Message from the President: Executing Strategy - The journey forward

As I reflect on the period under review, I can say that much of what has been accomplished is the starting point of the realization of the vision I had for the Court when I first assumed the office of President. Admittedly, leading change in an organization is not always an easy thing as there are those who will always find it uncomfortable and unnecessary and so they resist it. We recognize this fact and will continue to work with management and staff to ensure that change is managed transparently, equitably and consultatively. Change may not be easy, but in the words of the great revolutionary leader Martin Luther King Jr: “our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change”.

I can say without hesitation that this year was a critical one for the Court marked by significant change throughout the organization particularly in the area of human resources. Firstly, the Court witnessed the departure of two of its founding staff members; Court Executive Administrator, Master Christie-Anne Morris-Alleyne and Registrar, Ms Paula Pierre. It was a loss to the organization as both of them have made immeasurable contributions to the Court during their tenure here. We are grateful for their service and wish them well.

During the time of transition, the Court took the opportunity to look seriously at whether the organizational structure fits the direction of the Court. I will not dwell on these as they will be covered in more detail later in the report but it would be remiss if I did not mention the significant time and attention that was paid to the exercise. Of these changes, the most significant was the appointment of the new Registrar and Marshal, Mrs Jacqueline Graham in 2014, who also became head of the administrative function of the Court. Additionally, a Human Resource Unit was established as a separate and distinct department in the structure of the organization headed by the Manager, Ms Susan Campbell-Nicholas. A clear focus on our human resources should ensure that the Court’s staff members work more efficiently, with greater purpose and in harmony. In addition, several new branches were added to the structure to equip the CCJ for the future.

We also paid significant attention to streamlining and improving our operations. In keeping with one of our strategic goals to provide greater access to justice, in 2013 we instituted a system to ensure Court matters could be filed by email to reduce costs for both the Court and its customers. Since its establishment, the new practice direction has also resulted in increased efficiency and timeliness. Administratively, the Court introduced a new comprehensive financial regulatory framework to elevate accountability to international standards and to provide a more robust framework for planning, decision making and control.

During the period, the JURIST project was also launched. The CCJ will act as the executing agency for the project which aims to work with regional judiciaries to build the capacity of regional trial and appellate courts.

The CCJ is more than just an organization, it is the culmination of decades of hard work and dedication; it is the materialization of the Caribbean dream and so, we cannot allow it to fail or fall into mediocrity. We must continue to evolve and embrace the challenge of continuous improvement if we are really to earn the reputation of being an excellent court. This judicial year is one of the stepping stones on our continuous path to improving the CCJ for the benefit of the people of the Caribbean region.