



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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CCJ FACILITATES SENSITISATION SESSIONS ON THE ORIGINAL JURISDICTION IN JAMAICA

Port of Spain, Trinidad. From 11-13 January 2025, a delegation from the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) visited Jamaica to conduct a series of sensitisation sessions on the Court’s Original Jurisdiction and its referral process for Judicial Officers, the General Legal Council (GLC), and the Public Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ). The sessions are part of an ongoing European Union-funded campaign to raise awareness of the Court’s role in protecting the rights and freedoms granted under the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

Under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC), the CCJ was provided exclusive and compulsory jurisdiction to hear and determine disputes concerning the application and interpretation of the Treaty in the Court’s Original Jurisdiction. Therefore, any matters arising out of the operation of the CSME including the right to the freedom of movement, people, and capital, and the right of establishment must be brought before the CCJ for determination. As such, the Court embarked on a regional public education campaign to raise awareness of its Original Jurisdiction and the process through which national courts must refer such matters to the CCJ.

Noting the importance of the Treaty for CARICOM, the Honourable Mr Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD, Chief Justice of Jamaica, opined at the session for Judicial Officers hosted in collaboration with the Judicial Education Institute of Jamaica, “The RTC reflects an ambitious intention to rebuild our Caribbean societies by establishing institutions that will enable us to organise our affairs as we see fit. In effect it is creating a new Caribbean civilization not based on colonialism and slavery but on economic development, the development of human capital, the movement of persons and capital across the region.”

Given the significance of the Treaty, Mr Piotr Byczkowski, Chargé d’Affaires of the European Union Delegation to Jamaica, Belize, and The Bahamas acknowledged the benefits of the sessions not just for the attendees but for the wider region remarking that the work accomplished in the sessions would, “ripple outward, strengthening the justice systems of our respective nations and, by extension, the Caribbean as a whole.”

The three sensitisation sessions were facilitated by members of the delegation comprising CCJ Judges, the Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson and the Honourable Mme Justice Chantal Ononaiwu; Ms Gladys

Young, Assistant General Counsel, CARICOM Secretariat; Mrs Ria Mohammed-Pollard, Communication and Information Manager at the CCJ; and Mr John Furlonge, Project Co-ordinator of the 11th European Development Fund Project. The sessions utilised various interactive teaching methods including case studies, simulation exercises, step-by-step guides, and group exercises based on the audiences to allow for greater attendee participation.

Following the sessions, Ms Denise Kitson, Chair, GLC, praised the initiative, stating, “The General Legal Council is delighted to have partnered with the CCJ in its presentation to the legal profession in Jamaica on key aspects of the CSME regime, the CCJ’s referral mechanism and practice in the Original Jurisdiction of the Court. The presentations delivered by Justices Anderson and Ononaiwu and Ms Gladys Young, Assistant General Counsel of CARICOM were truly excellent, and very well received by all participants! We applaud the Academy and look forward to future similar collaborative events.”

Ms Sasha Vascianna-Riley, Executive Director, PSOJ, echoed similar sentiments remarking, “The PSOJ was pleased to partner with the Caribbean Court of Justice and the CARICOM Secretariat to host a highly impactful forum educating members on the CCJ, the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), and the associated rights, obligations and opportunities for regional business growth. Attendees from diverse sectors, including finance, manufacturing, retail, and small businesses, gained valuable insights into leveraging the CSME and understanding developments in jurisprudence to deepen integration and drive expansion. Gladys Young’s exceptional presentation was thorough, accessible, and well-received, equipping participants with practical knowledge. Based on the success of this initiative, we look forward to a second session to further empower our members.”

Having initiated the public education campaign in November 2022, the CCJ has since conducted sessions in Belize, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, namely Saint Lucia, and now Jamaica. It is anticipated that two additional sessions for the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago and the private sector in Trinidad and Tobago will be conducted later this year before the campaign ends.



The Hon Delroy Chuck, KC, MP, Jamaican Minister of Justice brings remarks at the Original Jurisdiction Referral Process Sensitisation Session for Judicial Officers on 11 January 2025.



Mr Justice Anderson addresses attendees during the Original Jurisdiction Referral Process Sensitisation Session for Judicial Officers on 11 January 2025. During his presentation, Mr Justice Anderson explained that the unfamiliarity of the concept of 'referrals' within the Caribbean legal profession encouraged the CCJ Academy for Law to embark on missions to the various regional judiciaries to sensitise regional judges and attorneys on the referral possibility.

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About the Caribbean Court of Justice:

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, five states access the Court in its Appellate Jurisdiction, these being Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, and Saint Lucia. 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:

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