



Jamaican Justice System Reform

Together for Justice with Civil Participation

How can Jamaica's Justice System be improved?

Recommendations in answer to this very important question are being collected during the reform of the Jamaican justice system which is currently underway. This reform process seeks to 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 to better meet the current and future needs of Jamaicans.

What is Jamaica Justice System Reform (JJSR)?

The comprehensive reform of the Jamaican Justice System is a joint effort between the Ministry of Justice and the Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU) of the Cabinet Office under the Modernisation Vision and Strategy Programme (Ministry Paper # 56). The review phase of this reform process is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the GOJ. After a competitive tender process, the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) was selected to conduct a comprehensive review of Jamaica's justice system. The CBA brings to the table extensive experience having delivered justice system reform and modernisation programmes in 28 countries across Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Central Europe, since 1990.

The Jamaican Justice System Reform Task Force (JJSRTF) comprising stakeholders from a wide cross section of society including the private sector, civil society and public sector decision-makers and chaired by Professor Barry Chevannes, was also established to provide recommendations for reform. The 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. The aim is to stimulate individual and collective engagement in the vision of a modern justice system that will be more efficient, accessible, accountable, fair and able to deliver timely results in a cost-effective manner.

Why Public Consultations?

It is vitally important that the JJSR engage in public consultation to:

- seek the views of individuals, groups and communities on specific justice reform issues.
- exchange information and ideas between affected and interested people and decision-makers before the strategy for Justice reform is finalised.

Importantly, consultations are used to:

- Engage meaningfully with stakeholders when developing policies that may affect the national or local populace – ***Justice Reform is of National Importance.***
- Gather and disseminate information
- Identify needs
- Narrow the range of options available

- Evaluate or review policies or programs
- Decide on future strategies (*for implementation in short, medium, and long term*)

During the Month of March 2007, island-wide public consultations spearheaded by Four Regional Working Groups (RWGs) are being conducted. These consultations will assist the Task Force in identifying regional problems, challenges and opportunities in the justice system and in proposing viable solutions or suggestions for justice reform.

What Consultation Process Is Being Used?

Consultations will be conducted by members of the Regional Working Groups assisted by trained facilitators as well as key resource persons. Consultations will centre around two main questions:

- 1. What are the most pressing issues for modernising and restoring our Justice System?**
- 2. Which solutions are likely to most positively meet the needs of our citizens?**

The general issues of concern for Justice System Reform include: Access to justice; General court system structure and administration; 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.

Guiding Principles for Consultation are:

- Inclusiveness and Equity
- Local Ownership
- Openness and Accountability
- Collaboration
- Mutual Respect

Where can I get more information?

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