

Magistrates Conference 2007

Opening Remarks
Justice Hugh Anthony Rawlins

The mission statement of the ECSC speaks to the 'delivery of justice independently by competent officers in a prompt, fair, efficient and effective manner'.

This represents a synopsis of the raison d'être of the ECSC. The court is in a constant state of reform to meet the changing demands of the litigants in particular and of the society in general. Consequently, in order to equip and maintain a judiciary that is competent, impartial effective and efficient, there must of necessity be initiatives for judicial education. This imperative explains the existence of the JEI.

I have been charged with the pleasant responsibility of bringing greetings on behalf of the Chairman of the JEI, Her Ladyship Justice Ianthea Leigertwood-Octave. She sends her profound apologies for being unable to attend this important conference. Her Ladyship is presently engaged in the Criminal Assizes in Montserrat and it would have been inopportune for her to have left the jurisdiction at this time. This very fact serves to emphasize to us all that, first and foremost, our business is that of dispensing justice.

However, the role of the JEI is extremely critical in that it serves to structure and bring to fruition training programmes for Judges, Magistrates and support staff at all levels.

In this regard, the JEI is pleased to be executing arm of the ECSC for the purpose of mounting this the Biennial Conference of Magistrates 2007.

The inaugural Conference was held in Tortola, BVI in September 2005 and here we are two years later in beautiful Dominica for the second of many such conferences.

The JEI is blessed with the tremendous talents of its Executive Director, Mrs. Alana Simmons, whose extraordinary organizational ability will become more evident over the next two days.

On behalf of the Chairman of JEI, Justice Octave, greetings are extended to all you learned Magistrates. We trust that at the end of the exercise you would have added to your knowledge quotient through the education component of the programme and also you would have been able to share and address concerns with a view to making your task of dispensing justice more efficient and effective.

The JEI looks forward to full participation by each and every one of you present. Let's indulge in open and constructive discussion on critical matters affecting the Magistracy.

We look forward to working with you over the next two days of this conference. In closing, I would simply remind us all of the mandate and Mission Statement of JEI, 'Enhancing administration of Justice through education and training.'