

VISION FOR THE COURT

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR DENNIS BYRON

I have thought long and hard about my vision for the Caribbean Court of Justice. I watched the CCJ start off as a fledgling bird and I have been pleased to watch its growth as it is now soaring to new heights. As the Court celebrates 10 years, I am proud of where it has come but we must now begin to equip the Court for an exciting future ahead.

TECHNOLOGY

Tools that enable courts, Judges and employees to deliver justice that is faster, more accessible and more efficient is necessary. I am a believer that technology can help courts to be far more accessible to the ordinary citizen and can help them to have the same access to justice as powerful governments or corporations. Technology is one of the drivers that can enable courts to work far more efficiently, allowing for faster disposition of cases, and will ultimately lead to greater access to justice for all. Another goal would be integration with the wider legal community so that all can benefit from increased efficiency and easier retrieval of documents. Some courts, including the CCJ, have achieved this with filing by email but this does not go far enough. I believe that the CCJ should pioneer and champion the application of a regional integrated case management system which would include an e-filing platform.

CAPACITY BUILDING & OUTREACH

The CCJ must continue to engage with local judiciaries to provide resources, tools and training to advance their own judicial reform activities. I also see the CCJ being the repository for judicial reform information and guidance for the Caribbean and sharing that knowledge through publications, conferences and online sources. This way, justice reform is achieved more efficiently and effectively. In addition, the Court continues to provide opportunities for learning to young jurists. This is done through our annual intern programme for students of regional law schools and also developmental opportunities like our annual International Law Moot. It is my hope that these kinds of opportunities, which give valuable work experience as well as deeper appreciation for the practice of Law, will be expanded as the Court grows in scope.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

While we believe in the right of all litigants to have their matter heard in court, we also want the CCJ to be a catalyst in the growth of the settlement of disputes through alternative means throughout the region.. We are also

working with judiciaries and institutions in the region to build capacity in this area. It is hoped that this will lead to widespread adoption of this approach which reduces the amount of cases in already burdened judicial systems.

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

It is necessary that the public is not only informed about what their rights are but are aware of how the justice system works. This will give a level of confidence to the people who we serve and is a necessary component in ensuring social stability and helps to assure their use of the proper channels to obtain justice.

HIGH-PERFORMING WORK ENVIRONMENT

It is one of the tenets of the CCJ's Strategic Plan 2013-2017, but it is also a vision of mine, to have employees who are happy, productive and engaged. The Court, and the RJLSC, continues to put in place measures and interventions toward this ideal. It is my belief that an organization that serves the Caribbean region must be staffed with persons of high intellect, tremendous expertise and with a strong sense of regional pride. We have such a team here and we must retain and reward them appropriately.

JUDICIAL REFORM & ADMINISTRATION

The Court will continue to champion judicial reform from as many angles as are practicable. The CCJ is also engaged in the development of judicial education, training and capacity building exercises in the region. For example, the CCJ provides support to its educational arm, the Caribbean Academy for Law and Court Administration (CALCA), and to the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO). These efforts will be expanded over the next few years to be broader in context and to provide additional services to the region. These are in addition to other reform activities being championed by the Court.

In the area of our core work, as the CCJ has to lead by example, we have developed mechanisms to ensure that matters are heard and judgments delivered expeditiously. These activities are supported by an innovative performance measurement toolkit which is being developed. The methodologies for setting, monitoring and evaluating standards will be available to be shared with judiciaries in the region who are grappling with those issues.