

Chairman's Report on Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO) Conference 2011

The CAJO Conference was held at the British Colonial Hilton Hotel in Nassau, The Bahamas from 6th – 8th October 2011 on the theme **Bringing the Law Closer to the People**. Over 133 judicial officers registered and participated including presenters and judicial officers from outside the region. The Conference was enhanced by the fact that on the day prior to its opening, the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Caribbean Chief Justices and Heads of Judiciary was held at the same venue and therefore almost all CARICOM Heads of Judiciary were present and participated in the Conference.

The Conference followed the same format as the one held two years earlier in Port-of-Spain. On each of the first two days there was a keynote presentation followed by a variety of panel discussions. On the third morning CAJO held its business meeting. The first keynote address was preceded by an opening ceremony that featured a **welcoming address by Sir Michael Barnett**, Chief Justice of The Bahamas, **remarks by Sir Dennis Byron**, newly appointed President of the Caribbean Court of Justice and **remarks by Justice Adrian Saunders**, Chairman (Pro Tem) of CAJO.

The keynote presentation on the first morning was delivered by Justice Michael Kirby, a former judge of the Australian High Court. His presentation was very warmly received and was followed by a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sponsored plenary session on **Judicial Sensitization, HIV and the Law**. This session was chaired by Justice Adrian Saunders and panellists included Dr. Maria Tallarica, Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Mr. Ivan Cruikshank and Mr. Vivek Divan. There followed that day, discussions on:

The Role of Morality in the Adjudication Process, the panellists for which were Mr. Justice Michael Kirby, Chief Justice Ivor Archie and Mr. Justice Neville K. Adderley and this panel was chaired by Mr. Justice Mario Michel;

Judicial Approaches to Corruption and Tribunals - Mr. Justice David Hayton, Mr. Justice Abdulai Conteh, and Mr. Colin Nicholls Q.C., and chaired by the specially invited jurist from New York, Judge Sylvia Hinds-Radix;

Judicial sensitization to Money Laundering - Judge Georgiana Fraser, Ms. Susan Francois and Mr. Bob Bland, and chaired by the Mr. Justice Don Mitchell; and

Challenges in Sentencing - Justice Roxane George, Mr. Justice Peter Williams, Mrs. Hazel Thompson-Ahye and chaired by Mr. Justice Loris Ganpatsingh (Ret.);

The keynote address on the second morning was delivered by Sir Edwin Carrington, former CARICOM Secretary General and current Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and following his address panel discussions were held on:

Small States, the CSME and the Impact of Globalisation, the panellists for which were Dr. Kusha Haraksingh and Ms. Evelyn Wayne and chaired by Sir Edwin Carrington;

Protecting the Rights of the Victims of Crime - Ms Tracy Robinson, Mr. Justice Jacob Wit and Mr. Simo Vaatainen and chaired by Chief Justice Zaila McCalla;

Substance vs. Procedure - Mr. Justice Peter Jamadar, Sir Dennis Byron, Mr. Frank Walwyn and chaired by Justice Christopher Blackman;

Access to Justice/Using Technology to enhance judicial role – Ms. Carol Herbert, Mr. Jeff Apperson and Ms. Carlene Cross and chaired by Chief Justice Kenneth Benjamin;

Environment: Is there a case for specialization within the Court System - Her Honour Judge Sandra Paul, Justice Charmaine Pemberton, Mr. Justice Tony Ross, (Ret.) and Judge Sandra Oxner (Ret.) who also chaired the panel;

Disaster Preparedness for Courts and Tribunals - Justice Maureen Rajnauth-Lee, Ms. Catherine Guilbard, Mr. Jeff Apperson, Ms. Gail Jermyn and chaired by Mr. Gregory Girard;

Judicial Ethics and the Appearance of Bias especially in a world of Social media - Sir Dennis Byron, Judge Sandra Oxner and Mr. James Eaglin and chaired by Chief Magistrate Tamara Gill.

On the first evening of the Conference the Government of The Bahamas hosted the participants at a reception at Balmoral Club and on the second evening the Bar Association of The Bahamas hosted a cocktail party for all the delegates.

CAJO's business meeting was held on the third morning of the Conference. At that meeting the CAJO Constitution was formally adopted. Justice Saunders was re-elected as Chairman of the Association and ten (10) judicial officers were elected to comprise, with the chairman, the Management Committee of CAJO. The names of the Committee Members elected are:

Justice Adrian Saunders, Chairman – Caribbean Court of Justice

Chief Justice Marston Gibson – Barbados

Chief Justice Kenneth Benjamin –Belize

Chief Justice Cynthia Valstein-Montnor – Suriname

Chief Justice designate Ian Kalawey – Bermuda

Justice Christopher Blackman – The Bahamas

Justice Roxane George – Guyana

Chief Magistrate Tamara Gill – Grenada

Resident Magistrate Cresencia Brown – Jamaica

Assistant Registrar Marissa Robertson – Trinidad and Tobago

Assistant Registrar Camille Darville-Gomez – The Bahamas

Mrs. Sandra Dee Brown was appointed CAJO Secretary – Caribbean Court of Justice

CAJO 2011 was a resounding success and was so hailed by all the participants. Each of the keynote addresses was brilliant and all panel discussions generated tremendous interest and discussion. No judicial officer can say that he or she did not learn something new at the Conference.

Chief Justice Marston Gibson has indicated that Barbados would make every effort to host CAJO 2013 and everyone looks forward to renewing acquaintances in two years' time.

Financial support for CAJO 2011 was provided by Thompson-Reuters, CIDA, UNDP and The Commonwealth Secretariat and I wish to thank respectively for their generosity and assistance Messrs. Beverly Smith-Hinkson and Lisa Reiten, Michele Gibson, Vivek Divan, Akbar Khan and all the other persons, including the presenters and chairpersons who in one way or another contributed to the success of the Conference. We are also indebted to the Government of The Bahamas, the Bar Association of The Bahamas, the Chief Justice and Judiciary of The Bahamas and in particular Ms. Carmille Darville-Gomez and finally, the administrative staff of the Caribbean Court of Justice for the assistance received in making the Conference a success.

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