MEDIA RELEASE

No. 07:2012
1 Mar 2012

CARIBBEAN STAKEHOLDERS GATHER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING WITH THE CCJ

CCJ, Port of Spain. The Conference of Heads of Judiciary and Chief Justices of CARICOM, Presidents of the Bar Associations of CARICOM countries, representatives of labour and business of CARICOM countries, and representatives of civil society gathered together today for the First Strategic Planning Session for the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, in Port of Spain.

In delivering welcome remarks at the Opening Ceremony, The Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Michael Dennis Byron, President of the CCJ, provided the vision for the CCJ’s Strategic Planning exercise, stating that it:

“... will allow the Court to reflect on its formative years, assess its performance, and most importantly, ensure that its operations are well-aligned with the expectations of the region and the people it serves. The First Regional Stakeholders’ Strategic Planning Session will be one of a series of fora designed to encourage your participation in drafting a roadmap for the CCJ.”

President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Professor George Maxwell Richards TC, CMT, Ph.D, congratulated the Court on its efforts while delivering opening remarks to the gathering:

“The fact that you have come together, during this time, not as a cloistered legal entity, but in company with business, labour and civil society, speaks clearly of your recognition of the need to understand the societies that you are called to serve. One cannot easily set aside the importance of an intimate understanding of the cultural dimensions that shape these societies. They must have a place in guiding the decisions that are taken in every aspect of our lives, not least those which pertain to law.”

His Excellency also added that, in relation to the CCJ;

“...in Trinidad and Tobago, our culture is speaking to us, through one of our exponents of the calypso art form. During this year’s offerings, it was
posited that we are “still in our Mammy’s house”. Could this be the case in so far as the CCJ is concerned? I seem to recall reading, in the print media, not long ago, that the venerable Privy Council had indicated that it was being burdened with the number of cases that are being placed before it by countries such as ours, for which it remains the final court of appeal. Perhaps we may wish to consider warning ourselves against the possibility of eviction.”

Against the backdrop of these encouraging statements, the participants delved into the Strategic Planning session with various exercises, which were designed to provoke candid feedback and discussion. In guiding the sessions along, facilitator Dr. Daniel Straub, reiterated the importance of the inclusiveness of the CCJ’s strategic exercise to the overall success of the initiative.

This session and the Court’s strategic planning exercise are being made possible with the assistance of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The Court intends to provide its regional stakeholders with other opportunities to contribute to the exercise, the results of which will feed into the development of a Strategic Plan for the next stage of the Court’s development.

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