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Prof. Barrington Chevannes  
Director, Centre for Public  
Safety & Justice

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Chief Justice, Supreme Court

The Hon. Mr. Justice  
Seymour Panton  
Court of Appeal

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Permanent Secretary  
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Ministry of National Security

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Jamaica Civil Service  
Association

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Independent Jamaica Council  
for Human Rights

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Correctional Services

Rev. Devon Dick, J.P.  
Civil Society

Mr. Patrick Foster  
Attorney General's  
Department

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Jamaican Bar Association

Mr. Norman Heywood, S. P.  
Jamaica Constabulary Force

Mrs. Valerie Neita-Robertson  
Advocates Association

Miss Lisa Palmer  
Office of the Director of  
Public Prosecutions

Ms. Donna Parchment, J.P.  
Dispute Resolution  
Foundation

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## Public Consultations Begin

**Are you concerned about the state of justice in Jamaica? Do you think it is high time Jamaica's justice system is modernized?"**

Public consultations on Justice Reform have commenced with an invitation being extended for written submissions from individuals and groups who are interested and committed to justice system reform.

As part of the public consultation process, stakeholders in the Justice sector including the private and public bar, the judiciary, court administration, security and correctional services, civil society and the general public will also be participating in working groups across the island. Four regional working groups have been established to assist the Jamaican Justice System Reform (JJSR) Task Force in garnering viable solutions for the justice reform programme.

With support from project advisors from the

Canadian Bar Association, working group consultations began on January 22, 2007 and will conclude in April 2007. A National conference on Justice Reform is slated to take place in May 2007.

"A Comprehensive Reform of the Jamaican Justice system has taken centre stage and will require full participation and commitment from all sectors of Jamaican society to succeed" said Hon. A.J. Nicholson, Minister of Justice in an address to the Task Force at their inaugural meeting held at the UWI Mona campus on November 9, 2006. "The Government of Jamaica is indeed looking forward to the recommendations that will emerge from these deliberations over the coming months", he said.

The comprehensive reform of the Jamaican justice system forms part of the public service modernization initiative of the Government of Jamaica through the Ministry of Justice and the Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU) of the Cabinet Office.

*"The Government of Jamaica is indeed looking forward to the recommendations that will emerge from these deliberations over the coming months"*

## The Jamaica Justice System Reform Task Force

The Jamaica Justice System Reform Task Force (JJSRTF) was appointed by the Minister of Justice in November

2006. The Task Force comprises stakeholders from a wide cross section of society including the private sector, civil society and public sector decision-makers and is chaired by Professor Barry Chevannes, the Director of the Centre for Public Safety and Justice, Faculty of Social Sci-

Jamaica, crime and drug related issues in Jamaica and garrison communities.



Members of the JJSRTF

ences. For over three decades Prof. Chevannes has been widely published throughout the Caribbean and internationally and his research, presentations and publications cover a wide range of topics including male identity in

The Jamaican Justice System Reform (JJSR) Task Force, in fulfilling its mandate to develop strategies and mechanisms to facilitate the modernisation of the justice system is undertaking a broad research, consultation and communications programme. This aims to stimulate individual and collective engagement in the vi-

sion of a modern justice system that will be more efficient, accessible, accountable, fair and able to deliver timely results in a cost-effective manner. The Task Force held its first meeting on November 9, 2006 at the UWI Mona Campus.

## JJRTF cont'd from page 1

Ms. Lorna Peddie  
PACT

Miss Hilary Phillips, Q. C.  
Jamaican Bar Association

Miss Kathryn Phipps  
Jamaica Labour Party

Mrs. Elaine Romans  
Court Administrator

Mr. Milton Samuda  
Jamaica Chamber of  
Commerce

Mrs. Jacqueline Samuels-  
Brown  
Advocates Association

Mrs. Audrey Sewell  
Justice Training Institute

Miss Melissa Simms  
Youth Representative

Mr. Justice Hugh Small, Q.C.  
Private Sector Organization  
of Jamaica

Her Hon. Ms. Lorraine Smith  
Resident Magistrate

Mr. Carlton Stephen, J.P.  
Lay Magistrates Association

Rt. Rev. Dr. Robert  
Thompson  
Church

Mr. Ronald Thwaites  
Civil Society

Mr. Peter John Thwaites  
Private Sector Organisation  
of Jamaica

**Project Management**

Mrs. Robin Sully  
Project Director

Mr. Peter Parchment  
Project Manager

Mrs. Susan Reid-Jones  
Project Advisor

Mrs. Melina Buckley  
Project Advisor

Mr. Andrejs Berzins  
Project Advisor

Ms. Yvonne Dixon  
Project Administration

Ms. Tracy-Ann Brown  
Project Secretary

# The CBA Completes Initial Research

The Canadian Bar Association presented its preliminary research titled "*Overview of Jamaican Justice System Reform: Issues and Initiatives*" at a retreat of the Task Force held at the Jamaica Conference Centre on December 1 – 2, 2006. This preliminary research is based on its initial review of existing reports, interviews with key stakeholders, and observations of court proceedings conducted between October and November 2006.

It was noted by the authors that this overview is a preliminary draft which will be verified through consultations with the JJSR Task Force and other key stakeholders. It will, however, be a base document for the reform process. A wide range of issues and recommendations for reform were identified under the following broad headings:

- Access to justice
- General court system structure and administration

*"The views of all persons who use the justice system are very important to the JJSR Task Force and we are eager to hear from as many parties as possible."*

- Criminal and civil justice processes reform
- Professionalism in support of justice reform
- Restorative justice
- Promoting a civil liberties culture
- Promoting a performance and evaluation culture

The Task Force is soliciting comments and written submissions up to March 1, 2007 on any aspects of justice system reform, including on one or more of the themes highlighted above. This is open to all members of the public.

"The views of all persons who use the justice system are very important to the JJSR Task Force and we are eager to hear from as many parties as possible." said Barry Chevannes, Chairman.

Visit <http://www.moj.gov.jm> for more information about the JJSRTF, the public consultations and upcoming justice reform events.

## Regional Working Groups

Four Regional Working Groups (RWG) have been established across the island representing all 14 parishes.

**Group 1: South Eastern Regional Working Group**  
(Kingston & St. Andrew, St. Catherine, St. Thomas)

**Group 2: Western Regional Working Group**  
(St. James, Hanover, Trelawny, Westmoreland)

**Group 3: Northern Regional Working Group**  
(St. Mary, Portland, St. Ann)

**Group 4: South Central Regional Working Group**  
(Clarendon, Manchester, St. Elizabeth)

Each of the Regional Working Groups will be composed of 7-10 persons and include representation from all of the key justice system stakeholders, including: the judiciary, the bar,

government, and the public.

The mandate of the Regional Working Groups is two-fold: (1) to consult about local justice reform issues and priorities; and (2) to organize and convene public consultation meetings.

Each Regional Working Group will provide a report to the JJRTF and present it at the national conference. The report will include: (a) identification of local reform issues and priorities; (b) summaries of public consultations and (c) recommendations for reform tailored to local conditions.

The schedule for the public consultations will be carried in the commercial print and electronic media at a later date.

**Working groups will conclude public consultations in April 2007.**

# Issue Working Groups

**S**even Issue Working Groups (IWG) have been formed to deal with the central themes and topics of justice system reform identified by the Task Force in its preliminary consultations. The IWGs covers these areas: Access to Justice, Court Administration and Management, Criminal Justice Reform, Restorative Justice, Professionalism and Justice Reform and Promoting a Civil Liberties Culture. Each IWG is chaired by a member of the Task Force and brings together representatives from a range of stakeholders in the justice system. The IWGs will review all issues relating to their subject area and make recommendations that will be considered at the National Conference



*Issue Working Group:  
consultation session*

which will feed into the broader reform deliberations of the Task Force. For example, the Court Administration and Management Working Group will consider such things as the physical condition of courts, jurisdiction of courts, scheduling and listing practices, data collection and analysis and strategic planning. Two major research papers on Court Management and Administration and Case Flow Management Systems and a number of other papers relevant to this mandate, will inform the WG's recommendations. In addition, the WG will monitor and consider the results of the Pilot Site at the May Pen RM Court.

## May Pen R M Court selected as Pilot Site

**T**he May Pen Resident Magistrate's Court has been selected as the Pilot Site for the JJSR Project. This is an exciting aspect of the Comprehensive Reform of the Justice System as it provides an opportunity to test best practices prior to full implementation. At the Pilot Court, a collaborative court users committee has been put in place to assist in the development of a strategic plan for the court. In addition, selected reform measures would be introduced and tested in that court.

It is expected that insights from this pilot will help inform the Task Force's recommendations and the implementation of reform initiative regarding Court Administration and Strategic Planning.

Reforms processes will be introduced on a trial basis during the months of March and April following which a preliminary report will be given at the National Conference. The Pilot Court Site Project will continue after the Jamaican Justice System Reform Task Force has completed its report.

The criteria for selecting the pilot court site are:

- **A court that has full suite of services (JEMS, Internet, email)**



**May Pen RM Court**

- **All business lines (criminal, civil, family, etc.)**
- **Medium size case load volume**
- **Motivated manager and administrative staff**
- **Staff willingness to participate**



**Jamaican Justice  
System Reform**  
*Together for Justice with Civil Participation*

## Purpose and Objectives of the Comprehensive Review and Reform Project

**NCB (South) Towers**  
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**2 Oxford Road**  
**Kingston 5**  
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The Jamaican Justice System Reform (JJSR) will inquire into the state of the justice system on a comprehensive basis and develop strategies and mechanisms to facilitate the modernisation of the justice system so that it is better able to meet the current and future needs of Jamaicans. A modern justice system will be more efficient, accessible, accountable, fair and able to deliver timely results in a cost-effective manner.

The JJSR project design and methodology is based on three pillars of systemic change processes: the sharing of expertise and experience, participatory processes, and capacity development. The JJSR will make practical recommendations for action focusing on proposals that will produce meaningful results in enhancing access to justice for Jamaicans and that will be suitable for implementation within a reasonable amount of time.

This project strategy and operational plan details the main steps to be taken during the review process. The strategy is divided into the six areas of activity:

Task Force Activities

Communications Programme

Research Programme



Capacity Building Programme

Consultation Programme

Transformation Team Activities

### Up Coming Events

## PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

MARCH 1 - MARCH 28

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE WILL  
BE HELD ON THURSDAY, MAY 10  
(3-7P.M) & FRIDAY, MAY 11 (ALL  
DAY) AT THE JAMAICA

## JUSTICE AND PEACE FOR ALL

We are fighting for justice and peace for all,  
And our young men are answering the call.  
They are giving their lives for you and for me,  
On land, in the air, and out on the sea.  
They are brave and strong,  
and have faith in God.  
And are fighting for the land  
their forefathers trod.  
If they can fight for justice and peace.  
Let's not let our efforts cease.  
Let us back home, toil-from light to dark  
So our boys, can hit their mark,  
This justice and peace, although it is old,  
Is a tale that years and centuries unfold.  
Our country was founded upon this claim,  
And it's our privilege to keep it the same.  
This were and conflict, I know will soon end.  
For justice and peace; to God are akin

**Billie Spratlin.**