



## Cayman Islands Judicial Administration

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **CARICOM Heads of Judiciaries Meet in Cayman**

Heads of Judiciaries from across the Caribbean Region and Bermuda meet in Grand Cayman this week (28-29 July 2022) for the Conference of CARICOM Chief Justices and Heads of Judiciaries.

The second in the Cayman Islands (the first in 2007), this week's conference will again be hosted by Cayman's Chief Justice, the Hon. Sir Anthony Smellie. He will be joined by nine heads of judiciaries, including the Chief Justice Designate of the Bahamas, Justice Ian Winder, who will be sworn in next week.

A key aim of this conference, its theme being "Administering Justice by Use of Information Technology: Building on Covid-19 Experiences", is to drive innovation in the advancement of the administration of justice, particularly having regard to experiences from the Covid pandemic.

"The administration of justice is a constant work in progress," said Sir Anthony. "As heads of judiciaries responsible for ensuring timely and effective access to justice for our citizens, we are obliged always to seek the best solutions, whether this is by way of the most modern information technology or the promotion of legislative advancements, or the development of rules and practices of courts. The important purpose of this Conference is that it affords us the opportunity to meet and consult together towards those objectives."

As an example of the effectiveness of these biennial conferences, the Conference of Caribbean Judicial Officers (CAJO), the regional body responsible for the professional development of judicial and court administrative staff, was initiated following the 2007 meeting held in Cayman. Large Cayman contingents subsequently attended the 2011 and 2019 CAJO conferences in Nassau and Belize, respectively.

This year's CAJO Conference follows in October, a key agenda item of which will be to advance relevant resolutions and recommendations, among other judicial education initiatives; it is expected that Cayman will again be represented at this upcoming CAJO meeting.

The CARICOM Heads of Judiciaries Conference opens on Thursday morning at 9 am, in an Opening Ceremony and Reception at the Ritz-Carlton Ballroom, at which HE the Acting Governor, Mr. Franz Manderson, and the Premier, the Hon. Wayne Panton, are expected to formally welcome the visiting heads of judiciaries. The opening ceremony will be chaired by Mr. Michell Davies, Director of the Truman Bodden Law School; prayers will be offered by the Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield, Regional Deputy General Secretary of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.

The opening ceremony will feature a cultural musical interlude by the *Swanky Kitchen Band*.

In terms of Conference membership, the heads of judiciaries of all 20 CARICOM Member and Associate Member countries are included and are active participants, except for Haiti, where the Chief Justice's post has remained vacant since 2011.

Attending this meeting will be heads of judiciaries of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Bahamas, Bermuda, Guyana, Belize, the Turks and Caicos, and, of course, Cayman.

Also attending the Conference will be Justice Adrian Saunders, the President of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), the highest appellate court for, to date, four Caricom countries.

CARICOM member countries sending regrets were the Dutch territories of Suriname, and the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, with the latter chief justice only recently sworn in. Also sending regrets, received only this week, was the Hon. Dame Janice Pereira, Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court.

As the outgoing chair of the Conference, she had already ensured representation of the interests of the nine CARICOM territories she represents: St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Montserrat, Anguilla, and the British Virgin Islands. Notably, the latter two territories are associate members of CARICOM, while all the others are full members.

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