

*Ensuring expedition
and timeliness and access
to justice*

The Court Registry

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This year was a very exciting one for the Court. It marked the filing of not just one but two matters in the original jurisdiction of the Court, both applications for special leave to commence proceedings. From 2006 until 3rd April 2008 when the first application was filed, staff of the Court read reports in regional newspapers of disputes which were supposedly 'headed to the CCJ'. Finally, after advising attorneys who were proposing to bring matters in the original jurisdiction on the procedure for so doing, on 3rd April 2008, the training and preparation of the staff of the Registry in the original jurisdiction Rules were tested when the first application was filed.

In the original jurisdiction of the Court, the Registry is required to serve all documents filed by the parties to the proceedings and by any Contracting Party where so ordered. This is different from the appellate jurisdiction of the Court where the parties are required to serve the documents filed by them and the Registry serves the parties with orders and notices issued by the Court unless otherwise ordered.

This requirement for service by the Registry entails careful monitoring of the dates of service of documents to ensure compliance with the timelines fixed by the Rules. The filing of matters in the original jurisdiction also meant that training and preparation had to be taken to a higher level because preparations for witnesses and interpreters would have to be reviewed and/or activated.

Above: The hard working team of the CCJ Registry: Mr. Nandlal Hardial; Court Registry Supervisor, Ms. Paula Pierre; Registrar and Chief Marshal, Ms. Radha Permanand; Deputy Registrar and Deputy Marshal, Ms. Jacqueline Swaby; Court Support Officer.

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The year was also significant for the appellate jurisdiction of the Court because after implementing the Appellate Jurisdiction Rules for more than two years and after receiving feedback from some attorneys on the problems which they experienced with those Rules, the Court made a substantial amendment to the Rules. These amendments were made with effect from 1st April 2008 and affected Part 10 (Leave to appeal), Part 11.1 and 11.3(f) (Notice of Appeal) and Part 13 (Record of Appeal). Schedules 1-3 were deleted and replaced and two new Schedules were added which dealt with the net worth qualification for leave to appeal as a poor person and the limit on security for costs.

The period under review continued its heightened level of communication with the sub-Registries of Barbados and Guyana but also saw an increase in the level of communication with other sub-Registries as a result of the filing of the applications in the original jurisdiction.

STAFF OF THE REGISTRY

Ms. Radha Permanand joined the Registry as the Deputy Registrar and Deputy Marshal on 1st February 2008 when she was promoted from the position of Judicial Research Assistant. Her appointment increased the number of members of staff of the Registry from four to five. The other members of staff of the Registry are the Registrar, the Registrar's Secretary, the Registry Supervisor and the Court Support Officer.

THE SUB-REGISTRIES

The Registry continued to have much more frequent communication with the sub-Registries of Barbados and Guyana than with the other ten sub-registries of the Court. This situation changed however when on July 22, 2008 the Court ordered in its Interim Ruling in the first application for special leave to commence proceedings in the original jurisdiction, that the Registrar the Caribbean Community and all the Contracting Parties except Guyana with the application for special leave and invite them to make written and/or oral submissions in the proceedings, if they so wished. The Registrars of the Courts of each of those Contracting Parties had to be informed of the possibility that submissions might be filed in their sub-Registries in compliance with the Order and reminded of the procedure in the Original Jurisdiction.

The high turnover of Registrars in the sub-Registries of the Court adverted to in previous Reports was not as noticeable during the period under review. Mrs. Maureen Crane-Scott, Q.C. the Registrar of the Supreme Court of Barbados was elevated to the Bench in Barbados in 2008. Ms. Marva Clarke replaced her as Ag. Registrar of the Supreme Court of Barbados.