



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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MEDIA RELEASE

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CCJ CONTINUES SENSITISATION SESSIONS ON THE ORIGINAL JURISDICTION IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Port of Spain, Trinidad. On 14 April 2025, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) conducted a sensitisation session for members of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce (TTCIC) on the Court's Original Jurisdiction (OJ). This is the final instalment in a European Union-funded series of sensitisation sessions conducted throughout the region to facilitate a deeper understanding of the CCJ's role in protecting the rights under the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and its referral process.

Under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC) which established the CSME, the CCJ has exclusive and compulsory jurisdiction to interpret and apply the Treaty, in its OJ. As such, any questions arising in a matter before a national court requiring the interpretation or application of the Treaty may be referred to the CCJ for determination. Under the Treaty, all 12 Member States that belong to the CSME, including their citizens and businesses, can access the Court's OJ to protect their rights under the RTC. Thus, the CCJ has since completed regional training and sensitisation to facilitate greater awareness and understanding of the Court's OJ for its key stakeholders, which included the regional Judiciaries, regional bar & law associations, and civil society.

Speaking of the workshop, Mr Justice Jamadar explained 'in a time of great global economic uncertainty, what/who can relatively small Caribbean nations turn to for stability, prosperity, and hope? In many ways the economic viability, resilience and future of the Caribbean may lie in the CSME, which depends significantly on the private business sector for its success. CARICOM and the CCJ both play facilitative roles. But ultimately, the CSME is intended to bring progress and prosperity to our region by leveraging the collective trading capacities of private sector entities, and through 'hassle-free' intra-regional movement of persons, skilled workers, capital, and through the establishment of businesses and the provision of services. Commendations are due to the members of the TTCIC for supporting and engaging in these discussions. We can all only gain by an effective, efficient and fair CSME.'

Additionally, President of the TTCIC, Ms Sonji Pierre-Chase, noted ‘as the national voice of business, the T&T Chamber is proud to have partnered in such an important engagement focused on the rights and protections afforded to individuals and businesses under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). The CCJ, through its Original Jurisdiction, plays a critical role in ensuring that regional rules governing trade, labour, investment, and services are applied fairly, equitably, and consistently. This session was designed to help the private sector understand how to assert its rights, access legal recourse, and participate more confidently in cross-border commerce.’

Echoing similar sentiments, Ms Vashti Guyadeen, Chief Executive Officer of the TTCIC, remarked ‘this session went beyond theory - it offered our members clear guidance on the rights of the CARICOM nationals, the movement of capital and services, trade rules under the Common External Tariff and how landmark legal cases have shaped the interpretation of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. Most importantly, it underscored the pivotal roles of the CCJ as the guardian of our integration process.’

The sensitisation session was facilitated by the Honourable Mr Justice Peter Jamadar, CCJ Judge; Ms Gladys Young, Assistant General Counsel, CARICOM Secretariat; Mr Suraj Sakal, Judicial Counsel; Mrs Ria Mohammed-Pollard, Communication and Information Manager at the CCJ; and Mr John Furlonge, Project Co-ordinator of the 11th European Development Fund Project. Also, in attendance were Her Excellency Jennifer Marchand, Ambassador to the Caribbean Community; Ms Neela Ram-Atwaroo, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs; and Ms Joanne Brooks, Head of the CSME Unit, Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs.

This brings to a close this series of workshops, having previously hosted sessions in Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Suriname. Nonetheless, it is anticipated that future workshops will be held as part of the Court’s public education efforts to raise awareness of the Court’s Original Jurisdiction.



The Honourable Mr Justice Peter Jamadar, CCJ Judge, delivers his presentation to workshop attendees.

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About the Caribbean Court of Justice:

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) was inaugurated in Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on 16 April 2005 and presently has a Bench of seven judges presided over by CCJ President, the Honourable Mr Justice Adrian Saunders. The CCJ has an Original and an Appellate Jurisdiction and is effectively, therefore, two courts in one. In its Original Jurisdiction, it is an international court with exclusive jurisdiction to interpret and apply the rules set out in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC) and to decide disputes arising under it. The RTC established the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). In its Original Jurisdiction, the CCJ is critical to the CSME and all 12 Member States which belong to the CSME (including their citizens, businesses, and governments) can access the Court's Original Jurisdiction to protect their rights under the RTC. In its Appellate Jurisdiction, the CCJ is the final court of appeal for criminal and civil matters for those countries in the Caribbean that alter their national Constitutions to enable the CCJ to perform that role. At present, five states access the Court in its Appellate Jurisdiction, these being Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, and Saint Lucia. However, by signing and ratifying the Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Court of Justice, Member States of the Community have demonstrated a commitment to making the CCJ their final court of appeal. The Court is the realisation of a vision of our ancestors, an expression of independence and a signal of the region's coming of age.

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