

Caribbean Court of Justice president Justice Adrian Saunders, right, chats with author Commercial and Environmental Law Professor Dr Rajendra Ramlogan at the launch of Dr Ramlogan's books at the University of the West Indies' (UWI) St Augustine campus recently.
PICTURE NADIR ALI



CCJ execs laud new regional law books

SHARLENE RAMPERSAD

Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) president Adrian Saunders has described two new books written by Commercial and Environmental Law Professor Dr Rajendra Ramlogan as critical to the advancement of

Caribbean jurisprudence.

Saunders was speaking at the recent launch of Commercial Law: Cases and Materials from the Commonwealth Caribbean—and The Rise of Environmental Law in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago—at the University of the West Indies' (UWI) St Augustine campus.

"Textbooks such as this, that reference and summarise judicial decision making, play a critical role in helping to advance Caribbean jurisprudence because they shine a spotlight on how judgments are made.

"And through their judgments, courts often determine important questions of policy that touch and concern the daily lives of the general populace," Saunders said.

He recalled studying law at the UWI's Cave Hill campus between 1972 and 1975 and using textbooks written only by British authors.

"Every single one of our texts was written by a British author. Naturally, the cases discussed in them were mostly from courts from the United Kingdom.

"This was despite the fact that there already was in existence a very rich body of jurisprudence from the Caribbean," Saunders told the gathering.

"Over time, this situation has naturally evolved, as we see more and more Caribbean law texts being published in diverse areas of the law."

He said like another of Ramlogan's books, Judicial Review in the Commonwealth Caribbean, Commercial Law summarises the most important cases from the Caribbean.

"Given the wealth of Caribbean cases discussed, the book is an excellent source for discovering Caribbean jurisprudence on the subject areas examined.

"But the value of any text that explores decision-making by Caribbean judges and courts goes even beyond the relatively-limited value of serving as a resource."

Commenting on the The Rise in Environmental Law meanwhile, CCJ Justice Winston Anderson said the book helps to convey the seriousness with which the region's jurisprudence now views the environment.

"The region is typically regarded as a preferred tourist destination, a 'laid-back', 'no problems' tropical paradise and a playground for the rich and famous. And until relatively recently, the Caribbean did adopt a laissez-faire attitude towards the environment," Anderson said.

"But beginning with the Port-of-Spain Accord in 1989 and the Port-of-Spain Consensus of 1991, Caribbean policy-makers have begun to take management of the environment seriously."

Anderson said Ramlogan's work will provide a useful road-map to T&T's environmental law for students, regulators, investors and policy-makers.

"In this way, the book obviously can contribute to balanced economic development of Trinidad and Tobago and by extension, of the Caribbean."

He said the book is a starting point for a legal discussion on sustainable development among Caribbean people in "our own voices."

"After nearly 60 years of organised legal education in the Caribbean, it remains the case that far too often our legal discourse has been conducted through the British writers of legal texts.

"These texts may have served us well in constructing a solid foundation for a stable and sound Caribbean jurisprudence, but it is time we honour that past by recognising the jurisprudential triumphs and travails of the Caribbean people in their own voices."

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