



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

134 HENRY STREET

PORT OF SPAIN

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Telephone: (868) 623-2CCJ Fax: (868) 624-4710

Website: www.ccj.org

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GERMAN JUDICIAL SCAN COMMENDS CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. A recent study conducted by the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the German corporation for international co-operation, found a high level of confidence in the integrity and independence of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ). The Judicial Integrity Scan also commended the Court for its institutional design, organisational capacities and the competencies of the staff. The study was based on the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct which aim to establish standards of judicial integrity internationally. Additionally, the Scan utilised Article 11 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption as a benchmark of good governance and integrity.

GIZ is a German federal organization that supports the German government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. It has in the past supported and continues to support the Judicial Integrity Group which developed the Bangalore Principles to promote compliance with judicial integrity standards.

The results of the study found that the CCJ had a high level of compliance with the Bangalore Principles in several respects. These included having a Code of Judicial Conduct; the monitoring of its Judges' compliance with this Code and the high level of public access to the Court's hearings and judgments. All hearings at the CCJ are live streamed. GIZ found that this ensured a high level of transparency in Court decision-making.

GIZ were impressed with the manner in which Judges were recruited and noted that the Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission (RJLSC), the institution that appoints the Judges of the CCJ, guarantees a free and independent selection of Judges based on ability and integrity, with the best candidate being selected among applicants. The GIZ did suggest, however, that to further ensure that the CCJ is compatible with other courts of a similar nature, measures could be established for unsuccessful applicants to be given the opportunity to file a competition complaint as part of the selection process to the Court.

Public Education and Communications Unit

Tel: (868) 623-2225 extns. 2296, 2246

Email: pecu@ccj.org

The Report also considered that in order to strengthen public confidence in the CCJ, a gender balance among the judges should be sought in the future.

Overall, the GIZ applauded the CCJ for being an independent and accessible institution, creating a distinct benefit for the people of the Caribbean as it continuously exemplifies “great transparency and openness”.

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About the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ)

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) was inaugurated in Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on 16 April 2005 and presently has a Bench of seven judges presided over by CCJ President, the Honourable Mr Justice Adrian Saunders. The CCJ has an Original and an Appellate jurisdiction and is effectively, therefore, two courts in one. In its Original Jurisdiction, it is an international court with exclusive jurisdiction to interpret and apply the rules set out in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC) and to decide disputes arising under it. The RTC established the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). In its Original Jurisdiction, the CCJ is critical to the CSME and all 12 Member States which belong to the CSME (including their citizens, businesses, and governments) can access the Court’s Original Jurisdiction to protect their rights under the RTC. In its Appellate Jurisdiction, the CCJ is the final court of appeal for criminal and civil matters for those countries in the Caribbean that alter their national Constitutions to enable the CCJ to perform that role. At present, four states access the Court in its Appellate Jurisdiction, these being Barbados, Belize, Dominica and Guyana. However, by signing and ratifying the Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Court of Justice, Member States of the Community have demonstrated a commitment to making the CCJ their final court of appeal. The Court is the realisation of a vision of our ancestors, an expression of independence and a signal of the region’s coming of age.

For more information please contact:

The Public Education & Communications Unit
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Email: pecu@ccj.org