

Opening Remarks

**Hon. Chief Justice
Dr. Faustin NTEZILYAYO**

**ASFAM 2023 International
Conference**

Marriot Hotel

Kigali, 7th March, 2023

1. Honorable Ministers and Government Officials, Here present,

Brig. Gen. Lawson Fanwel SIMAPUKA from ZAMBIA,

President of International Association of Forensic Sciences (IAFS),

President of African Society of Forensic Medicine (ASFM),

President of African Forensic Sciences Academy (AFSA),

Distinguished guests,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen.

2. It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to Rwanda, and to the 10th edition of African Society of Forensic Medicine 2023 International Conference.

3. Before I proceed, I want to thank the leadership of the African Society of Forensic Medicine to have chosen Rwanda to be the host of ASFM 2023 International Conference.

4. I want to thank Rwanda Forensic Laboratory (RFL) and the partners that joined efforts together to organize such a tremendous event.

5. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to all forensic professionals, academicians, heads of forensic offices, prosecutors, lawyers, scientists, investigators, doctors from Europe, America,

Australia, Asia and Africa who traveled miles away to Rwanda to attend this Conference.

6. In today's complex and rapidly changing environment, where people's expectations for quality justice are high, many countries have been working to transform and modernize their justice systems by implementing reforms aimed at strengthening the use and application of forensic science evidence, with the ultimate goal of improving efficiency in the administration of justice. It is in this regard that the Rwanda Forensic Laboratory was established with autonomous status, which allows this institution to work independently and deliver undisputable services.
7. Having a Forensic Institution that supports the justice system with evidence based on science and technology for use in our courts of law and other justice bodies is a great achievement to the country. Besides providing relevant scientific evidence, Rwanda Forensic Laboratory services contribute towards reducing the turnaround time of judicial proceedings. It is worth noting that RFL has now concluded strategic forensic partnerships with international bodies and organizations and other sister institutions in order to enhance its expertise.
8. ASFM International Conference is a good initiative that brings together hundreds of scientists, forensic practitioners and other players from the forensic science community to exchange knowledge in the fast-increasing number of forensic science

disciplines. In fact, there are numerous challenges and issues that need to be addressed in forensic and legal medicine (forensic pathology, toxicology, anthropology, entomology, personal damage evaluation, insurance medicine, clinical risk management, medical liability, and medical ethics, etc.), thus, highlighting the choice of this Conference's theme; Harmonization of Evidence-Based Forensic Science Practice in Africa.

9. If I may speak for my colleagues from Judiciaries in Africa, and as I have had an opportunity to express the same view with the management of the Rwanda Forensic Laboratory, we, in the Judiciary, are very grateful for the invaluable contribution of forensic and medico-legal experts in our duty to deliver quality and timely justice. It is my hope, however, that during this Conference, forensic science shortcomings and weaknesses that continue to plague forensic science with the risk that if unaddressed they may lead to miscarriage of justice, will be discussed and solutions to fix them agreed upon.

Distinguished participants, forensic science professionals, as I conclude my remarks, allow me once again to thank you for having devoted your time to attend this Conference, which is yet a testimony of your commitment to uphold high standards and reliability of forensic science evidence for a better administration of justice, much needed to foster peace, security and prosperity in our Continent and all over the world.

I wish you a successful conference and an enjoyable stay in Rwanda.

10. I therefore declare the African Society of Forensic Medicine International Conference officially opened.

Thank you for your kind attention.

