
CAJO Statement on the Wellbeing of Judicial Officers and Judiciary Staff

Adopted on 22 November 2024, at the CAJO Biennial Conference, Bermuda, 2024

AFFIRMING that human wellbeing is fundamentally connected to and connects all parts of our beings individually and relationally, and impacts institutions systemically, and that we must not only ensure healthier Judicial Officers and judiciary staff, but healthier judicial systems that all operate optimally for the benefit of all citizens and court users, and for the advancement of the administration of justice;

RECOGNIZING the pioneering research and extensive judicial education done by the CAJO in relation to judicial wellbeing and in particular its 2021 Regional Survey Report on exploring the Wellbeing of Caribbean Judicial Officers;

APPRECIATING the Global Survey Report on Exploring Linkages between Judicial Well-being and Judicial Integrity and the knowledge products developed by the UNODC Global Judicial Integrity Network;

ACKNOWLEDGING the findings of other studies on judicial stress and well-being conducted in various jurisdictions, collectively revealing high levels of occupational stress within judiciaries globally, and relatively low levels of institutional action regarding the same;

AFFIRMING the Nauru Declaration on Judicial Well-being issued on 25 July 2024 and adopting in measure its articulated principles;

REAFFIRMING that a well-functioning judiciary exemplifies the judicial values of: Independence, Impartiality, Integrity, Propriety, Equality, Competence and Diligence, and as elaborated in Regional guidelines for judicial and staff conduct;

RECOGNISING that the institutional judiciary is made of persons including both Judicial Officers and judiciary staff, and that the judiciary is fundamentally a human living system, dependent upon collective human capacities and faculties of individual persons working together for common objectives;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the physical, emotional, mental, psychological, and relational well-being of all Judicial Officers and judiciary staff is crucial for achieving the performance standards of competence and diligence in the discharge of functions, acting in integrity, effectively and efficiently, and for realizing sustainable judicial excellence in all domains;

RECOGNISING that judicial wellbeing, linked as it is to Judicial Officers' and judiciary performance, is therefore essential to achieving public trust and confidence in the administration of justice and upholding the rule of law;

APPRECIATING that maintaining a healthy work-life balance contributes positively to the discharge of professional responsibilities of judicial officers and judicial staff;

DESIROUS of having all Judicial Officers and judiciary staff optimally healthy and well and capable of flourishing in all aspects of their lives;

WE, the members of the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO) gathered at the Hamilton Princess, in Bermuda, hereby collectively declare and affirm:

1. The wellbeing of all judicial officers and judiciary staff is integral to achieving performance excellence in all domains in judiciaries, for sustaining public trust and confidence in the administration of justice, and for consistently upholding the rule of law.
2. The wellbeing of all judicial officers and judiciary staff must be institutionally facilitated and supported, including by the promulgation of Judicial Wellbeing policies, and by continuously implementing wellbeing-oriented activities and interventions.
3. Wellbeing is a continuous process enabling persons to thrive and flourish in all domains, including the following recognised ones: occupational, physical, social, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual.
4. The wellbeing of Judicial Officers and judiciary staff requires knowledgeable, sensitive, caring, and attentive judicial leadership at all levels that is committed to promoting, creating, and supporting judicial cultures of wellbeing that are holistic and inclusive, and ensuring that working conditions exist that are conducive to wellbeing.
5. Judicial stress and work-related health issues are not uncommon and must not be stigmatized or treated in ways that hinder individual and institutional actions towards wellbeing, but rather must be addressed with sensitivity and support.
6. Judicial stress and judicial wellbeing both need to be continuously researched and studied, and interventions to mitigate the former and enhance the latter should be evidence based and aimed at achieving sustainable individual and institutional behavioural and cultural change.
7. The wellbeing of all Judicial Officers and judiciary staff is both an individual and institutional responsibility, and both individuals and judiciaries are expected to pro-actively engage and create for themselves and others healthy lifestyles and workplace environments.
8. Supporting a healthy work-life balance is essential to the wellbeing of all Judicial Officers and judiciary staff and Judicial Officers and judiciary department and unit heads and managers must monitor, evaluate and ensure that this balance is created and maintained, with special attention to work-load management cognizant of power-relation imbalances.
9. Judicial wellbeing initiatives must be tailored to suit the circumstances and requirements of national judiciaries and to accommodate resource and other unique local realities, cognizant of the right to a dignified work life.