

# Court Performance Update

## 1. Access to Justice

The Court continues to take much care in ensuring accessibility. It maintains its high standards in the provision of a safe, non-intimidating and convenient facility. Our mandate to provide access to the physically challenged has been improved in that Braille has been included in more signage. Staff were trained in basic fire safety and fire warden procedures as well as exposed to the standards required under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. As a result of this training, a Safety & Health Committee comprising staff from all units was formed.

The Court continues to provide access to its operations via its well maintained website where all users have easy and convenient access to information about the Court and all its judgments.

Court Room 1 has now been completed and there are now facilities for video conferencing which provides even greater access to justice. It is planned that video conferencing facilities will be placed in other courts of the region.

The Court now routinely hears Case Management Conferences via teleconferencing which negates the need for attorneys to travel to the Court for these hearings. We have conducted two full hearings via teleconferencing.

## 2. Expedition and Timeliness

From inauguration to date the Court has heard and determined 35 appeals and applications in its Appellate Jurisdiction and issued an interim ruling in one matter in the Original Jurisdiction. On average it takes six months from filing to disposition.

The Court has improved on its financial and accounting business practices. Microsoft Great Plains software was implemented and this has enhanced the Court's business processes and access to critical business information.

## 3. Equality, Fairness and Integrity and Promoting the Rule of Law

The Caribbean Court of Justice (Appellate Jurisdiction) Rules 2005 have been amended to deal with the new procedure for filing a Notice of Appeal.

The Court has written 16 judgments all of which appear on the website. Several judgments appear in the West Indian Reports from Volume 69 onwards. Numerous articles and commentaries have been written on ***The Attorney General, Superintendent of Prisons and Chief Marshal v Jeffrey Joseph and Lennox Ricardo Boyce*** which is considered the landmark decision of the CCJ.

The Court continues to ensure that its records are properly stored and accessible and appropriate solutions have been implemented. Also a number of staff members have been trained in all aspects of records management. The Library's server has been enhanced to accommodate all of the Current Awareness Bulletins as well as to store all digitally transcribed transcripts of the Court's proceedings in a Portal Document Format (PDF). To assist with its case records management, the Court has implemented JEMS as its case management information system and e-filing system.

The Court continues to cater to the research and information needs of the judges and users of the Court. To ensure this, the Library maintains and develops both its print and electronic collections. Current and older legal as well as non-legal materials have been purchased to satisfy these needs.

## 4. Independence and Accountability

The Caribbean Court of Justice continues its efforts to develop and strengthen its good relations with the Conference of Heads of Government, the Conference of Heads of Judiciary, the Council of Legal Education and all national governments, oppositions, judiciaries,

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labour movements and business communities in the appropriate manner. In furtherance of this there have been tripartite meetings between a delegation comprising CCJ Judges and senior staff, Trustees and Commissioners and the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Attorney General and the President of the Bar Association of Belize. Other meetings have been planned for Jamaica and Antigua and Barbuda.

The Court continues its public education initiatives and this year has held a conference in Belize. The conference was well received by the audience that comprised members of the public, bench, bar, business community and the labour movement. There are plans for future conferences in other countries that are served by the CCJ.

## **5. Attaining and Preserving Public Trust and Confidence**

Through the delivery of its judgments and the accessibility of these judgments the public is able to garner a better understanding of the work of the Court. It is also a means by which the public is able to judge for themselves the calibre of the judges and the commitment of the Court to develop a Caribbean jurisprudence.

## **6. Protecting the Rule of Law**

The jurisprudence of the Caribbean is continuously being developed by the CCJ through its judgments. There have been several decisions that have clarified areas of land law in Guyana. The CCJ also heard its first Original Jurisdiction matter - an occasion which was greatly anticipated both by the Court and the legal community at large.