



## FIRST HEMISPHERIC MEETING OF REGIONAL COURTS OF THE AMERICAS

# *Port of Spain Declaration*

The Caribbean Court of Justice, The Central American Court of Justice, The Court of Justice of the Andean Community, The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, and The Inter-American Court of Human Rights, on the occasion of the First Hemispheric Meeting of Regional Courts on **The Rule of Law and International Justice** held from 22 to 23 September 2022, at the Hyatt Regency in Port of Spain Trinidad and Tobago:

**Re-affirming** their commitment to the principles and objectives contained in their founding documents, the Charter of the United Nations, and the American Convention on Human Rights, and other relevant international human rights instruments, as accepted by the States ascribing to their jurisdiction;

**Noting** with commendation the existing cordial relationships that allow for institutional and jurisprudential dialogue, the sharing of information and best practices for their common benefit, and the desire to strengthen that relationship through continued shared dialogue and efforts between and among the regional courts of the Americas;

**Strongly condemning** all wars and the concomitant senseless loss of human life and breaches of the international rule of law and urging the swiftest end possible to all conflicts which threaten global peace, security and justice;

**Welcoming** subscription to this **Declaration on the Rule of Law and International Justice** to publicly affirm their fidelity to the following principles that operationalise and advance institutional integrity and stability of the regional courts in Latin America and the Caribbean and which further the cause of regional jurisprudence:

1. The Rule of Law is essential to the growth and flourishing of human society.
2. Regional courts and tribunals are essential to guarantee the Rule of Law, justice, and democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean, within their respective competencies, and require appropriate institutional frameworks to fulfil these high juridical functions and to guarantee their judicial independence. Regional courts should endeavour to deliver judgments in a timely manner.

3. Member States of regional courts should provide the appropriate institutional frameworks. Each of the courts' corresponding governing treaty, agreed by Member States, provides the basis to guarantee the Rule of Law as practised in democratic societies served by those courts.
4. Regional courts of Latin America and the Caribbean should be guaranteed a stable, sufficient, autonomous budgetary framework, according to applicable law. Among the diverse mechanisms for funding, we recognise that the utilisation of Trust Funds or multi-year financial frameworks can constitute appropriate arrangements that aim to respect judicial independence and the proper functioning of regional courts.
5. The designation or the selection process of the judges and magistrates of regional courts in Latin America and the Caribbean must be transparent and permit the selection of suitable judicial officers based on objective legal criteria that guide the final designation or selection process, including geographic and gender balance considerations. We recognise the desirability, if the applicable law allows, to establish technical selection committees, made up of relevant and independent individuals from among the judiciary, attorneys, legal academics, public service, and civil society as a means to facilitate the practical function of appointing judicial officers.
6. Compliance with and implementation of the judgments of regional courts are crucial to ensuring respect for the Rule of Law in Latin America and the Caribbean particularly in matters of high importance, in compliance with their jurisdiction, such as respect for human rights and the rights of diverse groups in situations of vulnerability, economic integration, and environmental justice. An adequate and timely enforcement and implementation of the judgments of regional courts serve to solidify persons as subjects of the international legal system since countless essential rights of individuals are supported, directly or indirectly, by International Law, International Human Rights Law, or Community Law in Latin America and the Caribbean.
7. A relationship of respect and collaboration exists between regional courts and national courts. Advantage should be taken of every reasonable opportunity for jurisprudential dialogue and exchange. Adequate mechanisms in international and domestic law to support and direct national compliance with and implementation of judgments of regional courts should be ensured.
8. As a specific instance of collaboration between national courts and regional courts that exercise community law jurisdiction, inclusive of hearing matters on referral, an obligation on domestic courts to refer appropriate disputes to the relevant regional courts affords regional courts valuable opportunities to develop jurisprudence and ensure consistency and uniformity in the interpretation and application of community law. We urge the fullest utilisation of this instrument as anticipated by the terms of the respective regional treaty.

*Highly* commending the Caribbean Court of Justice for its gracious and excellent hosting of this inaugural Hemispheric Meeting of Regional Courts and with express gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for their considerable support.

*Decide* that the next meeting of Hemispheric Regional Courts will be hosted by The Inter-American Court of Human Rights at its Seat in San José, Costa Rica in 2023.

Being done in Spanish and English, each being equally authentic.

Adopted in Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, on this **23rd day of September, 2022.**

**CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE**

The Hon Mr. Justice Adrian Saunders  
President

**CENTRAL AMERICAN COURT OF JUSTICE**

The Hon Mr. Justice César Ernesto Salazar Grande  
President

**COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE ANDEAN COMMUNITY**

The Hon Mr. Justice Hugo Ramiro Gómez Apac  
President

**EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT**

The Hon Dame Janice Pereira, DBE, LL.D  
Chief Justice

**INTER-AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Hon Mr. Justice Ricardo Pérez Manrique  
President