



CAJO News
Issue 16



7TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE
THE SPIRIT OF SAINT LUCIA

7TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

The Spirit of Saint Lucia

This Issue of CAJO News celebrates the success of the 7th Biennial Conference and offers readers an opportunity to revisit the impactful programming, memorable moments, and spirit of camaraderie. Issue 16 shares significant updates from the CAJO's First Annual General Meeting as a non-profit organisation and also recognises the Hon Mr Justice Christopher Blackman on whom honorary membership was conferred at the Conference. As well, the teams behind the Conference share their reflections and insights into what goes into ensuring a successful event.

Layout and design by Elron Elahie

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Message FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Bonjour! (or is it Bozu!)

At the CAJO's 7th Biennial Conference, spirits were renewed as we marked the first time in quite a while that we were able to come together in-person, as Caribbean judicial officers, and share in cutting-edge judicial education, unforgettable social activities, and enjoy each other's company. This Issue pays tribute to the tremendous work and support that went into making the 7th Biennial Conference a resounding success and celebrates the spirit of Saint Lucia that has now been instilled in all of us.

Issue 16 also marks the first Issue of CAJO News under the new Management Committee elected by you, member judicial officers, at the CAJO's AGM in Saint Lucia. I say, unreservedly, as Chair of this Management Committee that we all look forward to continuing the important and meaningful work of the CAJO and commit to supporting the continued development and reform of the administration of justice across Caribbean judiciaries.

A special thank you goes out to the sponsors of the 7th Biennial Conference: the Caribbean Court of Justice, the JURIST Project, UN Women, and vLex. And, of course, to the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, our incredible host.

I invite you to enjoy this Issue of CAJO News as you relive the wonderful memories of Saint Lucia and look forward to your continued support of the work of the CAJO. As 2023 begins, let us all commit to improving access to justice and to playing our part in making our justice systems more efficient and effective for all persons in the region. Working together, we can make a difference.

The 7th Biennial Conference: A Resounding Success

The Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO) 7th Biennial Conference has been hailed a resounding success. The Conference was hosted by the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC) under the theme 'Caribbean Judiciaries in a Changing World' from 27-29 October 2022 at the Royalton Saint Lucia. The Conference attracted over 120 judicial officers from throughout the region including the Heads of Judiciary of The Bahamas, Barbados, the ECSC, Guyana, and Jamaica as well as other dignitaries. The 2 ½-day intensive judicial education programme comprised 11 interactive sessions facilitated by regional and international jurists and experts.

In his opening remarks, CAJO Chairman, the Honourable Mr Justice Jamadar, Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice, noted that the theme for the Conference was 'informed by the desire to educate, enlighten, and empower' in a rapidly evolving global and regional order. He also reiterated that judicial officers were called to 'deliver justice to real people, living real lives, in real time'. With this in mind, the Conference featured thought-provoking exchanges on a variety of issues of critical and immediate importance for Caribbean citizens and judiciaries such as criminal trials without juries, the use of artificial intelligence in courts, and forced labour, human trafficking and modern forms of slavery. The Conference also examined other pressing areas such as time standards for the hearing of cases and delivery of judgments and best practice performance benchmarks for courts. Participants also engaged in discussions surrounding legal and socio-legal issues relating to human rights, sustainable development and the environment, and gender. These sessions probed matters concerning regional and global changes and the need to implement sensitive and appropriate approaches to justice delivery.

At the Association's First Annual General Meeting, CAJO also adopted a number of Resolutions related to the delivery of justice in the region. The members reiterated the role that judicial officers have to guard democracy and uphold the constitutional rights of all and the duty that judicial officers have to respond to the specific needs of persons and communities who are marginalised and vulnerable. Additionally, the Association recommended and encouraged the commitment by governments and judiciaries to provide adequate resources, financial and otherwise, for judicial education and training.

Programming for the 7th Biennial Conference was developed and managed by the CAJO's Papers and Panels Committee. The Committee comprised:

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The Hon. Mr. Justice Adrian D. Saunders – President, Caribbean Court of Justice and Chair

The Hon. Mr. Justice Peter Jamadar – Judge, Caribbean Court of Justice/ Chairman, CAJO

The Hon. Mr. Justice Jacob Wit – Judge, Caribbean Court of Justice

The Hon. Mme. Justice Maureen Rajnauth-Lee – Judge, Caribbean Court of Justice

The Hon. Mr. Justice Mauritsz de Kort – President, Joint Court of Justice of Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten and of Bonaire, Saint Eustatius, and Saba

The Hon. Mme. Justice Roxane George – Chief Justice (Ag), Guyana

The Hon. Mme. Justice Lisa Ramsumair-Hinds – High Court Judge, Judiciary of T&T

The Hon. Mr. Justice Juan Wolffe – Judge, Bermuda

Ms. Kerine Dobson – Legal Officer, Caribbean Court of Justice

Mrs. Candace Simmons-Peters - EAJ, CCJ/ Executive Administrator, CAJO

Elron Elahie – Research and Programme Coordinator, CAJO

The CAJO is truly grateful to attendees, staff, sponsors, and all others who contributed to another successful conference! The Opening Ceremony can be viewed below.



SETTING THE STAGE

Reflections from the CAJO Planning Committee

Lights, AV requirements, presentations, camera, catering, Airtable, action! CAJO 2022 was like a movie with producers, directors, screenwriters, and a cast! Everyone played a significant role in setting the stage for one of the best CAJO conferences in Saint Lucia at the Royalton during the period October 27 to 29, 2022. The planning for a CAJO conference begins almost immediately at the end of the last conference. Once the venue was announced at the last conference in Belize in 2019, the planning for Saint Lucia began. However, the global pandemic hit in 2020 and put a halt on plans as many of the countries were hit hard by COVID-19 and stymied by lockdowns and travel restrictions. For two years, the CAJO, while still working and conducting online training, was unable to move forward with planning the conference. In 2022, as the world began to see the sun peeking through the COVID-19 cloud, and as a lot of the safety measures from country to country were relaxed, it was announced that CAJO 2022 was on! The CAJO Planning Team led by the Chairman of CAJO, the Honourable Mr. Justice Peter Jamadar, worked alongside the Local Organizing Committee from the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court led by the Honourable Chief Justice, Dame Janice Pereira. With approximately seven months to plan, the two groups met, and meetings were frequent, involved, task-oriented, and lengthy, but very productive! With every passing month, the planning intensified, and the excitement was building to CAJO 2022. I remember when it was announced that the Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley was the featured speaker, this seemed to take the already 'planning to perfection' attitude to the next level.

Candis Cayona, Conference Coordinator



THE STAGE

From participant arrivals to airport transfers to hotel arrangements, it seemed like the only thing happening in Saint Lucia during those three days was CAJO. The stage was set at the Royalton to welcome all the participants, speakers, and exhibitors. The conference facility at Royalton was transformed into a beautiful scene. Like a wave breaking and heading to shore were the participants as they flooded the lobby. The buzzing sound of voices, the chattering, and the many voices that echoed "so long I eh see yuh" dimmed the effects of the intense planning, the day-before hustle, and the last-minute changes and preparation. CAJO 2022 was on. It was a beautiful sight to witness participants connecting, and in many instances reconnecting at the conference and letting their hair down in a social face-to-face setting after being personally restricted for two years. Many participants expressed their gratitude for planning an excellent conference. They were heartened that CAJO has maintained its standard of excellence and that it was evident by the hard work of the planning teams on the ground ensuring that the needs of every participant were met, without exception!

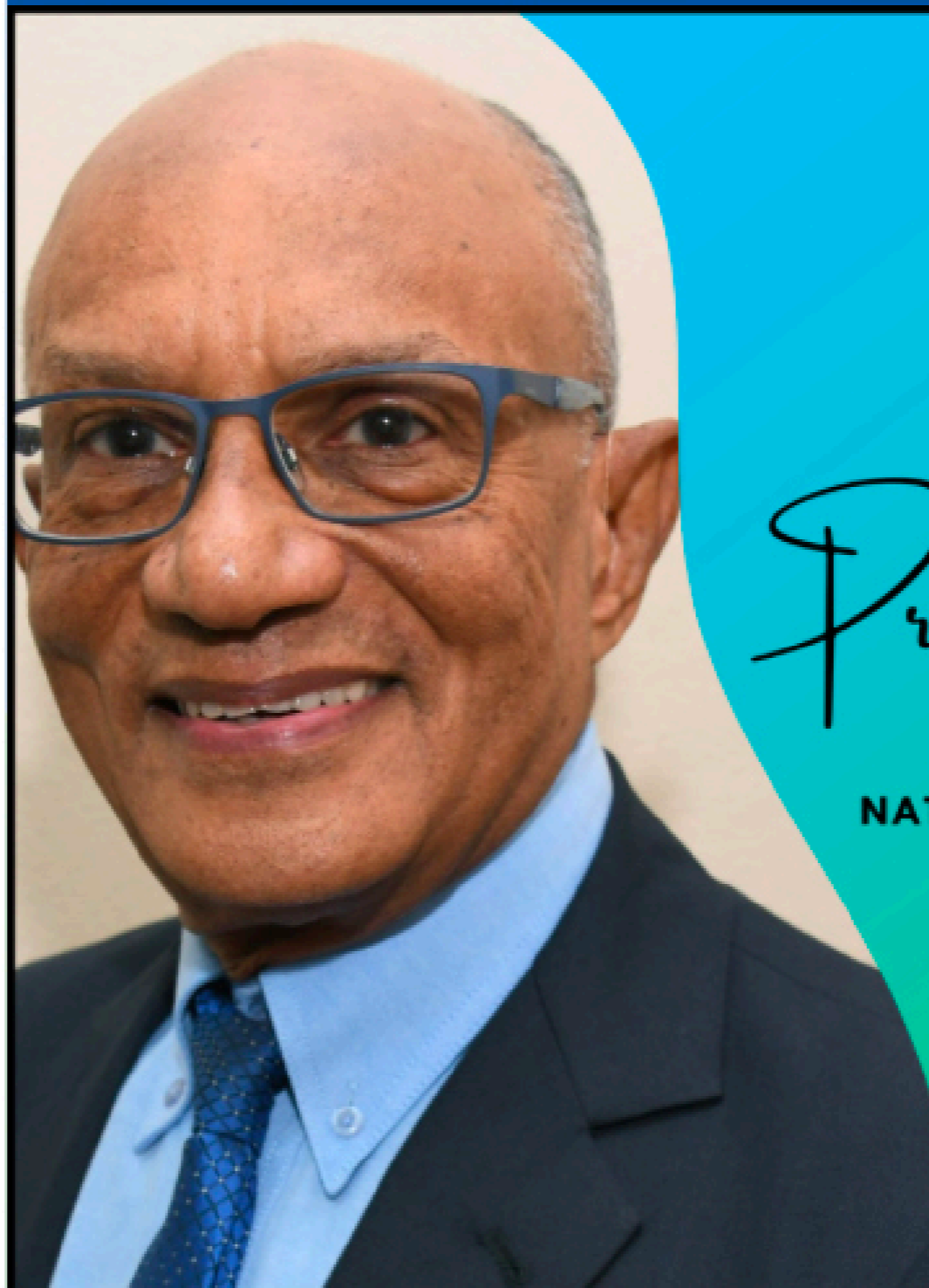
Special mention to the Local Organising Committee of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, who executed a sleuth of logistical and event planning activities, which was no easy feat to manage for 150 participants! They executed with poise and as we say, they understood the assignment! Not to mention the CAJO memorabilia and gifts and the man-hours put into making sure that every bag was packed and designed with the sheer thought of the persons attending. The CAJO Planning team, worked tirelessly to ensure that every detail was attended to, from the colour of the lanyards to the technical audio-visual requirements. Technicians were drawing plans and working outside of normal hours to ensure that everything was just right, and the administrative planning was progressing full steam ahead – drafting budgets, payment requests, contract review, data management software. The CAJO engine room was fully operational! CAJO 2022, now in the distance is but a memory, but a pleasant memory. It will forever be that first conference that brought judicial officers from the region together after the pandemic, in one space, to connect, to learn, to grow. From uncertainty to reality!

BUILDING STRONGER JUDICIARIES

CAPTIVATING KEYNOTES

The Honourable Mia Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados and Professor Trevor Munroe, International Development Consultant and Principal Director of National Integrity Action, Jamaica's Chapter of Transparency International were the two distinguished keynote speakers at the 7th Biennial Conference. In her presentation, Prime Minister Mottley raised a number of issues affecting the delivery of justice and the rule of law in the Caribbean. She expressed the view that **'the most important thing in a civilised society, the thing that defines us as nation states is our ability to maintain the rule of law. We have to ask ourselves as Caribbean people whether we have not reached a moment where the ultimate defence of the rule of law is what is necessary to save our societies and to reserve our capacity to grow from strength to strength.'** Professor Trevor Munroe, on Day 2 of the Conference, recognised the importance of the law and judges in maintaining democracy. In his keynote address, Professor Munroe stated that while **'CARICOM states are not experiencing a "democratic recession", high homicide rates, levels of inequality, concern with corruption and early signals of voter disillusionment are signals which indicate vulnerability to the global downturn of democratic governance.'** He also remarked that **'the judiciary appears to have the least decline in public trust and confidence which gives the potential to check the slide toward democratic recession.'** To view the keynote presentations, click on the image to the right.

* The recording of the Keynote delivered by Prime Minister Mottley will be made available soon.



7TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

CARIBBEAN JUDICIARIES IN A CHANGING WORLD

Prof Trevor Munroe

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NATIONAL INTEGRITY ACTION, JAMAICA
KEYNOTE SPEAKER



CAJO

CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF JUDICIAL OFFICERS

ECSC STRONG

REFLECTIONS FROM THE LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE

As the local organizing committee (LOC), the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court under the leadership of Her Ladyship, Hon. Dame Janice Pereira, LLD. BDE, Chief Justice, had the responsibility to provide oversight, support, and advice to the CAJO, for all on-site arrangements and logistics before, during, and after the conference. The activities ranged from planning and coordination of the official opening ceremony, social activities, security detail, medical services, transportation, airport meet and greet, and transfers, to identification and selection of decorators, photographers, and press officials.

The preparations began at least six months prior to the conference date and included the identification and selection of an adequate conference venue and accommodation for conference participants. The hotels identified for the accommodation were within close proximity of each other and allowed for the easy and seamless transfer of participants to and from the conference venue. Multiple site visits were conducted to ensure that the hotels adequately met the needs of the CAJO team.

To execute the security detail, airport meet and greet, medical support, conference transfers, and social activity transfers, the LOC partnered with the Ministry of External Affairs, the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force, the Ministry of Health, and Landmark Events who provided personnel to protect our senior judicial officers, assist with medical emergencies, serve as ushers throughout the conference and to assist the conference secretariat. The police and protocol officers not only served at the conference but were also available at the social events planned for the enjoyment of the participants.

Michelle John-Theobalds, Registrar, ECSC

The opening ceremony which was a resounding success commenced with the parade of the flags of the CAJO member states by the national Cadet Corp – a troop of young men and women who delivered a splendid display. The LOC engaged a nationally renowned artistic director, Ms. Drenia Frederick, who showcased Saint Lucia's rich culture through interpretive dance, the use of creole dress, and music including live performances by drummers and local folk and soca artists. This energetic and vibrant performance followed the parade of the flags and set the tone for an engaging three-day conference. The coordination of all players required weeks of rehearsals, meetings, and time management.

The LOC staged four social events. The first was a Welcome Reception hosted by the Hon. Chief Justice, Her Ladyship, Hon. Dame Janice Pereira. This event allowed participants to re-acquaint themselves before the official start of the conference proceedings. The evening was marked by lively conversations, local cuisine, and a live band. The following evening the Hon. Prime Minister of Saint Lucia hosted a creole-themed cocktail for participants held at the Governor General's official residence. The delegates were also treated to a fundraising dinner and dance which took place in the old ruins of the Pigeon Island landmark. This event was organized by the Saint Lucia Bar Association. The conference concluded with a dynamic performance by Teddyson "TJ" John who also sang happy birthday to two individuals who were celebrating away from home.

To wrap up their time in Saint Lucia, participants were invited to see Saint Lucia, (the Helen of the West Indies) by sea. The boat sailed 28 nautical miles from Rodney Bay Marina to Soufriere where the boat cruisers were anxious to see the majestic Pitons. Unfortunately, upon arriving in Soufriere a heavy downfall obscured the Pitons. Nonetheless, the seafarers had an enjoyable time with food, music, and some rain.



Members of the LOC and CAJO team

The LOC would like to extend a thank you to all our partners and in particular, the police officers who ensured that every activity from the airport meet-and-greet to the departure of the last participant was covered by police security. Outriders, close protection officers and plain clothes police officers maintained a close eye on every event. The Royal Saint Lucia Police Force worked tirelessly with the LOC and ensured that the high-level delegates were protected while providing discreet surveillance.

In addition, we extend gratitude to the five-member medical and EMS team who were on hand daily to provide medical assistance where necessary. Thankfully their services did not come into play in the incident-free conference.

The coordination and successful execution of the activities of the local organizing committee was the direct result of a dedicated team of employees who pitched ideas and took time off from their busy schedules to attend meetings both physically and virtually.

The team was made up of Judicial Officers and ECSC staff:

**Justice Talyor Alexander,
Justice Agnes Actie,
Master Carlos Michel,
Michelle John-Theobalds,
Mrs. Cecil Hill,
Alana Simmons,
Gregory Girard,
Francis Letang,
Dwaymian Brissette,
Lenore St. Croix,
Natacha James,**

**Anselma Fadlin,
Natasha Fitz-Christophe,
Florentina Nelson,
Zannia Plummer-Gabriel,
Raejean Montoute,
Guy Stava,
Deaver Melius,
Stacia Smith,
Ericson Louis,
Mc Neal Mathurin,
Erica Phillip.**

The protocol officers included Chantel Mathurin-Pamphile, Jamie Dalphinis, Kia Williams, Naomi Fevriere-Eugene, Jakima Delaire, Arnold Jules, Cathy Louis, Magdalene Florius, Alita Finistere.

Participating in the conference was a fulfilling experience for each member of the LOC and we say and big THANK YOU to CAJO for partnering with us to ensure the success of the conference.



Hon Chief Justice Pereira at the Opening Ceremony



Conference participants and guests at the Cocktail Reception



CONFERENCE PHOTO GALLERY

Advancing Digital and Artificial Intelligence Interventions

As part of its continued cutting-edge programming, the CAJO hosted the following plenary discussion and breakout session on digital and artificial intelligence interventions in the Caribbean:

1. **Digital and Artificial Intelligence for Enhancing the Work of Judiciaries**
2. **Privacy and Data Protection in the Courts: Civil and Common Law**

Both sessions were well-received by conference participants and provided unique and important insights into the rapidly evolving spaces in which Caribbean judiciaries must operate and function.



Digital and Artificial Intelligence for Enhancing the Work of Judiciaries Plenary

Globally, judiciaries are advancing the integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness of the administration of justice by implementing tailored digital and artificial intelligence interventions. In the Caribbean, as regional judiciaries continue to address issues such as backlog, delay, ineffective and inefficient court systems and practices, interventions of this nature can play a significant role.

Digital and Artificial Intelligence for Enhancing the Work of Judiciaries brought two experts in the area to explore the developing field and the impact on Caribbean judiciaries. **Professor Frederic Lederer**, Chancellor Professor of Law and Director, Center for Legal & Court Technology, William & Mary Law School and **Mr Bevil Wooding**, Executive Director, Caribbean Agency for Justice Solutions offered engaging and timely presentations and **Justice Jacqueline Graham**, Judge of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, moderated the session.

From the session feedback provided, participants noted the importance of the information shared. One judicial officer shared that there is a *"need to properly prepare for the integration of AI into our region as a tool to assist with making fair and swift decisions,"* as, noted by another judicial officer, *"AI will inevitably come to our region and our courts so it's imperative to become informed so one can decide the best outcome for ourselves."*

In October 2021, the CAJO hosted a webinar titled **"The Future of Caribbean Courts: A Service or a Place"** which featured Professor Richard Susskind OBE. The webinar sought to provide critical insights to judicial officers, legal practitioners, and faculty of legal education institutes as well as encourage discussion around the future of courts in the Caribbean. To view this webinar, [click here](#).

With the rapid expansion of technology globally and across the Caribbean, regional judiciaries are faced with issues of privacy and data protection both to be heard by courts and in their internal administration. **Privacy and Data Protection in the Courts: Civil and Common Law** offered multiple regionally relevant perspectives and approaches be explored to arrive at potential solutions.

The breakout session featured presentations by **Justice Patrick Brooks**, President of the Court of Appeal, Jamaica and **Ms Roella Pourier**, Commission Supervision Personal Data Protection BES, and was moderated by **Justice Bryan Sykes**, Chief Justice, Jamaica.



Privacy and Data Protection in the Courts: Civil and Common Law Session

Feedback provided by participants was significant as judicial officers noted both the novelty and importance of the topic. Some judicial officers were also alarmed at *"how seemingly unprepared we are."*



The Privacy and Data Protection Panel

Global perspective



Snapshot of the presentation by Ms Pourier



Mr Bevil Wooding presenting at the Digital and Artificial Intelligence Plenary

CELEBRATING THE CONFERMENT OF HONORARY MEMBERSHIP OF THE CAJO ON MR JUSTICE CHRISTOPHER BLACKMAN

A quick glance at the title of this article would easily lead one to think that the subject, Mr. Justice Christopher Blackman (ret'd) is being eulogized. Fact is, this is far from the case. Justice Blackman, an ardent and wide reader, shared how much he enjoys reading the Obituaries Section of the Times of London. While the pastime may be macabre for some, it is an opportunity to read a snapshot of the life stories of a cross section of society which can be *"immeasurably insightful into peoples' lives, what they have achieved and what one can learn from them."* This rather, is a tribute; a snapshot of Justice Blackman and his invaluable contribution to the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO).

The recent CAJO 7th Biennial Conference held in October 2022 provided an opportunity to learn more about Justice Blackman's instrumental role in the foundation and early development of the CAJO and his crucial drive in the organization of its initial conferences. At the formal closing of the Conference, the Honourable Justice Adrian Saunders, President of the Caribbean Court of Justice announced that Justice Blackman was to be invested and conferred the status of Honorary Member of CAJO. **The Constitution of the CAJO makes provision for the conferment of honorary membership on deserving judicial officers where Article 8 of the Constitution states that honorary membership shall be open to those persons upon whom such a status is conferred by the Association.**

Ms Hilary Wyke, Judicial Counsel, CCJ

According to President Saunders, while the CAJO Constitution does not spell out criteria for bestowing this status, an obvious criterion should include that the candidate must perhaps have had a long association with the organisation; or must have given outstanding service to CAJO over the years; or is such an exemplary Caribbean judicial officer that the Association is proud and pleased to invite them to accept such an honour (Saunders, Remarks by the Hon. Mr Justice Adrian Saunders, Chairman of Proceedings, on the Occasion of the Conferment upon Mr Justice Christopher Blackman of the Status of Honorary Member of the CAJO).



In an article written by President Saunders in 2018 to mark Justice Blackman's retirement from the Bench, President Saunders wrote that Justice Blackman's *"...wise counsel, enthusiasm and commitment to the Association played no small part in making CAJO what it is today."* (Saunders, 2018). Indeed, Justice Blackman's involvement in CAJO dates back to before its existence. Recognizing the need for continual training and sensitization of judicial officers, he advocated for the creation of a body of judicial officers who can speak to and share their experiences with their Caribbean colleagues, without feeling ignorant of the law.

His own experience founded this interest and desire. When he started his judicial life in Belize in 2001, he explained that when sitting as a new judge in a small jurisdiction, he became aware of the many things he did not know and the novel issues that arose in his new role as a judicial officer. Upon reflection, it occurred to him that his experience was likely not unique, and that it could be an experience shared by many judges throughout the region. **He remarked that many times, judges are thrown into the sea without a life jacket, no training, and no recourse to ask for assistance. The risk of one's case being reheard by or reassigned to brothers and sisters on the Bench made any discussion of issues impermissible.** He thought it would be helpful for a body to be created which could be an approachable resource where judges were able to converse, share experiences and ask questions.

This idea was fortified when he recalled his travels to other bar association meetings in his days as a member of the Organisation of Commonwealth Caribbean Bar Association. In his experiences, he discovered that the informal gatherings of the conferences were the most useful. Conversations over breakfast, lunch or at the cocktail parties or simply "shooting the breeze" were the most enlightening, with colleagues from far and wide, discussing issues and finding solutions. Some years later, whilst back home as a judge in the Supreme Court of Barbados, the idea was still on Justice Blackman's mind. He frequently shared his concerns and pursuit of the idea with a friend and colleague, Master Christie-Anne Morris-Alleyne, believing in its necessity. She and Justice Blackman, along with others who shared the same idea, prompted the founding of the CAJO and the first training conference for judicial officers in 2009.

Justice Blackman's concept of a body for Caribbean judicial officers has come to life with the establishment and growth of the CAJO into what it is today. From the beginning, he was instrumental in the development of the CAJO. He formed part of the Steering Committee of the first CAJO Conference in 2009 in Port of Spain and was Deputy Chair on the CAJO Executive from 2009-2017, assisting in the organization of the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th biennial conferences. Reflecting on those early years, Justice Blackman describes the work as being important and enjoyable, particularly working with then Chairman, President Saunders, who was always receptive to his ideas.

Believing that CAJO has a great future, he admits that he would like to see CAJO taking on a new life – greater promotion of the Association being a resource for judicial officers, including those sitting in industrial relations courts, who are insulated by themselves in any jurisdiction throughout the region and who face the difficulty of approaching colleagues to discuss ideas and cases. There should always be a possibility for any judge having a challenge in their case work or otherwise, to communicate and discuss matters or challenges with other judicial officers from across the Caribbean. For him, this is the foundational and underlying reason for CAJO.

He laments the fact that there was one idea that he would have liked to have come to fruition during his time on the CAJO Executive. **Observing the wealth of talent in the Caribbean, he believes that retired judicial officers still have much to offer the region. In his opinion, they are to some degree, underutilized. There are many activities and opportunities across the region - advisory roles, consultants, trainers, commissioners of enquiry, legislative drafters and so on - where skill sets, expertise and experience of retired judicial officers can be tapped into and utilized.** He considers that the CAJO can be an active force in working within the region to promote this initiative, perhaps with the assistance of CARICOM. This type of work can also provide an opportunity to work with retired or soon-to-be-retired judges, providing an encouragement to update their CVs and further their professional development. Furthermore, CAJO can engage in more programmes for them such as planning for retirement and life after the bench. In Justice Blackman's opinion, CAJO can be the perfect instrument to enable this to happen. He also hopes that one day, CAJO can take on an additional role in the area of employment law and work with regional quasi-judicial tribunals and encourage their membership to apply and engage in training.

No doubt, Justice Blackman can speak about post-bench life from personal experience. After his retirement in 2017, he has experienced what he describes as 'a renaissance', commenting that he is busier than when he was a judge. **He is currently the Chairman of the CARICOM Competition Commission (CCC); and in Barbados, he is Chairman of the Employment Rights Tribunal (ERT) and a member of the Judicial and Legal Services Commission and the Judicial Appointments Committee.** An early riser, he begins his days between 5.00 and 5.30am, occupied with reading, writing and editing judgments and attending various commitments such as hearings and meetings. His proudest achievement post-retirement, however, is his contribution as Chairman of the Employment Rights Tribunal (ERT). Without any immodesty, he believes he has made a difference to the concept of the Tribunal. In his role as "Mr. Chairman", he has contributed to the Tribunal's delivery of a body of decisions which have enabled employers to settle matters and has given confidence to employees and the public at large that the Tribunal is working.

In June 2022, he was appointed the Chairman of the Constitutional Reform Commission, the body responsible for developing a new draft constitution for Barbados. He acknowledges his role and considers it an honour to serve his country. His contribution and service in this capacity as Barbados savours its new status as a republic is to be commended. Chairing a disparate group of people from Barbadian society, reviewing submissions from the public and attending town hall meetings is no easy feat. However, he sees the Commission's efforts as valuable, as ultimately its work will form the foundation for a draft constitution which will best serve 21st century Barbados and promote peace, order and good governance of the country: ("Justice Blackman Speaks About Commission's Role", 2022)



Justice Christopher Blackman

Frank, direct and not one to equivocate or worry about others' judgments and opinions, reflecting on his career as an attorney and judge, Justice Blackman acknowledges that he has been immeasurably fortunate and blessed, with the kindness of others helping him get to where he is today. This gratitude frames his belief in living the best life that he can, while helping others in their own endeavours. In our conversation, he reflects on legacy and how people are viewed after they have vacated a space: "There's a quote from Julius Caesar... The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones." Far from being interred, "the good" that Justice Blackman has done, particularly for CAJO, now has been recognized and celebrated with the conferment of Honorary Membership. His immeasurable contribution to building CAJO, a professional community of Caribbean judicial officers, is greatly appreciated.

As we closed our conversation, Justice Blackman recalls a phrase he read in an article: "You must give people flowers in their lifetime." This recognition by CAJO, he sees as receiving 'a flower in his lifetime.'

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CAJO's Competition Commission Chairman, Justice Christopher Blackman (left), and Justice Adrian Saunders, President of the OGC



Constitutional Reform Commission Official Launch 24th June 22



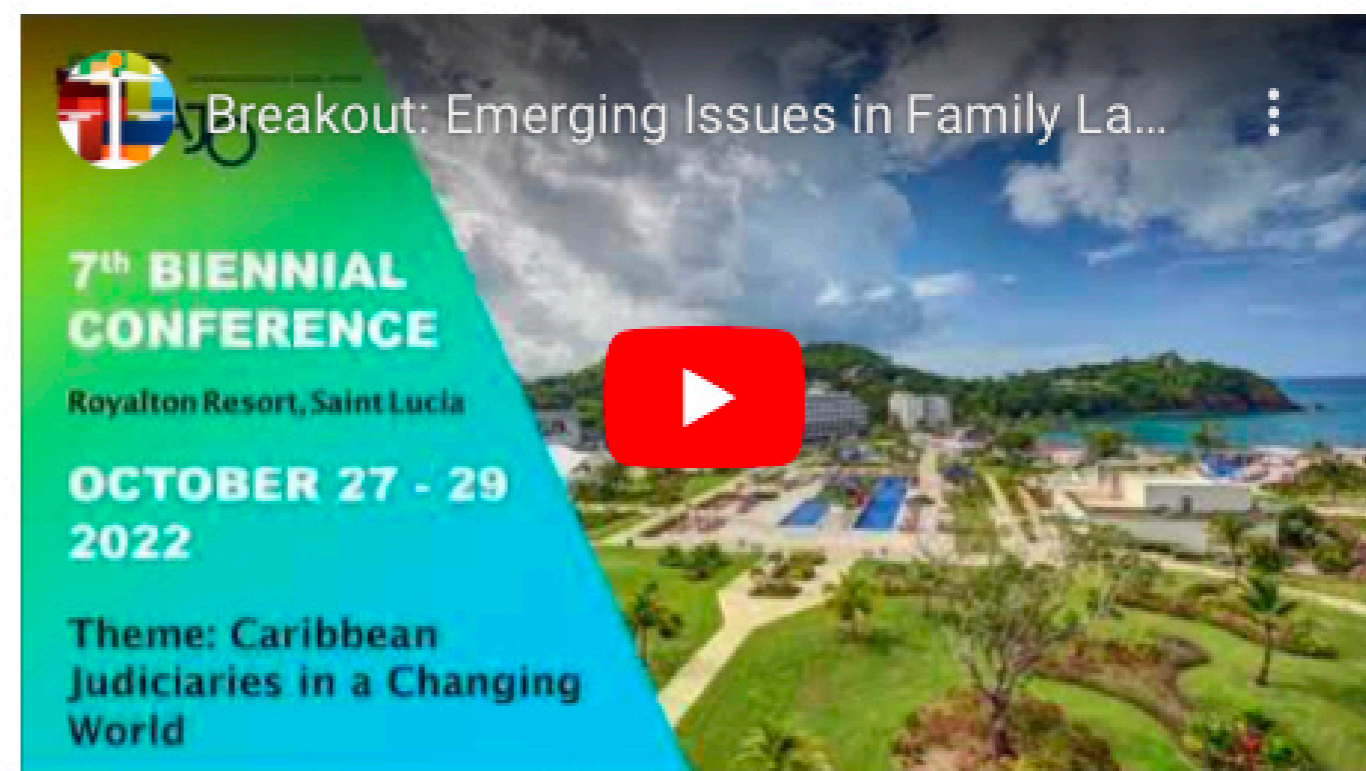
Justice Blackman being sworn in as a Judge of the Belize Court of Appeal by the Governor General, Sir Colville Young in 2014

RIGHTS-BASED INTERVENTIONS AND APPROACHES

The CAJO hosted plenaries and breakout sessions on various human rights topics which are emergent across the Caribbean region. These included:

1. **Emerging Issues in Family Law**
2. **Forced Labour, Human Trafficking, and Modern Slavery**
3. **Environmental Justice**
4. **Gender Justice**

All three sessions were well-received by conference participants and provided unique and important insights into the rapidly evolving spaces in which Caribbean judiciaries must operate and function.



Emerging Issues in Family Law breakout Session

With the introduction of focused courts and interdisciplinary practices and insights in the area of family law across the Caribbean, this body of law is developing and expanding. With this development comes various issues which require significant interrogation with a view to identifying practical and robust solutions.

Emerging Issues in Family Law identified and explored developing areas of family law and interrogated approaches to various issues. The session was chaired by **Her Worship Maxanne Anderson**, Senior Magistrate of Bermuda and the presenters were **Justice Kimberly Lasten**, Judge of the Joint Court of Justice of Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, and of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba and **Justice Juan Wolffe**, Judge of the Supreme Court of Bermuda.

From the session feedback provided, participants deeply appreciated the cross-jurisdiction approaches shared. As one judicial officer noted, they gained "*fascinating and critical exposure to family law as it is applied in the courts of the Netherlands Antilles followed by an even more fascinating and well presented discussion on family applications in Bermuda and the important lessons that can be applied anywhere to improve and expand the role of the judge in ensuring the welfare of the child and family.*"

**CHILD FOCUSED
FAMILY COURTS**

Screenshot from one of the presentations



Forced Labour, Human Trafficking, and Modern Slavery

Globally and across the Caribbean region, migrant crises as well as the expanding reality of forms of gender-based violence have seen increases in forced labour, human trafficking, and modern forms of slavery. Judiciaries ought to be equipped to not only hear cases that touch on these issues but also to focus on the use of rights and survivor-based approaches. **Forced Labour, Human Trafficking, and Modern Slavery** explored why why human trafficking, forced labour, sexual exploitation, and domestic servitude are considered modern forms of slavery, examined cases which may properly be characterised as modern forms of slavery, and interrogated why and how non-punishment and re-victimisation are relevant in these cases. The session was chaired by **Justice Yonette Cummings-Edwards**, Chancellor (Ag) of Guyana and the presenters were **Dr Jason Haynes**, Associate Professor of the University of Birmingham and **Justice Vasheist Kokaram**, Judge of the Court of Appeal of Trinidad and Tobago. The session made a significant impact on participants. A judicial officer stated that they now had *"increased awareness of a burning social issue that as a judicial officer I did not realize how I could act to help alleviate the plight of trafficked victims."* Another judicial officer shared that they better understand the *"requirement for Judges to have that keen sense of compassion to look behind what is on paper to the reality of persons who may be victims and not law breakers."*



Environmental Justice Plenary



Gender Justice Plenary

Globally and across the Caribbean region, migrant crises as well as the expanding reality of forms of gender-based violence have seen increases in forced labour, human trafficking, and modern forms of slavery. Judiciaries ought to be equipped to not only hear cases that touch on these issues but also to focus on the use of rights and survivor-based approaches. **Forced Labour, Human Trafficking, and Modern Slavery** explored why why human trafficking, forced labour, sexual exploitation, and domestic servitude are considered modern forms of slavery, examined cases which may properly be characterised as modern forms of slavery, and interrogated why and how non-punishment and re-victimisation are relevant in these cases. The session was chaired by **Justice Yonette Cummings-Edwards**, Chancellor (Ag) of Guyana and the presenters were **Dr Jason Haynes**, Associate Professor of the University of Birmingham and **Justice Vasheist Kokaram**, Judge of the Court of Appeal of Trinidad and Tobago. The session made a significant impact on participants. A judicial officer stated that they now

CONFERENCE PHOTO GALLERY



Memorable moments from the Conference social events

Membership Benefits



Access to
member-only
judicial forums



Spotlight
opportunities in
the CAJO News



Exclusive CAJO
email signature
icon



Information and details on becoming a member will be made available in March 2023. If you are not yet registered to be on our mailing list and would like to be, please send us an email at info@thecafo.org

Updates from the CAJO's Annual General Meeting

On Friday 28th October 2022, the CAJO held its first Annual General Meeting as a Non-profit Organisation. The AGM took place in Saint Lucia during the 7th Biennial Conference period. The AGM sought to provide members with updates on the CAJO's financial accounts, work over the past three years, and to have members elect a new Management Committee and vote on resolutions and amendments to the CAJO's bye-laws. Justice Peter Jamadar was re-elected as Chairman of the CAJO and the newly elected members of the 2022/24 Management Committee are:

Justice Peter Jamadar – Chair (Judge, CCJ)
Justice Adrian Saunders – ex officio (President, CCJ)
Justice Roxane George (Chief Justice (Ag), Guyana)
Justice Francis Belle (Judge, Barbados)
Justice Carol Edwards (Judge, Jamaica)
Justice Maria Wilson (Judge, Trinidad & Tobago)
Justice Vivian Georgis Taylor-Alexander (Judge, ECSC)
Justice Sandra Nanhoe-Gangadin (Judge, Suriname)
Justice Kimberly Lasten (Judge, Joint Court of Justice)
Justice Ricardo Sandcroft (Judge, Belize)
Justice Shade Subair-Williams (Judge, Bermuda)
Ms. Constance Delancy (Registrar, Bahamas)
Ms. Patricia Arana (Registrar of the Magistrates' Court, Turks & Caicos)
Her Worship Maxanne Anderson (Senior Magistrate, Bermuda)
Justice Natiesha Fairclough Hylton (Judge of the Parish Court, Jamaica)

Membership Categories

Previously, the CAJO comprised full, associate, and honorary members. At the AGM, it was voted on that a membership category of amicus judici will now be included. Under the amended Constitution, amicus judici membership shall be available to: (a) Law lecturers of any of the Caribbean States and territories listed in the First Schedule of the Constitution; and (b) Attorneys-at-law that are employed with the judiciaries of any of the Caribbean States and territories listed in the First Schedule of the Constitution.

Expanding Full Membership

Prior to amendment, full membership to the CAJO was available to judicial officers from countries listed in the Constitution's First Schedule. This list excluded Curacao, Aruba, Bonaire, Sint Maarten, St Martin, St Eustatius, and Saba and judicial officers from these territories could only access associate membership. Members of the CAJO thus voted, at the AGM, to place the listed territories in the First Schedule, making full membership available to those judicial officers.

Resolutions Adopted and Disseminated

At the Association's First Annual General Meeting, CAJO also adopted a number of Resolutions related to the delivery of justice in the region. The members reiterated the role that judicial officers have to guard democracy and uphold the constitutional rights of all and the duty that judicial officers have to respond to the specific needs of persons and communities who are marginalised and vulnerable. Additionally, the Association recommended and encouraged the commitment by governments and judiciaries to provide adequate resources, financial and otherwise, for judicial education and training. To access the Resolutions, click below.



[RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE 7TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF JUDICIAL OFFICERS \(CAJO\)](#)

PLANT A TREE, SAVE THE PLANET INITIATIVE

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In March 2020, the CAJO began its Plant a Tree to Save the Planet initiative in the Bahamas. At a judicial training engagement in the Bahamas, judicial officers and the then Chief Justice, the Hon Sir Brian Moree, were presented with a Lignum Vitae tree which has been planted on the Judiciary's grounds. And at the CAJO's most recent Conference held in Saint Lucia in October 2022, the CAJO presented ECSC Chief Justice Dame Janice Pereira with a tree to be planted, and encouraged

all participants to join the movement (see video below).

Thomas Crowther and colleagues at ETH Zurich (a Swiss university) note that trees are one of the most powerful weapons in the fight against climate change. And, further, that planting 1.2 trillion trees could cancel out almost a decade of carbon dioxide emissions. While this may sound like a lot of trees, the CAJO stands firm that even the smallest change can contribute to a larger impact. And should each of us promote this act of environmental concern, then we can work together to protect our planet from climate crisis.

The CAJO thus invites judicial officers across our region, and our stakeholders regionally and internationally, to participate in our Plant a Tree Save the Planet initiative. To participate, simply plant a tree. And, if you'd like, share with us a photo and some details about the tree you have planted. You could also be featured in an Issue of our CAJO News. To share your tree planting efforts with us, click [HERE](#).



IMPROVING Regional Access TO JUSTICE

The CAJO has and continues to promote the efficient and effective delivery of justice across the Caribbean. This focus was part of the 7th Biennial Conference programming as three breakout sessions on access to justice issues were facilitated:

1. Performance Standards for Courts
2. Criminal Trials Without Juries
3. Community Law Obligations and Domestic Law

these session were timely and appreciated by judicial officers as they offered practical approaches to the thinking about and enhancing the delivery of justice. The CAJO has also conducted past sessions on performance standards and judge-alone trials are these are rapidly developing areas in the Caribbean judicial space.

Across the Caribbean region, and over the past decade, the work of judiciaries has exponentially increased. The provision of suitable resources and the adoption of innovative measures have not kept pace with that increase. Backlogs, delays and inefficient processes have proven to be the bane of many Judiciaries. To ensure that public trust and confidence are maintained, it is imperative that courts set and sustain reasonable and achievable performance standards.

Performance Standards for Courts offered judicial officers fundamental principles that inform courts' performance standards and presented performance standards measures and interventions that can increase efficiency and effectiveness of caseload management. The session was chaired by **Sir Patterson Cheltenham**, Chief Justice of Barbados and the presenters were **Sir Dennis Byron**, President of the CJEI and **Justice Dale Staple**, Judge of the Supreme Court of Jamaica.

Judicial officers found this session incredibly helpful in how they approach managing their cases. One judicial officer noted that what stood out was, "*the reality of backlog of cases on paper and how easy it appears that the situation could be rectified if performance standards are implemented and the great impact it will have on reduction of backlog of cases.*"



Performance Standards for Courts Breakout Session

In March 2022, the CAJO hosted a webinar for Judges of the Parish Court and Magistrates titled "**Setting and Sustaining Performance Standards**" For more information on this session, [click here](#).

Across the Caribbean criminal trials without juries are conducted at the Magistrates, Parish, and District courts and increasingly in Supreme Courts. As such trials become more prominent and frequently accessed, it is imperative that principles and practices to inform and strengthen these proceedings be explored.



Criminal Trials Without Juries

Criminal Trials Without Juries gave judicial officers insight into emerging areas of jurisprudence in the Caribbean and interrogated practices across the region that facilitate the efficient and effective management of criminal trials without juries. The session was chaired by **Justice Sonya Young**, Judge of the Supreme Court of Belize and the presenters were **Justice Carla Brown-Antoine**, Judge of the High Court of Trinidad and Tobago and **Justice Jacob Wit**, Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice.

The session was well-received by judicial officers with the examination of regional practices being very useful. One judicial officer also noted "*There is great benefits in judge alone trial especially with delays. The varying practice as to how the matters are brought up for trial by judge alone.*"



Community Law Obligations and Domestic Law*

The Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC) prescribes a number of obligations which CARICOM states must adhere to and consider. As well, the RTC provides for referrals to the Caribbean Court of Justice for the interpretation or application of treaty provisions. These obligations and procedures ought to be known and understood by all CARICOM courts and their judicial officers in furtherance of the sustainability of Caribbean regionalism.

Community Law Obligations and Domestic Law explored intersections between Caribbean community law obligations under the RTC and domestic law across the region and examined the processes and procedures to be followed by a domestic (or national) court in referring to the CCJ an issue concerning community law that arises during the course of proceedings. The session was chaired by **Justice Denys Barrow**, Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice and the presenters were **Dr Jan Yves Remy**, Director of the Shridath Ramphal Centre and **Justice Jacob Wit**, Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice.

Judicial officers left the session with a deeper appreciation of the RTC and domestic law, and one judicial officer even requested more time on the topic as there is much to learn in the area.

*Session recording will be made available soon.

A CONTINUED FOCUS ON JUDICIAL WELLNESS

Judicial officers function and work in a contested conceptual space. Their foundations have been debated by legal and social philosophers for centuries. Whether judicial officers are squarely Hartian or Dworkinian beings, prudent moral reasoners, varied legal positivists, simply pragmatic utilitarians in the mould of Bentham or Mill, or more post-colonial 'Caribbeanised' constitutional functionaries (or any combination thereof), the traditional and current debates reveal one poignant truth – that judicial officers engage a number of roles which require public accountability and transparency for very disciplined thinking, reasoning, and behaviour. Their public personas allow little room for indiscretion, indulgence, or hedonistic extravagance. **In small Caribbean societies, even permissible professional error can be a cause of public ridicule or shame. What is therefore clear, is that the work of a judicial officer is immense, and expectations run incredibly deep.** The idea of depth is significant as naturally, a greater depth means increased pressure. And pressure is impacted by variables that are either predictable or appear without notice.

Caribbean heads of judiciary and judicial officers are no doubt tight-rope walking above burnout, stress, and a lack of resources. And the demand to be immediately responsive to the rapidly changing face of the administration of justice, means judicial officers have found themselves in unfamiliar discovery, often with little time and space or resources to sufficiently process, engage healthy distance, and attend to the numerous other requirements of human living.

The CAJO thus continuously works to ensure that judicial wellness is explored and meaningfully engaged in its judicial education. At the 7th Biennial Conference, a plenary on Judicial Wellness was held. This session gave judicial officers an opportunity to identify wellness challenges which they may face, think about the causes of stress and work-related distress, and examine techniques they can implement to combat judicial stress.

The plenary session was chaired by **Judge Michele Salmon**, Judge of the Parish Court and presentations were done by experts **Tatiana Veress**, Crime Prevention Officer at UNODC, **Professor Joseph Sadek**, Associate Professor at Dalhousie University, and **Dr Diane Douglas**, Founder of Douglas and Associates. Judicial officers appreciated the deep interrogation of judicial stress and the practical approach adopted by the presenters. Most asked for much more time to go even further into managing stress and working towards optimal wellness.



Judicial Wellness session

A number of resources and useful information can be found by clicking the image below.



