



Opening Remarks by Justice Rajnauth-Lee at the First Hemispheric Meeting of Regional Courts

The Honourable Mme Justice Maureen
Rajnauth-Lee, Judge of the Caribbean
Court of Justice

The First Hemispheric Meeting of Regional Courts

Hyatt Regency
Trinidad and Tobago
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In September 2022, the Caribbean Court of Justice hosted the First Hemispheric Meeting of Regional Courts in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The theme of the First Hemispheric Meeting was “**The Rule of Law and International Justice**”. Participants explored the challenges facing regional courts in the course of their operations and shared best practices in substantive areas of international and community law. The following Regional Courts participated in this First Hemispheric Meeting - The Central American Court of Justice, The Court of Justice of the Andean Community, The Inter-American Court of Human Rights, The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court and The Caribbean Court of Justice. Topics discussed included, the Rule of Law and International Justice, Compliance and Enforcement of International Judgments, Institutional Arrangements of International Courts, the Relationship with Domestic Courts and the Referral Obligation.

Remarks
by
The Honourable Mme Justice Maureen Rajnauth-Lee, Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice
on the occasion of the
First Hemispheric Meeting of Regional Courts and Tribunals of the Americas
‘The Rule of Law and International Justice’
22 September 2022

Greetings and Welcome

Honourable Chief Justices, Honourable Attorney General, Excellencies, fellow Judges. A pleasant good morning to all distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen. Permit me to adopt the Protocols which have been established.

It is with tremendous pleasure that I join with my colleague, the Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson, in extending a warm welcome to you all, to this, the First Hemispheric Meeting of Regional Courts, hosted by the Caribbean Court of Justice, in the beautiful capital city of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

The Caribbean – my Home

It is my privilege to provide a few brief insights into my home. - the beautiful Caribbean region; from Belize in the north, in Central America; coming across and down through the beautiful island chain that is the Caribbean – passing Jamaica, Haiti, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, and ending in the south with Suriname and Guyana, on the South American mainland. These are the lands of steelpan and calypso, reggae, chutney and other indigenous sounds. This region can be proud of icons such as Bob Marley, one of the most popular musicians in the world; Usain Bolt, widely regarded as the greatest sprinter of all time; and Brian Lara, the holder of world records in the sport of cricket, popularly nicknamed “The Prince of Port of Spain.” The region’s beautiful beaches and natural wonders, such as Kaieteur Falls in Guyana, are breath-taking. These lands boast resilient, warm, and culturally rich peoples; some indigenous; some brought here against their will; some who came freely with the hope of a better life; but all who have worked together to build nations of which we can be proud, and which make up the Caribbean.

Sincere Appreciation

Allow me to convey on behalf of us all sincere appreciation to the presenters and speakers at this prestigious event. We look forward with much anticipation to exceptional presentations, and meaningful contributions by all participants. Thank you to those who have worked tirelessly to ensure smooth sailing over the next two days. I wish to extend special thanks to the Honourable Mr Justice Adrian Saunders, the President of the Caribbean Court of Justice, for his unstinting and invaluable support, and to Justice Winston Anderson and his very competent team, for spearheading the organization of this important Conference.

Dialogue and the Sharing of Experiences

Over the next two days, there will be focus on the general theme “*The Rule of Law and International Justice*.” Participants will consider the challenges facing regional courts in the course of their operations. Some of these challenges include ensuring institutional integrity and legitimacy and promoting and adhering to best practices in substantive areas such as treaty interpretation, referrals and enforcement.

It is our hope that this inaugural Hemispheric Meeting of Regional Courts will provide a platform for respectful and valuable dialogue. It is intended that participants from courts which speak different languages and have distinct structures, will engage in meaningful discussions, and will establish professional and personal relationships which will last a very long time, and which will benefit all our courts.

After this short opening ceremony, there will be an introduction of participants and preliminary remarks. The rest of the conference is separated into five sessions. Session One will cover the Rule of Law and International Justice. Session Two will explore the topic of Compliance and Enforcement of International Judgments. Session Three will be a discussion on Institutional Arrangements of International Courts. Session Four will cover the Relationship with Domestic Courts. Session Five will explore the Referral Obligation. It is our hope that the plenary sessions which follow the presentations will set the stage for the sharing of experiences and will be critical to the success of the Conference. It is intended that the strategic and constructive recommendations emanating from the plenary sessions will be incorporated in a Communique for dissemination to the Media and wider public.

Closing Comments

Once more, on behalf of the organizers of this, the First Hemispheric Meeting of Regional Courts, I express my gratitude to all presenters and attendees. Your participation is invaluable, and we look forward to spending the next two days with you.

Thank you.