

DUNCAN OKELLO: PROFILE, 2026

Duncan Okello is a political scientist, a lawyer, and an international relations specialist. His career and professional history is multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral - a triad of politics, policy, and the law. He has extensive experience in government, civil society, and policy research institutions. His policy and research interests revolve around questions of democratization and institution-building for societies in transition, and, how the law and institutions interface to mediate and influence state and citizen relations. He has authored, edited, and published several publications in this regard.

He presently serves as the *Deputy Director to the Director General*, at the Kenya Judiciary Academy (KJA). He has previously served as a *Commissioner*, Kenya Law Reform Commission (KLRC); the first *Chief of Staff* in the Office of the Chief Justice & President of the Supreme Court of Kenya; the founder *Executive Director* of the National Council on the Administration of Justice (NCAJ) – a multi-agency statutory body that coordinates the justice sector; *Director of Programs* at the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) – Kenya’s premier independent policy and research think tank; and *Regional Director*, Society for International Development (SID), Eastern & Southern Africa.

He was appointed as *Chair* of the *Judiciary Inauguration and Swearing-in Committee for the President and Governors (2017)*, and as *Advisor to the Swearing-in Committee (2022)*. In 2010, he was also part of the team that designed the Ministry of Justice’s *Interim Governance, Justice, Law and Order Sector Program (GJLOS)* and the *GJLOS Policy Framework Paper*. He has undertaken several consultancy assignments for the Government of Kenya, UN agencies, and other multilateral and bilateral organizations including the State University of New York, USAID, Kenya and UNDP Somalia.

As the first Chief of Staff for the Chief Justice, he led the team that conceptualised and implemented the successful Judiciary Transformation Programme from 2011; chairing many reform committees and leading many initiatives in this regard. The first two blueprints by the first two post-2010 Chief Justices were authored under his leadership and direction.

He has authored, edited, and published several publications including the following books: [1] Kenya: The Struggle for a New Constitutional Order (Zed Books 2014); [2] Tensions and Reversals

in Democratic Transitions: The 2007 General Elections (IDS/SID 2008); [3] Readings on Inequality in Kenya: Sectoral Dynamics and Perspectives (SID 2005); [4] Beacons of Judiciary Transformation (Sheria Publishers, 2020). He has also contributed several book chapters including: ‘*The Constitution and Public Finance*’ (CLARION, 2005); and ‘*The Socio-Economic Context of Governance in Kenya*’ (ACEG, 2004); ‘*Democratic Change and Political Transition in Kenya, 2002-2007: An Examination of Civil Society Effect on the Culture of Governance in Kenya*’ (IDS, Sussex, 2010); ‘*Devolution and Kenya’s Socio-Economic Development: A Political Economy Inquiry and Emerging Case Law – A Preliminary Account*’ (JTI, 2015) among others. He occasionally dabbles in poetry and holds an unpublished anthology.