

- Ministry of Justice (Sen. Mark Golding, Minister of Justice, and Mrs. Carol Palmer, Permanent Secretary)

Senator Golding was invited to discuss with Media Heads the Ministry's plans to improve the Court system. He advised that the Justice Undertaking for Social Transformation (JUST) was established to provide funding for work required to implement programmes and projects and the Justice Reform Implementable Unit (JRIU) was responsible for coordinating the JUST projects.

The Senator advised that the strategies to improve the court system were as follows:-

- To reduce the flow of cases coming in to the Courts, such as identifying offences that could be handled out of Court and reducing deceased estates cases.
- To re-introduce the Restarter Justice Programme which is a community justice system for minor civil disputes. Cases would be mediated by authoritative figures such as Justices of the Peace.
- To improve the physical structures, facilities and processing systems.

The Minister mentioned that the Jury Act was being amended:-

- To reduce the categories of exempt persons and expand the pool.

- To increase the stipend from \$500 to \$2,000.

- To reduce the number of Jurors required for non-capital murder cases from 12 to 7.

- To provide a time bar on disposing cases, particularly in the Resident Magistrate's Court, for minor offences. Therefore, if a case had commenced and was not completed within a certain period, it would be assumed that it was in breach of the Defendant's right to a fair trial and would be dismissed.

MAJ suggested that media-related offences resulting in the arrests of journalists should be addressed and sketching in the Courts should be allowed.