



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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MEDIA RELEASE

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CCJ DELEGATION CONCLUDES VISIT TO SURINAME TO ENGAGE ON ACCESSION TO THE CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. From 20–24 January 2026, a high-level delegation from the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) concluded an official visit to the Republic of Suriname, following an invitation extended by the Honourable Mr Justice Iwan Rasoelbaks, President of the Court of Justice of Suriname.

As part of the visit, representatives of the Court including the Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson, President of the CCJ; the Honourable Mr Justice Peter Jamadar, CCJ Judge; Sir Dennis Byron, former CCJ President; and Gabrielle Figaro-Jones, Registrar and Chief Marshal engaged members of the Surinamese judiciary, parliamentarians, and other key stakeholders at the Congress on the Modernisation of the Judiciary, held at the Torarica Resort in Paramaribo on 22 January 2026. The presentations addressed the Court's framework, operability, effectiveness, and institutional architecture, as well as the possibility of Suriname's accession to the Appellate Jurisdiction of the CCJ.

In his address at the Congress, President Anderson noted that accession to the CCJ's Appellate Jurisdiction would solidify Suriname's status as a sovereign and independent nation, strengthen Community institutions and contribute the diversity and richness of regional jurisprudence. Suriname comes from a civil law tradition, unlike most other Caribbean Community Member States, which have a common law background. In his presentation, President Anderson outlined a proposal for the establishment of a specific Civil Law Chamber within the CCJ to hear appeals from Suriname.

It was explained that the Chamber would comprise suitably qualified judges, experienced in civil law jurisprudence. Additionally, proceedings would be conducted entirely in accordance with civil law traditions. Appeals would be managed under procedural rules drafted in Dutch, with all filings, evidence, and correspondence submitted in the Dutch language, reflecting the legal and linguistic context of Suriname.

As part of the visit, the delegation also paid a courtesy call on Her Excellency Jennifer Geerlings-Simons, President of the Republic of Suriname. Discussions focused on the modernisation of Suriname's judiciary and the CCJ's role in supporting judicial reform and regional integration.

The Court looks forward to future engagement with Suriname as the State continues to work on the modernisation of their local judiciary, consistent with the Court's mandate to advance access to justice, regional integration, and the rule of law within the Caribbean.

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Caption: The Hon. Mr Justice Winston Anderson, CCJ President addresses the audience at the Congress on the Modernisation of the Judiciary in Paramaribo, Suriname.

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 Winston Anderson. 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.

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