



This year the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) celebrated 10 years of service to the citizens and businesses of the Caribbean Community.

What an honour and a privilege it is for me to pen this message as President of the Court and to work with such a talented team whose record of service, leadership and jurisprudence continues to be held in high regard. This annual report, which covers the period August 2014 to July 2015, will both reflect on the past and also share a vision for what the Court will be in the future. And we can already see that the future is bright for the CCJ as, during this judicial year, many of the countries in the region have been discussing making the CCJ their final court of appeal.

In January 2015 we received the news that Dominica would be joining the countries that have acceded to the CCJ as the final court of appeal. Dominica acceded in March 2015.

Later in the year, Jamaica's House of Representatives voted to have the Court replace the Privy Council as the final court of appeal. While not yet approved by the Senate, it sends the signal that more and more countries are seeing the value in having the CCJ as their final appellate court. Similar discussions are taking place in Grenada, Antigua and St. Lucia and we welcome those developments as a manifestation of the plans of our forefathers to have a regional Court as an arbiter of justice, a guardian of rights and a catalyst for the development of regional judicial systems. The Court can play a pivotal role in ensuring social stability and encouraging economic development in the region.



For the 10th Anniversary, we held a celebration at the Court, and invited a number of our internal and external stakeholders to share in this important milestone. Our 10th anniversary exhibition was also launched at the same time and serves as a tool for public education and a commemoration of the work that has been done over the years. We were also hosted by a number of media houses, in Trinidad and around the region, to spread awareness about the work of the Court in its ten years of existence.

Also of note, as we are a prudent institution, the planning and execution of the 10th anniversary activities was done by a talented in-house team with support from contractors.

As we are speaking of the CCJ's 10 years, it also behooves me to pay tribute to the first President of the Court, the Rt. Hon. Michael de la Bastide, for his dedication to this institution and the outstanding legacy he left. He has left an indelible mark on the Organization and the region owes him a debt of gratitude.

I must also make mention of the first chairman of the Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission (RJLSC), Sir David Simmons, and all the other past commissioners of the RJLSC; to the first Chairman of the CCJ Trust Fund, Dr. Rollin Bertrand, and the past Trustees and staff of the Fund; retired judges Mr. Justice Pollard and Mme. Justice Bernard and to the management and members of staff who have served the Organization well and have moved on. All of them have contributed immensely to the development of the Court.

My sincere thanks to my current colleagues: the Judges, our Registrar & Marshal, the Registry and administrative staff, who continue to contribute their professional expertise, diverse talents and innovative ideas to the Institution. In December 2015, 27 members of staff will be rewarded for dedicated service of 10 years.

That represents almost 30% of our work force which speaks to the individual commitment, resilience and dedication of the CCJ's employees. Last, but certainly not least, I want to recognize the support and guidance of the CCJ Trust Fund and the RJLSC which have been stewards of the Caribbean Court of Justice for the last decade and whose support and guidance continue to be invaluable.

We have pledged to improve our human resources capabilities and we have begun to take steps to do so. The restructuring of the Organization continued with the hiring of a Finance and Administration Manager, Ms. Andrea Callender, and a Security and Logistics Manager, Mr. Maurice Piggott, in February 2015. Our Communications and Information Manager, Ms. Charmaine Wright, joined us in May 2015 completing the revised Organizational Structure recommended by the RJLSC. During this time we also bid farewell to the Deputy Court Executive Administrator, Ms. Wendy Lewis.

We have also been working with consultants to help with our institutional strengthening. The consultants have been mentoring units within the Court, and their leaders, while they develop annual operational plans that are more measurable, inclusive and directly contribute to the objectives outlined in the Court's Strategic Plan.

As we are in the midst of implementing the CCJ's Strategic Plan, which covers the years 2013-2017, it would be remiss of me not to also look towards what we see for the CCJ in the future. The CCJ must continue to develop and implement technological solutions to improve efficiency, reduce waste and to strengthen collaboration among nations. The work of the Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) Project also plays a role in that future. Already pilot projects in Barbados, Grenada, Guyana and Jamaica, are improving the effectiveness of the judiciaries in those countries. All of these initiatives being undertaken by JURIST will provide information and tools that we can use for the benefit of all judiciaries in the region.

My final comment will be about the Court's existing efforts to be more responsible with its financial resources and its carbon footprint. We are actively working to reduce the amount of paper used within the Court and one of those areas will extend to our annual report. We will be reducing the number of printed copies of the annual report and are encouraging you to receive the report via email or an electronic copy. Please support us in this mission.

The Right Honourable Sir Dennis Byron
President of the Caribbean Court of Justice