



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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MEDIA RELEASE

(For immediate release)

No. 23:2014

16 July 2014

CARIBBEAN HEADS OF JUDICIARY MEET ON REGIONAL JUDICIAL REFORM PROJECT

CCJ, Port of Spain. On July 14 and 15, 2014 the Conference of the Heads of Judiciary of CARICOM States met at the Headquarters of the Caribbean Court of Justice for a two-day meeting. The purpose of the session was to discuss the implementation of a project to advance judicial reform and to aid the strengthening of courts and court processes throughout the region inclusive of Suriname and Belize.

The project which is expected to benefit all states within the region, aims to build the capacity of regional trial and appellate courts, inclusive of the CCJ which will also function as the project's regional executing agency. The project is also meant to advance the CARICOM goal of economic integration through improved court governance, case flow management and case disposition and so, make the region more attractive for foreign investment.

More specifically, the project will serve to improve court administration and the administration of justice throughout the region. It will also enhance the training of judicial officers and court staff and strengthen and maximise the efficiency of the human resource element in regional courts while also modernising Information and Communication Systems in the courts. The project will have two central cross-cutting themes focusing on issues of gender and environmental sustainability

The initiative comes as response to concerns that exist due to delays experienced by court users in the processing of cases from filing to the carrying out of court orders in both the civil and criminal courts in the Caribbean. This concern has been accompanied by rising crime including domestic violence throughout the region. The resulting backlog of cases has also caused a reduction in public trust and confidence in the judicial arm of government.

The meeting accepted the approach that has been taken for the preparation of a Project Implementation Plan and it is therefore expected that the project will come on stream soon.

Among those in attendance at the meeting were Sir Dennis Byron, President of the CCJ and Heads of Judiciary from Barbados, Belize, Guyana, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, Suriname, Turks and Caicos Islands and Trinidad and Tobago.

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