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## OFFICE OF THE DEAN SCHOOL OF LAW

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### PRESS RELEASE

#### **School of Law set to establish fully-fledged Law Clinics**

The School of Law Makerere University is to establish fully fledged Public Interest Law Clinics (PILAC) that will enhance the practical application of Clinical Legal Education (CLE).

The project mainly aims at building the capacity and skills of Ugandan Lawyers to enable them initiate and pursue public interest litigation, teach Clinical Legal Education (CLE) as well as organize and manage the students' clinics.

It also aims at creating an avenue for provision of legal services to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) which use public interest litigations as one of their strategies, and creating a network with legal aid clinics in Uganda, Africa and the world. The project will also facilitate research in public interest litigation cases in the courts of Uganda.

The Human rights and Peace Centre, HURIPPEC, under the School of Law, will spearhead the operations of the PILAC, and the teaching of Clinical Legal Education. HURIPPEC will also through PILAC, spearhead research and undertake litigation relevant to the advancement of Public Interest Law for the protection of the vulnerable.

This initiative comes out of the realization that although the School of Law is the oldest Legal training institution in Uganda, the Law curriculum still lacks a component to equip students with practical skills relevant in the area of Public Interest Law.

PILAC therefore fits in well with the recent Makerere University Policy that all Students, including Law students, undertake field attachments as a practical element of their training. The clinic will offer an avenue for such attachments for selected Law students.

It is worth observing that the majority of Ugandans are not aware of their legal rights, and despite the high levels of violations, many do not have the resources to protect their rights through seeking legal action.

In the recent past, there has been an increase in the number of students graduating with degrees in Law following the liberalization of Legal education in Uganda. However, there still exist a small number of public interest lawyers, owing to the fact that the curricula of the Law schools and that of the Law Development Centre are designed to prepare graduates for Commercial Legal practice.

Intensified teaching of Clinical Legal Education at undergraduate level will therefore greatly contribute to changing this state of affairs. It is expected that the project will build the capacity of Ugandan Lawyers and Civil Society activists to initiate and pursue public interest litigation aimed at providing redress for human rights violations.

The Human Rights and Peace Centre, through PILAC will offer Law students opportunity to acquire public interest litigation skills by undertaking research and working on practical cases. In addition the clinic will work hand in hand with the School of Law in teaching Clinical Legal Education. The clinic will also provide legal services to selected Civil Society Organizations, involved in public interest litigation as one of their strategies.

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