REPORT ON THE
LATIN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JUDGES
21-22 OCTOBER 2015

1. The Conference was held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, hosted by the Brazilian Association of Women Judges and convened by Judge Maria Cristina Zucchi, Co-Director for the Latin American and Caribbean Region with our own Justice Joan Charles.

2. In attendance were judges from Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia and Peru. Justice Maureen Rajnauth-Lee, Justice Joan Charles, Justice Carla Brown-Antoine and resident Magistrate Sonya Wint-Blair from the Caribbean also participated.

3. The Opening Ceremony included greetings from our Justice Charles on behalf of the Caribbean Association of Women Judges.

4. The theme of the Conference was ‘Women Judges and Women’s Human Rights’. Over the course of the Conference participants made presentations on a wide range of topics including ‘Violence Against Women’, and ‘Trafficking in Women and Girls - Prostitution and Migration’. A paper was also presented on the ‘Challenges of Implementing Human Rights for Women’ as the Conference sought to grapple with the real issue
of giving effect to laws that protect women and girls, thereby safeguarding the rights of this vulnerable group in the region. An interesting session on ‘The Woman Judge and the Military Career’ was held, showcasing the opportunities available in some Latin American jurisdictions for judges.

5. Sessions on ‘How Women Judges May Use Mindfulness in the Effectiveness of Women’s Human Rights’ and ‘Participation of Women in Social and Political Institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean’ were also held, though in Portuguese.

6. A major drawback of the Conference was that most of the sessions were conducted in Portuguese; the English speaking participants were assisted by members of the military police who translated the material into English. Their services were not available throughout the conference, however, so unfortunately we missed some of the no doubt excellent presentations.

7. The Caribbean judges who presented had their material translated by Judge Zucchi herself; happily all presentations were well received. Justice Rajnauth-Lee presented on the topic ‘ADR/Conciliation As a Means to Justice’; Justice Brown-Antoine presented on the topic ‘Women and Girls Trafficking – Prostitution and Migration’ while Justice Charles presented on ‘Violence Against Women’. 
8. This Conference highlighted the need for judges of the region to be at least bilingual in order to foster better communication and co-operation in the region. We of the CAWJ hope to take steps to address some of the language difficulties soon.

9. The attendance and participation of Caribbean judges must be hailed as an important victory for the CAWJ and the Caribbean region as a whole. It is the very first time that judges from the Caribbean have attended and participated in a regional conference and it is expected that this first step will be built on and strengthened until Latin America and the Caribbean become equal partners in advancing the interests of the region. The co-directors Judge Maria Cristina Zucchi and Justice Joan Charles both welcome this development and pledge to continue working together to deepen ties between Latin America and the Caribbean.

Joan Charles
President of the Caribbean Association of Women Judges