



# Third Caribbean Course on International Labour Standards for Judges, Lawyers and Legal Educators

The Right Honourable Sir Dennis Byron,  
President of the Caribbean Court of Justice

## **The Opening Ceremony of the Third Caribbean Course on International Labour Standards**

Regency 1 Room, Hyatt Regency  
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago  
9 July 2012

**The International Labour Organization (ILO) Office for the Caribbean** was established in 1969 and is based in Trinidad and Tobago. It serves 13 member States and 9 non-metropolitan territories of the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean as follows: Member States: Antigua and Barbuda; Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago. Non-metropolitan territories: Anguilla, Aruba, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curacao, Montserrat, Sint Maarten, Turks and Caicos Islands. Utilizing the ILO's tripartite structure, the Office works in close collaboration with governments, employers' and workers' organizations to promote decent work for all through technical guidance and cooperation. The concept of decent work is built on four strategic pillars: the promotion of rights at work, employment opportunities, social protection and social dialogue. The Decent Work Agenda supports integrated development strategies that link rights at work and social dialogue with employment policies and social protection. The Office works with the constituents at the national level to implement the Decent Work Agenda through Decent Work Country Programmes.

**Remarks**

**By**

**The Right Honourable Sir Dennis Byron, President of the Caribbean Court of Justice,**

**on the occasion of**

**The Opening Ceremony of the Third Caribbean Course on International Labour  
Standards for Judges, Lawyers and Legal educators**

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Protocols and appreciation for the invitation to deliver opening remarks.

I must take this opportunity of expressing a special welcome to the distinguished lead presenter Dr. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry Director, International Labour Standards Department, ILO. I recall meeting with her at a much earlier stage in her career, I won't say exactly when, for fear of disclosing her seniority, in Geneva and was even then impressed and delighted at the fact that a Caribbean Jurist, from Dominica had risen to such heights in an international institution. Since then she has continued to rise to the highest levels of professional accomplishment, and allowed us to be proud of another Caribbean jurist exhibiting excellence and leadership at the international level.

The ILO was founded in 1919, in the wake of a destructive war, to pursue a vision based on the premise that universal, lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice. The ILO became the first specialized agency of the UN in 1946. The primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

Maintaining these objectives are not easy as the recessed world economy has posed many challenges. Just last week on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2012 the ILO Director-General Juan Somavia, in his statement at the ECOSOC Substantive Session pointed out the international community is afflicted by certain realities. First, the political consequences of unacceptably high levels of unemployment are ripping apart the fabric of many societies, both developed and developing. Second, the increasing financialization of the global economy since the 1980s, has led to a progressive stagnation in productive investment in the real economy. Third, inequality has increased almost everywhere. These levels of inequality are no longer politically sustainable.

As the Caribbean in general and Trinidad and Tobago in particular face these challenges, reliance on the rule of law becomes more important. And in this area the role of the Industrial Court is valuable. It is a court that has already been highly credited with great success in the maintenance of its mission to be an effective Court upholding the Principles and Practices of good Industrial Relations as pillars of Industrial Peace, Economic and Social Development. It has contributed to the literature of Caribbean Jurisprudence in the publication of its law reports setting out in the law and legal philosophy for all to read and understand. I am pleased to be able to say that I have noted with pride the accomplishments of this court.

But excellence cannot rest on its laurels. It is important to keep developing and to keep pace with the highest standards. Continuing education is an important aspect of the work of courts as this is a tool which strengthens the judges as well as the advocates who appear before it. Such programs benefit the litigants and the community. Partnering with the ILO in this endeavour is evidence of the high ideals of the court and should produce the best possible results.

In this context, I am particularly pleased that the Caribbean Court of Justice has been associated with this important program. The CCJ is mandated to assist in the development of the Caribbean Jurisprudence and the areas of industrial and labour law is critical to the social stability of our communities. I am sure that programs like this will also advance that objective to the benefit of the citizens our justice sectors serve.

And so in closing I would like to congratulate the Industrial Court for the initiative of convening this program. I am sure that it will result in the creation of greater links between the administration of justice in the field of labour law in Trinidad and Tobago and international standards and norms and recontribute to the work of the court in upholding the economic and working conditions that give working people and business people a stake in lasting peace, prosperity and progress.

Good luck to the participants and presenters for a most successful program.