Justice Reform and Emancipation: The Lessons and the Legacy

The Right Honourable Sir Dennis Byron
President, Caribbean Court of Justice
31 July 2016
The History of Emancipation in Jamaica

- 1664 – Introduction of slavery-based plantation economy
- 1834 – the Proclamation of Freedom
- 1838 – Slavery was abolished

Emancipation = human rights + equality before the law
Historical Developments in the Jamaican Judicial System

The Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865 – the absence of human rights and freedoms in judicial administration

- The Universal Declaration on Human Rights
- The 1962 Constitution of Jamaica and the Bill of Rights
- The Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and the Original Jurisdiction of the CCJ
Regional Integration, Emancipation and Judicial Reform

- Freedom in movement of people, capital and goods
- Establishing level playing field between CARICOM and global economies
- Equal distribution of CARICOM benefits
- The Original Jurisdiction of the CCJ:
  - Judicial redress available to all CARICOM people
  - Shanique Myrie stood up for her rights
  - CCJ adjudicating on human rights issues
The Citizens' Responsibility

- It is YOUR responsibility to use the mechanisms that exist.
- When the systems are utilized, lessons are learned and reform is effective.
Justice Reform

The Report of the Commission of Enquiry:

* In defense of human rights
* Alternative Dispute Resolution
* Addressing delay and backlog
* Use of Technology
The Role of the CCJ in Regional Judicial Reform
Brexit reflections
Conclusion

- Let us sit at the table of brotherhood with full equality in all its aspects

"Free at last, Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last"