



# Opening of the Court Year Message: “Honouring our Legacy, Shaping our Future” by the Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson, President of the CCJ

The Honourable Mr Justice Winston  
Anderson, President of the Caribbean  
Court of Justice

## Opening of the Court Year 2025-2026

The Seat of the Court, Trinidad and Tobago  
06 October 2025

**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 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.

**Message**

**by**

**The Hon Mr Justice Winston Anderson, President, Caribbean Court of Justice**

**On the occasion of the**

**Opening of the Court Year 2025-2026**

**Under the theme: “Honouring our Legacy, Shaping our Future”**

**6 October 2025**

**“Honouring our Legacy, Shaping our Future”**

As the Caribbean Court of Justice commences the Court Year 2025–2026, I extend warm greetings to all members of the legal fraternity, to our partners across the region, and, most importantly, to the people of the Caribbean whom we have the privilege to serve. Our strategic theme, “Honouring our Legacy: Shaping our Future”, allows us to reflect on the CCJ’s enduring commitment to accessible, fair and efficient justice, innovation, and regional integration.

This past year was a milestone for the Court. We marked the CCJ’s 20th anniversary, an occasion for celebration of two decades of jurisprudential leadership and regional service. Our anniversary celebrations culminated in a memorable Gala in June 2025, where we honoured the dedication and contribution of those who have provided bedrock support for the Court over the past 20 years. That landmark underscored not only our growing legacy but also our continuing commitment to being a model of judicial excellence.

The past year was also a time of transition for the Court. We marked the retirement of two distinguished jurists, our former President, Mr Justice Adrian Saunders, the final member of the inaugural Bench, and Mr Justice Andrew Burgess. Their scholarship, leadership, and deep commitment to the rule of law have left an indelible impression. At the same time, we welcomed new colleagues whose perspectives and expertise have already begun to enrich our deliberations and our judicial decisions: Mme Justice Chantal Ononaiwu in October 2024, and Mr Justice Chile

Eboe-Osuji in April 2025. Later this month, we will also welcome another member of the Bench, Mr Justice Arif Bulkan, continuing the process of renewal and strengthening of the Court.

The Court's judicial work remained steady throughout the year. Between 1 August 2024 and 31 July 2025, the Court convened a total of 40 sittings, comprising 10 case management conferences, 19 hearings, and 11 judgment deliveries. We have had 29 appellate jurisdiction hearings, five Original Jurisdiction hearings, and six special leave applications. I commend our judges and staff for their continued dedication and professionalism in ensuring that the work of the Court is carried out efficiently and with integrity.

Even as we reflect on the past year, we remain focused on the future. Later this year, we will launch the Court's Strategic Plan for 2025-2032. This Plan sets out six clear priorities: judicial excellence and independence; access to justice and increased regional impact; strengthening communication, stakeholder engagement and public trust; embrace of technology and innovation; organisational resilience and sustainability; and empowering persons to function within a high-performance environment.

In shaping the future work of the Court, we continue to be guided by transformative and innovative policies and procedures designed to increase access to justice and boost efficiency. Notably:

- We have formally adopted a Policy to Improve Access to Justice and Provide Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities, ensuring that justice is not only available but accessible to all, reinforcing our commitment to inclusivity.
- We have issued Practice Direction No. 1 of 2025 on The Use of Generative AI in Court Proceedings, which will guide the responsible integration and use of artificial intelligence.
- We will continue to proudly host the Annual CCJ International Law Moot, which just completed its 15th year—the longest-running institutional activity of the Court—nurturing the next generation of legal minds.
- We will continue with our referral training initiatives and workshops on the Original Jurisdiction across the region, increasing awareness of the obligations on Member States and of the rights afforded to nationals under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC).

- We will soon be launching the CCJ Original Jurisdiction Rules in Dutch, allowing greater accessibility to the Court for nationals of Suriname to advocate for their rights under the Treaty; and sensitising other Dutch-speaking territories to the possibilities under the RTC.
- Through the support of the 11th European Development Fund, our recently refurbished courtroom, with modern and state-of-the-art technology, will allow for an enhanced court experience for our judges, attorneys, and all other court users.

I assumed the presidency of the Court three months ago, in July 2025, and remain mindful of the immense responsibility this reposes in me. My focus continues to be on building even stronger relationships with stakeholders, deepening public education and awareness of the Court's role and processes, ensuring greater accessibility to our judgments, and leveraging technology, including artificial intelligence, responsibly and effectively. In this, I am in debt to a strong and supportive Bench and a cadre of staff committed to the mission and vision of the Court.

As we embark on this new Court year, let us continue to work together to advance our Caribbean society. The CCJ remains committed to the path defined by commitment to excellence, resilience, innovation, transparency, inclusivity, and bold vision. We look forward to the future with confidence.

Thank you.