandans. He stated, "It is crucial that we adhere to the principles of justice, reconciliation, and human rights while seeking solutions to existing problems. Our justice system must be innovative and inclusive, ensuring that no one is left behind."

The Ministry of Justice maintains that true justice is achieved through cooperation and collaboration with other sectors. According to the latest report from the World

Justice Project, Rwanda is ranked 40th globally in terms of justice and holds the top position in Africa, followed by Namibia and Mauritius.