

JURIST Project donates laptops to ECSC



(From right) Her Ladyship, the Honourable Dame Janice M. Pereira, DBE, LL.D, Chief Justice of ECSC receives the laptops donated by the Canadian-funded JURIST Project from Mr. Mark Ernest, Information Technology Manager, ECSC

The Canadian-funded Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) Project donated ten (10) laptops to the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC) to support their work, as they continue to devise ways and means of dispensing justice, despite the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic facing the region and the worldwide community.

Her Ladyship, the Honourable Dame Janice M. Pereira, DBE, LL.D, Chief Justice of the ECSC, received the laptops at the court's headquarters in Castries, St. Lucia, during a short handing over ceremony on Tuesday June 2, 2020. Mr. Mark Ernest, Information Technology Manager, ECSC, handed over the laptops to the Honourable Chief Justices as representatives of the Government of Canada and the JURIST Project could not attend, due to the pandemic.

Dame Janice said that the donation from the Project was very timely and significant. "It comes at a time when the ECSC is undergoing rapid transformation in retooling and reengineering a number of its processes in an effort to keep the wheels of justice turning. The 10 laptops received today, will, without doubt, go a long way toward improving our efficiency in providing access to and the delivery of justice to the citizens and residents of this region. With the advent of COVID-19, we needed to increase our digital and electronic capabilities to enable continued productivity of court staff working remotely."

The laptops, along with other technology that the court has acquired, including the Zoom Web Conferencing Service, Microsoft Teams and Microsoft SharePoint, provide effective tools for the operation of the court in a remote environment. The conduct of remote hearings across the court's nine Member States and Territories has become, by necessity, even more commonplace and will shape the way the court serves the people of the region going forward.

"The past two months have demonstrated that, armed with modern tools and technology, the court can continue to render service in an efficient manner even if physical presence is rendered difficult or impossible," added the Honourable Chief Justice.

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In this Issue

Dear Reader,

Issue 16 of *JURIST News* is here for your reading enjoyment.

In this issue, we continue to focus on the efforts being made by the judicial sector across the Caribbean to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, while ensuring that the wheels of justice continue to turn. This issue covers the period June - September, 2020.

The Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) Project in implementing activities as prescribed in its Year 7 work plan, is keeping an eye on the effects of the pandemic, to ensure that we render assistance where it is needed, to our stakeholders, as they attempt to stymie the impact on their judiciaries.

Over the period under review, the Project has donated equipment to support the continuation of work in the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC) and Barbados. We have also supported the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ)

in bringing together various justice sector stakeholders to develop a plan of action to deal with the fall-out from the pandemic.

Additionally, we look at some of the other activities that are being implemented by judiciaries as they adjust to deal with the "new normal."

The Project will continue to collaborate with judiciaries on the implementation of activities and advises them to contact us if they require any assistance with their own business continuity measures.

We hope you enjoy reading the articles in this issue. As always, we take this opportunity to remind you that we welcome and appreciate feedback from our readers. We encourage contributions, information or material that we can include in future issues of the Newsletter.

We urge everyone to continue to be safe during this time.

- *The JURIST Project Team*

Barbados courts urged to maximise COVID-19 challenges

The Honourable Mr. Justice Sir Marston Gibson, Chief Justice of Barbados has made it clear that the operations of the court system will not go back to pre-COVID-19 times as the judiciary continues to equip its staff, to effect much needed changes.

Sir Marston was at the time addressing participants at the handing over ceremony of 54 laptops which were provided by the Canadian-funded Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) Project. The ceremony was held at the Supreme Court on August 17, 2020.

The JURIST Project has been working with regional judiciaries to address delay and backlogs which directly affect the effectiveness and efficiency of the judiciary to resolve cases in a timely manner and serve those who are the most vulnerable in society. The laptops will support case flow management, and court administration in the Barbados court system.

Sir Marston said while there has been much discussion about the issues resulting from COVID-19, it was his opinion that the pandemic has created more opportunities than challenges.

“I think it was Sir Winston Churchill who said never let a good crisis go to waste. I do not see this as a challenge but as an opportunity. The horse is now out of the barn and there is no putting the horse back in the barn. So, therefore, working remotely is going to be a part of the way we do business going forward,” he explained.

He expressed his gratitude to Canadian government and the JURIST Project for its “unwavering support” to the judiciary. “I want to thank the Canadian government for assisting us and assure them that we are going to continue to use the opportunity presented to us by the pandemic to



(From L-R) Her Excellency Marie Legault, High Commissioner of Canada to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean presents one of the laptops donated by the Canadian-funded JURIST Project to the Honourable Mr. Justice Sir Marston Gibson, Chief Justice of Barbados

work virtually and automate the way we do business. This is what it is all about, making the court more effective and efficient while working during a pandemic,” Sir Marston stated.

Her Excellency Marie Legault, High Commissioner

of Canada to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean lauded the courts for continuing to function during the pandemic. She said the Canadian government through the Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean (IMPACT Justice) and the JURIST Projects, was assisting countries in this region to navigate the challenges to adapt to a “new way of doing business.” She noted that both Projects were able to “think quickly and respond to see how best they could help and assist our partners with this challenge.”

Mrs. Gloria Richards-Johnson, Director, JURIST Project said the equipment will redound to the benefit of the courts and everyone they serve. She added: “The provision of this equipment to the judiciary will also assist the Project in achieving one of its overarching objectives which is to reduce delay and backlog. It is also a perfect example of what the JURIST Project is all about – partnerships and collaboration. We recognise that without the support of you – our valuable stakeholders within the local jurisdictions where we work, none of our objectives will be achieved. We depend on you to ensure that all initiatives we undertake are sustained long after the Project ends.”

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She also took the opportunity to personally thank Mrs. Gloria Richards-Johnson, Director, JURIST Project and other staff members for their continued and unwavering support. Dame Janice noted that: “The donation of laptops strengthens our relationship which is centred on seeing timely justice and increased access to justice through the modernisation of the court system.”

She assured that the laptops will be put to good and immediate use as the ECSC continues to improve and implement its business continuity and resiliency measures. “Every new challenge presents new opportunities once we are prepared to find them. The court remains focused in its drive to search for innovative and creative ways to overcome the challenges posed by this pandemic to the administration of justice and

looks forward to the continued goodwill of and collaboration with all our stakeholders,” she stated.

Mrs. Richards-Johnson said the Project was pleased to support the ECSC and other judiciaries in the region to strengthen their capacities in improving court efficiency and effectiveness during this unprecedented time. “The JURIST Project is responding swiftly and fully to the pandemic and uncertainties in the environment. We recognize the need for a pivot in our approach to respond to the impact of COVID-19, which will be felt beyond project completion,” she emphasized.

She reiterated that the Project has liaised with Heads of Judiciaries about their needs for an effective COVID-19 response, and has adapted investment thinking, methods, sequencing and scheduling of tasks to support a pivot strategy.

Adapting to the COVID-19 reality: A roadmap for Caribbean Judiciaries

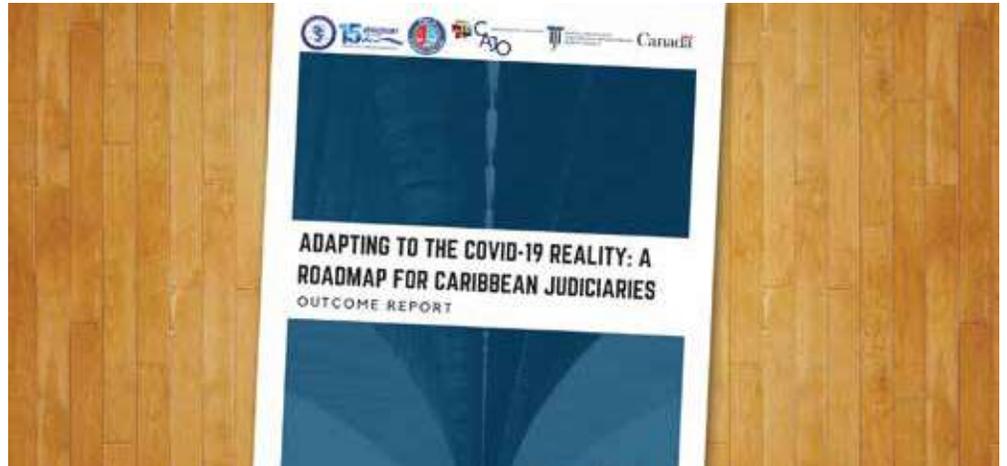
Following a virtual meeting of key personnel in judiciaries, prosecutorial services, state agencies and bar associations throughout the Caribbean to assess challenges and needs arising from the new paradigm produced by the COVID-19 pandemic, a report titled *“Adapting to the COVID-19 Reality: A Roadmap for Caribbean Judiciaries”* is now available to participants.

The meeting which was held on May 7, 2020 was held by the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) and co-sponsored by the Canadian-funded Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) Project, the CCJ Academy for Law (CAL) and the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO). It was attended by more than 100 participants across 22 countries. Further information on the meeting is available [here](#).

This report provides a summary of the data collected from pre and post-meeting surveys which was sent to all invitees, the discussion from the meeting, as well as submissions from four Caribbean countries regarding the challenges they have faced.

Based on the feedback received from the post-meeting survey, 88% rated the session as very good to excellent. The overall average rating based on content, discussion, organisation, and use of technology was 4/5. One hundred percent of respondents indicated a desire and willingness to participate in follow-up meetings.

The data was compiled and analyzed to extrapolate and present emergent themes and sub-themes. Themes are the broad “umbrella” ideas that are



frequently represented in the data received; and subthemes are the commonly present ideas that fall within these broader themes.

Recommendations from the meeting put forward for immediate consideration include:

- Coordinating a regional response to address common challenges;
- Establishing a regional network for sharing and co-creating appropriate interventions;
- Creating a regional repository of relevant Practice Directions, Protocols, and Legislation;
- Sourcing funding assistance for the development of technology infrastructure in organisations across the region;

- Implementing continued judicial and staff, behaviour change, and change management education and support, and
- Organising and facilitating further web-based regional conferences to address these issues.

The Honourable Mr. Justice Adrian Saunders, President, CCJ indicated that using the data generated from the meeting, the intention is, to have follow-up sessions that will deal with the most pressing challenges identified and the recommendations as stated in the report.

The full report is available [here](#).

Client and service standards training for the Barbados judiciary

The Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) Project in collaboration with the Barbados judiciary commenced client and service standards training for its court registry and magistrate’s courts staff on August 10, 2020. The virtual training was delivered at intervals to various staff members until September 15, 2020.

The training was geared towards improving client service, while simultaneously establishing organisational service standards for court users in Barbados.

One of the JURIST Project’s objectives is to achieve strengthened customer focused and gender respon-

sive court and judicial service delivery in the CARICOM region. This includes improving the capacity of courts to deliver gender responsive and customer focused services to court users.

The client service manual covers areas such as good client service in a court environment while the service standards manual includes topics as organisation standards for court administration; document processing; performance measurement; court reporting; Magistrate’s Courts and child maintenance.

Read more [here](#).

JURIST PSC Meeting convened

The 8th Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting of the JURIST Project was convened virtually on June 4, 2020.

At the Meeting, the Project sought Members’ approval for its Year 7 Work Plan. The work plan was developed and finalised by the Project after seeking feedback from Heads of Judiciary and other stakeholders and responds swiftly and fully to the pandemic and uncertainties in the environment. The Project recognized the need for a pivot in its approach to respond to the impact of COVID-19, which will be felt beyond project completion.

The Project’s Annual Work Plan (AWP) and budget, which was conditionally approved at the PSC, will be updated at the mid-year of 2020-21.

Jamaica judiciary reviews strategic targets in the wake of COVID-19

The judiciary of Jamaica has conducted a review of its Strategic Plan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that it remains on track to achieving its vision statement of being the best in the Caribbean in three years and one of the best in the world in six years.

The Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD, Chief Justice of Jamaica said the annual strategic planning retreat held in August, 2020 was an apt time for the judiciary to evaluate the team's fundamental direction against the background of COVID-19, to address any threats or to capitalize on any opportunities that the health crisis may present to the courts.

He noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has created an opportunity for the judiciary to fast-track the use of technology in judicial proceedings. On the other hand, he noted that jury trials have been suspended because juror boxes do not allow for physical distancing. Despite the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Justice Sykes is confident that there will be light at the end of the tunnel.

"We are having delays now, but we are really managing the process in a way that certainly towards the end of this year and beginning of next year, you should begin to see the result of the planning that we have been

engaged in since August of this year," he said.

Justice Sykes said all levels of the three-tier Strategic Plan are constantly being assessed to identify any gaps and to implement practical solutions. "We have been reviewing and refining the strategic plan for the overall legal system in light of COVID-19. Then, we will be looking at the second level of the Strategic Plan for the individual court. As a result, each Parish court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court will have its own strategic plan that is linked to the overall Plan," he said.

He added that the cooperation of every member of staff is paramount in order for the judiciary to remain on course to achieve the strategic objectives. "As in everything, plans are not self-executing. There has to be a real live flesh and blood person at the end of this who is going to be doing this. This is where tier three comes in which is the individual work plan for each person within the court. So there is an attempt to give more meaning, focus and direction to our efforts. With that being done, we should not be worse off because of the COVID-19 crisis," the Chief Justice emphasized.

The five-day strategic planning retreat was facilitated by Professor Mitchell Weisberg, who has over 30 years of experience in leadership and advising executives on strategic planning.

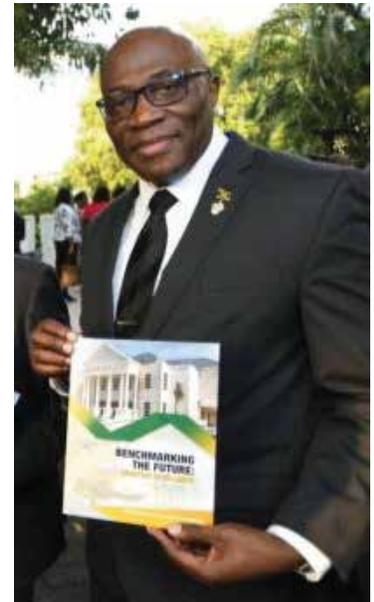
Professor Weisberg pointed out that a SWOT (a study undertaken by an organization to identify its internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as its external opportunities and threats) analysis is necessary to consider the external and internal environment.

"The external environment has to do with what we should be doing from the stakeholder perspective. The internal environment has to do with what we can do presently with our skills, knowledge and resources," Professor Weisberg pointed out.

Professor Weisberg also noted that the problem with many organizations that have failed to achieve their desired results is not with their strategies, but in the implementation. "In 70% of cases, strategies fail not because of bad strategy, but poor execution. The balanced scorecard allows each group and individual to take ownership of the strategy. It links strategy to execution," he explained.

He said that measurements are important because they are used to make rational decisions. Professor Weisberg added that "the judiciary must focus on the right initiatives. It must do those things that will get us to the objectives. It must have process improvements that are guided by the strategy and not simply improve a process for the sake of improvement."

The Strategic Plan, "*Benchmarking the Future: Courting Success*," was launched



Chief Justice the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD at the Strategic Launch held at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel in St. Andrew on January 31, 2020

in January, 2020 and covers the period 2019 to 2023. It is rooted in the Balanced Scorecard, a strategic performance management tool that consists of four perspectives. These are learning and growth, internal processes, customer and financial perspectives. The scorecard consists of a set of measures, targets and initiatives designed to achieve the objectives selected from the various perspectives.

Committee discussions begin on intra-regional sex offender register

The Canadian-funded Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean (IMPACT Justice) Project in collaboration with Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) Project, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Implementation Agency for Crime and Security

(IMPACS) held a virtual committee meeting to discuss the need for a Sex Offender Register in the OECS on September 4, 2020.

The committee discussed a number of topics, including: the feasibility of an intra-regional register; the legislative framework in other jurisdictions such as Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago; whether a register should be private,

public or follow a halfway house model where information is shared with specific individuals in society; the treatment of persons with criminal sex offences history traveling throughout the region; and the need for model legislation.

Read more [here](#).