



Regional Meeting on Judicial Integrity for Latin America and the Caribbean
Brasilia, Brazil, 6-8 August, 2024

Final Statement

The following recommendations, collectively forming this Statement, are the result of discussions held at the Regional Meeting on Judicial Integrity for Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place in Brasilia, Brazil from 6 to 8 August 2024. Organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the National High Court of Brazil (STJ) and the Superior Labour Court of Brazil (TST), the event brought together 80 Chief Justices, Justices, members of the judiciary and experts from 21 countries as well as relevant judicial associations, providing a valuable platform to discuss critical current and emerging challenges to judicial integrity and independence in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Through UNODC's Regional Anti-Corruption Hub for Latin America and the Caribbean, the event continued to enhance support to States Parties in fast-tracking the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, including its article 11, which calls for strengthening judicial integrity. It aligned with the vision and objectives of the UNODC Global Judicial Integrity Network to foster experience-sharing and knowledge exchange on emerging challenges. It also supported the implementation of roadmaps adopted by three Regional Anti-Corruption Platforms for South America and Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, which identify strengthening judicial integrity as one of the priority areas for the region.

During the meeting, the participating judiciaries from Latin America and the Caribbean engaged in discussions on priority thematic areas, which pose a challenge for the judicial systems in the region. The recommendations outlined below reflect the key outcomes of the discussions held at the event, capturing the collective insights and suggestions on advancing judicial integrity in the region. They are intended to serve as guidance for action by the judiciaries of the region, with recognition that thematic areas are interconnected and that some recommendations are therefore cross-cutting.

Judicial independence as a cornerstone of the rule of law:

- Ensure effective and efficient security for the judiciary, including physical protection measures (personal and family), to protect from undue pressure, threats and interference in their decision-making processes, if necessary, taking into account the diversity of countries in the region and within countries.

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- Ensure the necessary budget and human and material resources, including infrastructure and training, for the judiciary to operate effectively, efficiently and in an independent manner.
- Considering that the security of tenure for judges is fundamental to the independence of the judiciary, adopt clear, transparent and merit-based procedures and objective criteria for the appointment, promotion and transfer of judges and prosecutors.
- Considering that effective communication by the judiciary is fundamental to judicial independence and the rule of law, consider adopting measures to establish formal and professional mechanisms and channels of communication with the public to promote transparency and enhance public confidence in the judiciary and, where appropriate, consider providing institutional support for the decisions of its members.

Open justice and judicial transparency:

- Provide accessible public information about the mission, functions and procedures of the justice system in clear, simple and inclusive language appropriate according to the audience receiving the information.
- Promote information policies for justice users and judicial officers regarding behaviours or actions that constitute conduct contrary to judicial ethics as well as how these can be reported.
- Produce and conduct training and awareness programmes for various stakeholders to foster an inclusive approach to the development and implementation of policies affecting the operation of the justice system.
- Establish specialized units, focal points and protocols to foster information exchange and user support, also serving as a channel for contact with the media.
- Foster partnerships with academia, the media, associations, civil society and youth, among others, to raise awareness about their rights and how they can participate in promoting integrity.
- Promote transparency, raising awareness among judges about how the public perceives their actions and how these affect the image of the judiciary as a whole.



New technologies and artificial intelligence (AI):

- Develop and deploy digital tools and platforms to increase the efficiency and accessibility of judicial administration, including case and document management, case distribution and weighting, scheduling, electronic filing, legal research and virtual hearings. In doing so, manage potential risks associated with digital divide, data security and privacy, and cybersecurity.
- Provide training on the risks and benefits of new technologies and AI for judges and court staff so that they are well-equipped to leverage these tools effectively and ethically and ensure effective communication and outreach programmes to sensitize stakeholders, including lawyers and the public, to raise awareness, overcome resistance and build trust.
- Acknowledging that the integration of AI in judicial processes is inevitable and recognizing its value in detecting “deep fakes” and evidence lacking in integrity, judiciaries should harness the benefits of AI in increasing efficiency, managing large volumes of data and safeguarding against known and potential threats caused by technological advancements while upholding the principles of judicial integrity, fairness, accountability and transparency.
- In developing and implementing AI tools in the judicial system, define the roles and limitations of AI to avoid such ethical risks as inherent biases, and ensure that AI provides complementary assistance to members of the judiciary, who retain ultimate control and responsibility over decision-making to guarantee legitimacy deriving from their role and status.
- Stay informed about technological advancements and emerging trends and continuously evaluate and adapt the use of technology and AI to meet evolving needs, recognizing that the time may well come when public confidence is greater in decision-making supported by algorithms and AI because the likelihood of human prejudice, bias, discrimination or corruption could be reduced or eliminated.
- Facilitate regional experience-sharing, collaboration and cooperation on new technologies and AI to tackle shared regional issues, share good practices and experiences, and address potential consequences of a digital divide.

Issues related to judicial integrity and gender:

- It is recommended that official data on the number and percentage of men and women in the judiciary, disaggregated by level and location, be published annually and compiled by an international organization, such as UNODC.

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- Recall the need to adopt obligatory and persuasive criteria for gender-sensitive judgements, including intersectionality as a relevant factor.
- Promote comprehensive gender-sensitive training programmes for lawyers, legal support staff, judicial administration and the community at large.
- Promote policies on gender equality in the judiciary, including those related to access, promotion, affirmative action and fostering an equitable environment.
- Ensure an environment of equality free from violence and harassment and establish preventive and punitive measures to achieve this goal, including through multidisciplinary approaches.

Judicial well-being as an emerging challenge to judicial integrity:

- Foster a culture within the judiciary that prioritizes well-being of judges, maintaining a supportive environment, removing stigma and encouraging judges to voice their needs.