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Former UK High Court Judge Serves as an Acting Grand Court Judge

The Hon. Dame Linda Dobbs, DBE, a former UK High Court Judge who was sworn in by HE the Governor Helen Kilpatrick earlier this month, will conclude her first six-week sitting as an Acting Judge of the Grand Court on 16 December.

Dame Linda is among a panel of judges approved by the Governor on the advice of the Judicial and Legal Services Commission (JLSC) to sit as Acting Judges of the Grand Court to ensure that cases are heard within a reasonable timeframe. She was sworn in by the Governor on 7 November 2016. These appointments are made at the request of the Chief Justice.

Commenting on her work so far, Dame Linda said that the scope of work here offered an even broader variety than the wide range she experienced as a High Court Judge in London. On a general note, she said that she has been “struck by the warmth and friendliness of the people, the lush greenery and the beautiful beaches,” and added: “I can understand why there is great pride in these Islands.”

Welcoming the new Acting Grand Court Judge on the occasion of her swearing in when he deputised for the Chief Justice, Acting Chief Justice Quin said: “It is a distinct pleasure to have Dame Linda with us, as she brings with her not only a reservoir of knowledge gained as a member of the UK judiciary at the highest levels, but also her clear passion for the law.”

Following a successful career at the British Bar, Dame Linda was appointed to the UK High Court in 2004; she stepped down in 2013 to pursue other professional and charitable interests. While on the Bench Dame Linda had the distinction of serving as the Senior Liaison Judge for Diversity, chair of the Magisterial and International Committees of the Judicial College, and a Fawcett Commissioner. The role of Fawcett Commissioner, involving a focus on women in the criminal justice system, was named in honour of the late Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett, English feminist, intellectual, political and union leader, and writer.

Among UK projects, Dame Linda conducted the Stuart Hall Inquiry (part of the Saville Inquiry) into the BBC’s practices and culture. Regional undertakings included assisting the Government of the Bahamas with its “Swift Justice” programme.

This concentration on ensuring and strengthening justice for citizenry in Britain and internationally was exemplified in her 2016 appointment in the UK to the Independent Commissioner for Miscarriages of Justice Compensation.

Dame Linda now works in a variety of areas focused on the legal and justice systems with particular, though not exclusive, reference to Africa and the Caribbean. Those associations include serving as current president of the International Lawyers for Africa (ILA). She has also recently become the Director of Training at the Judicial Institute for Africa (JIFA), based at the University of Cape Town.

Dame Linda is a former Governor of the London School of Economics (LSE), former chair of its ethics policy committee, and is currently Pro Chancellor at the University of Surrey.

Her honours include the award of six honorary doctorates.

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