

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE CHIEF JUSTICE ON
THE OCCASION OF THE SPECIAL SITTING OF THE HIGH COURT TO
WELCOME HIS HONOUR JUSTICE T. ZEHURIKIZE AS A JUDGE OF
THE HIGH COURT OF KIRIBATI
30 MAY 2014, TARAWA, KIRIBATI**

We in the Judiciary are honoured to have you all here present to grace this special occasion.

Last Friday 22 May 2014, His Honour, Justice Vincent Tiwangye Zehurikize, took his Oaths before HE the President, as a Judge of the High Court of Kiribati. Today, I am profoundly pleased to preside over this special ceremonial sitting (of the High Court of Kiribati) to welcome His Honour Justice Vincent Tiwangye Zehurikize to the Bench in the High Court of Kiribati. After a protracted delay in securing the assistance of an additional judge to the Judiciary from the Commonwealth, we are finally delighted to have the Honourable Mr Justice Zehurikize with us here. His Honour hails from Uganda, East Africa.

Mr Justice Zehurikize is not new to the Bench. His Honour is 13 years on the Bench this year having been appointed High Court Judge of Uganda in 2001. In addition to his 13 years judicial stint, His Honour has his career in law spanning over 40 years, having graduated in law in 1974 from Makerere University, Uganda. He was admitted to the Bar in 1977. Between 1976 to 1980, His Honour lectured in law, at the Institute of Public Administration in Uganda. Subsequently His Honour established and managed a Private Law Practice (M/S Zehurikize & Co Advocates) for about 19 years before joining

the Uganda High Court Bench in 2001. He has since retired from that Bench, and now joins the Commonwealth Expert and he is here with us, under Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation.

This Commonwealth Assignment abroad is an immense invaluable service provided by the Commonwealth to its members throughout the world. I was privileged to be part of that special service before coming to Kiribati.

I must at this juncture, express my personal gratitude, as well as that of the Judiciary and people of this country, to the Commonwealth Secretariat for facilitating His Honour's appointment and assignment to Kiribati. His Honour's assignment to Kiribati could not have come at a more opportune time than now.

Our foremost gratitude goes to the Government of Kiribati in supporting and facilitating the Judiciary's request for judicial assistance to the High Court of Kiribati. The appointment of His Honour to the Judiciary in Kiribati is in line with the Memorandum of Understanding between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Government of Kiribati signed on 28 July 1980.

Justice Zehurikize, as a second judge of this Court, will be an immense help to the Judiciary in Kiribati. The task of administering justice in the High Court in Kiribati, a country stretching over 3.5 million square kilometres, as I have said in the past, is a task beyond the stamina of one judicial officer.

With His Honour's presence for the next three years, the load will be shared, judicial services enhanced and improve access to justice.

His Honour comes to us with a wealth of experience. He will be taking care of the criminal cases aspect of work of the High Court as well as any other responsibilities as may be assigned to him from time to time as envisaged under the terms of his assignment to Kiribati.

I do not have any confirmation of His Honour's expertise, outside of his judicial knowledge and skills. I have no doubt His Honour possesses skills in other areas of social nature. Lawyers are sometimes depicted as jack-of-all-trades.

However, for those of you who have good voices and interest in the Gregorian Chants, you may be interested to know that His Honour has a great keenness in Gregorian Chants, something which Seminarians are keen in.

Your Honour, you are most welcome in Kiribati. You are especially and profoundly welcome to the Judiciary and in particular as a Judge of the High Court of Kiribati. On behalf of the entire Judiciary and legal fraternity in Kiribati, we welcome you to our shores and to the High Court of Kiribati and trust you will enjoy the Pacific spirit while you are here.

I trust also that you will enjoy your three years CFTC assignment here in Kiribati and look forward to benefitting from your services whilst with us in Kiribati.

SIR JOHN MURIA
Chief Justice

30TH May 2014