

Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO)

The 2015 CAJO Biennial Conference was held in Jamaica from 24th - 26th September 2015 under the theme “**Setting High Standards for Justice Delivery**”. Approximately 130 judicial officers registered for the Conference. The participants included specially-invited presenters and judicial officers from a range of countries outside the Caribbean including the United States, Canada, England, Australia, Mexico, France and The Netherlands. This year, for the first time, there was also a delegation from Puerto Rico and a representative from the International Association of Judges. The Conference attracted the attendance of six Heads of Judiciary from Caribbean countries and a former Chief Justice of the Canadian province of Ontario.

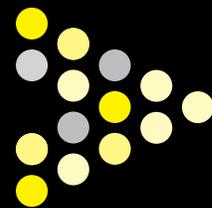
Two keynote presentations were delivered. The first, by Professor Richard Drayton titled “Longer than rope? Time, History, and the Law in the Caribbean”, examined Caribbean law and its present interpretation from a historical perspective. The presentation provided a refreshing perspective by a non-lawyer that sought to explain and situate present legal concepts in the context of the colonial history of the region. The second keynote was delivered by Professor Kimberly Papillon on “The neuro-science of Judicial decision-making and Impartiality”. Professor Papillon demonstrated vividly, with the aid of neuro-science and empirical data, how unconscious bias affects judicial decision.



At the end of the conference, the commemorative photo was taken of presenters, sponsors and delegates who attended the CAJO 4th Biennial Conference held in Jamaica at the Rose Hall Hilton Resort & Spa. The conference included sessions on methods to ensure expeditious resolutions of trials, real time court reporting, separation of powers and restorative justice.



Professor Kimberly Papillon, one of the keynote presenters, delivered a highly interactive and thought-provoking presentation entitled “The Neuro-science of judicial decision-making and impartiality”.



The conference featured a variety of panel discussions and plenaries that covered such diverse issues as judicial methods that could reduce delay and achieve high performance to Gender Responsiveness and the Law.

CAJO placed greater emphasis on the Magistracy at this year's conference. This was reflected not only in the holding of a Magistrates' forum but also in the fact that an effort was made to ensure that there was good representation from the Magistracy on the panels and also as panel chairpersons. At their forum, the Magistrates present agreed to establish themselves as a Magistrates' arm of CAJO.

CAJO's business meeting looked at ways of strengthening the organization. It was agreed that a select number of representatives from law institutions in the region would be invited to biennial meetings and a resolution was adopted at the closing of the conference. CCJ's Justice Saunders was re-elected as Chairman of the Association and the following executive members and country representatives were elected:

Executive Committee

Mr. Justice Adrian Saunders, Chairman - C.C.J.
Mr. Justice Christopher Blackman - Belize
Mme. Justice Charmaine Pemberton - Trinidad and Tobago
Mme. Justice Yonette Cummings-Edwards - Guyana
Mme. Justice Nicole Simmons - Jamaica
Mrs. Simone Wolfe-Reece - Jamaica
Ms. Camille Darville-Gomez - The Bahamas

Country Representatives

Mr. Justice Evert Van der Poel - Curacao
Mme. Justice Sandra Nanhoe-Gangadin - Suriname
Mr. Justice Francis Belle - OECS
Mme. Justice Sonya Young - Belize
Mme. Justice Charles-Etta Simmons - Bermuda
Mrs. Barbara Cooke-Alleyne - Barbados

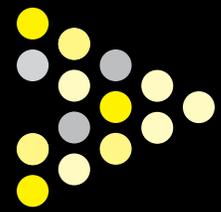
The holding of CAJO 2015 was supported respectively by Thompson Reuters, UN Women, the JURIST project, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Caribbean Court of Justice and The Equal Rights Trust.

Highlights of the CAJO Conference



The Hon Mme. Justice Zaila Rowena McCalla (left), Chief Justice of Jamaica, addressed the audience at the opening of the CAJO 4th Biennial Conference. The conference, held in Jamaica in September 2015, was themed "Setting High Standards for Justice Delivery". Representatives from the judiciary in Jamaica were instrumental in the planning and the provision of resources to ensure that the Conference was a success.

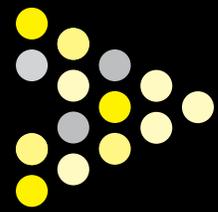
JUDICIAL REFORM ACTIVITIES



The Caribbean Association of Women Judges (CAWJ) held a forum during the conference. Here, the Hon. Mme. Justice Rajnauth-Lee (2nd left), a Judge of the CCJ and a CAWJ Vice-President, addresses the audience which included a number of their male counterparts.



Ms. Allison Ali, Communications Specialist of the Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) Project, gives a brochure with information on the JURIST Project to a CAJO attendee. JURIST was one of the sponsors of the Conference.



The Caribbean Academy for Law and Court Administration (CALCA)

The educational arm of the Court is the Caribbean Academy for Law and Court Administration (CALCA). The Academy was established in 2012 and is administered by a Management Committee under the ultimate authority of the President of the Court. Using various modes of delivery, the academy develops, co-ordinates and facilitates seminars, workshops, exchanges, and special lectures, as the primary vehicles for achievement of its objectives. The academy is intended to provide interesting, informative and innovative perspectives on the rules and the roles of law, particularly, International Law, and is therefore critical to the work of the Caribbean Court of Justice, especially in the Court's Original Jurisdiction. The academy also provides a platform for examining court administration and encouraging best practices in the judicial administration of justice.

Activities

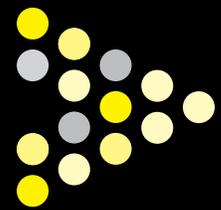
CALCA prepares an annual slate of activities based upon an assessment of need. The roll-out of the programmes contains indications of the target groups to whom each programme is geared. Participants are typically drawn from various professions and fields of endeavour associated not only with courts but also from sectors that have some interaction with courts.

Special seminars, workshops and lectures are delivered in the various jurisdictions of the Caribbean Community under the auspices of CALCA. Programmes vary in length depending on the nature of the legal concepts explored and on other relevant considerations.

The faculty for the academy's programmes consists of international experts in the subject matter and include experts from the CARICOM region and may include Judges and senior officials of the Caribbean Court of Justice. A list of the proposed presenters is usually provided in the advertisement of the relevant programme.

CALCA's flagship event is its biennial Law Conferences/Seminars. The 4th Biennial Conference is to be held in Sint Maarten, in partnership with the General Legal Council of Jamaica, under the theme: 'Law at the Crossroads: Reappraising the Role of Common Law and Civil Law Practitioners in Transnational Development'. The conference takes place from October 27-29, 2016.

CALCA has also taken a leadership role in the establishment the Caribbean Community Administrative Tribunal (CCAT) in order to fill a troubling gap in the community governance arrangements. The approximately twenty-five Community Institutions have a significant number of employees comprising both permanent and contractual staff. However, there exists a worrisome void in the constituent instruments of these Institutions in relation to the settlement of employment disputes.



The establishment of the Caribbean Community Administrative Tribunal is intended to remedy the situation by providing such an avenue for the resolution of employment-related disputes involving staff of eligible CARICOM institutions. Assistance has been received from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the CARICOM Secretariat, among other organizations. So far, significant progress has been made towards the establishment of the tribunal which is planned to come into effect through the signing of the statute, planned for the fourth quarter of 2016.

CALCA has also contacted the several judiciaries within CARICOM with a view to organizing lectures in their respective jurisdictions on the referral obligation under Article 214 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. In preparation for these lectures, a manual and power point presentation are being prepared with the assistance of the Judicial Research Assistants of the CCJ. It is expected that this project will gain traction in 2017.

Judicial Reform And Institutional Strengthening (Jurist) Project

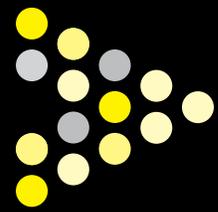
The Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) Project has been working with countries in the Caribbean for the past two and a half years. The ultimate goal of the project is to develop a regional judicial system that is more responsive to the needs of women, men, youth and the poor. Its aim is to modernize and strengthen court systems, processes and services, and to equip judicial officers and court staff with the skills and competencies necessary to deliver justice in a fair, predictable, efficient and timely manner.

The JURIST Project, funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and executed by the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) on behalf of the Conference of Heads of Judiciary of CARICOM, has developed a number of activities that will improve the overall functioning of judiciaries in the region.

During 2016, the JURIST Project held a series of collaborative workshops in conjunction with the judiciaries of Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana and Jamaica with a view to identifying priorities, and building consensus for the Project's work plan for the remaining period.



Mr. John Furlonge, Regional Project Coordinator, JURIST Project summarises the findings of the planning workshop in Barbados.



The Honourable Mme. Justice Yonette Cummings-Edwards, Chief Justice (Ag) of Guyana, and the Honourable Mr. Justice Carl Singh, Chancellor of the Judiciary of Guyana, participate in the Project's Collaborative workshop in July 2016.

While the justice systems in each country have unique and specific challenges, we can state that a few common priorities for judicial reform emerged. These included training of judicial officers, court staff and attorneys; mediation at magisterial and appeal levels; the use of technology to reduce delays and expedite the disposition of cases; and public education and awareness, with the aim to improve public confidence in the justice system.

In June, the JURIST Project launched its website – www.juristproject.org. The website will be a source of comprehensive and up-to-date information about the JURIST Project in the Caribbean and will be one of the main communication vehicles used to inform a wide and varied audience about the JURIST Project. It will be regularly updated to include project progress information, photos, news stories, activities and achievements from countries and partners across the region.

The team also continued its efforts to provide insight into the work of the project by producing JURIST News. The inaugural issue was published in November 2015.

The project team also made considerable progress during the period under review. We have strengthened the governance structure and introduced policies to guide the operations of the project. Additionally, the project has a new Director, Dr. Penny Reddie, who started in August 2016, and a Gender Coordinator, Ms. Anika Gray, seconded from UN Women.