



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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CCJ President Addresses Environmental Rule of Law at International Conference

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. From 20 to 22 April 2026, the President of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), the Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson, visited The Bahamas to speak on the role of the Escazú Agreement in promoting the rule of law in the Caribbean at the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Agreement (COP4). COP4 is hosted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The Conference is being held for the first time in the Caribbean in Nassau, from 21 to 24 April 2026.

President Anderson was accompanied by Mr Marlon Prince, officer in the Chambers of the President, and the Honourable Mme Justice Mira Dean-Armorer, Justice of Appeal of the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago, in her capacity as Deputy Chair of the CCJ Academy for Law. At its recent 8th Biennial Conference, held in Port of Spain November 2025, the CCJ Academy highlighted the importance of environmental justice to sustainable development.

The Escazú Agreement, adopted on 4 March 2018 in Escazú, Costa Rica, is a landmark regional treaty aimed at advancing environmental rights across Latin America and the Caribbean. It seeks to guarantee access to environmental information, promote public participation in environmental decision-making, and strengthen access to justice in environmental matters.

The concept of the environmental rule of law was first proposed in 2012 by the International Advisory Council to the United Nations Environment Programme, of which President Anderson is a founding member. That same year, the concept was formally recognised by the international community at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Since then, it has served as a catalyst for governmental and institutional initiatives worldwide to protect and promote environmental interests.

The environmental rule of law integrates sustainable development within the general rule of law principle. It ensures that environmental laws are clear, enforceable, and applied equitably. Application and implementation frequently involve and are depended on procedural rights.

In reflecting on the significance of the Escazú Agreement at COP4, President Anderson noted that “The procedural guarantees in the Escazú Agreement are not abstract or merely legal commitments; they operate as economic markers and enablers. By shifting access to information, public participation, and access to justice from theory to practice, the Agreement dictates how environmental decisions are made and how risks are measured and shared. The Agreement thus brings the environmental rule of law closer to realization.”

Live streaming of the event is facilitated here: <https://live.cepal.org/escazu/>.

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Caption: From left to right:

Sharing the panel with the Hon. Mr Justice Anderson at COP4 are Ms Watatakalu Yawalapiti, Coordinator of ATIX Müller and Co-Founder of the National Network of Indigenous Ancestral Warrior Women, Brazil; Ms Mariana Boy Tamborrell, Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection, Mexico; Ms Gomin Camacho, CEO, Ethnic Relations Commission, Guyana; and Ms Jerusa Ali, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Bahamas.

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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