



INDUSTRIAL COURT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Cor. Queen & St. Vincent Streets, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago

PHONE: 623-1304 - 8

FAX: 623-6179

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APPOINTMENT OF HER HONOUR MRS. DEBORAH THOMAS-FELIX AS JUDGE OF THE UNITED NATIONS APPEALS TRIBUNAL

Her Honour Mrs. Deborah Thomas-Felix, President of the Industrial Court has been appointed as a Judge of the United Nations Appeals Tribunal (UNAT). Her appointment will fill an existing vacancy to complete the complement of seven judges on UNAT.

The current Judges of the United Nations Appeals Tribunal are:

- Justice Richard Lussick is from Samoa. Justice Lussick is the current and sixth President of the United Nations Appeals Tribunal. He is also a judge of the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone.
- Justice Rosalyn M. Chapman from the United States of America is the First Vice-President of the Tribunal. Judge Chapman served as Magistrate Judge for the United States District Court for the Central District of California from 1995 until her retirement on December 1, 2010.
- Justice Inés Weinberg de Roca from Argentina is Second Vice-President of the Tribunal. Judge Weinberg de Roca was the First President of the United Nations Appeals Tribunal. She is currently a judge of the Supreme Court in the city of Buenos Aires.
- Justice Sophia Adinyira from Ghana. Justice Adinyira was the Third President of the United Nations Appeals Tribunal. She has been a judge of the Supreme Court of Ghana since March 2006.
- Justice Luis María Simón from Uruguay. Judge Simón was the Fourth President of the United Nations Appeals Tribunal. He is a judge of the Civil Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in Montevideo, since 2002.
- Justice Mary Faherty from Ireland. Judge Faherty was the Fifth President of the United Nations Appeals Tribunal. She is currently a judge of the Circuit Court of Ireland and a Member of a Tribunal of Inquiry established by Parliament.

A Report of the Internal Justice Council of the United Nations General Assembly dated September 19, 2014 stated:

“The Council received applications from 48 different countries. There were a total of 37 applicants from Africa, seven applicants from the Asia and the Pacific, 10 applicants from Eastern Europe, eight applicants from Latin America and the Caribbean and 72 applicants from Western Europe and other States. Of those, 93 were male applicants and 41 were female. Most applicants also expressed interest in being on the roster in the event that a

vacancy should arise prior to the expiration of the regular terms of any of the judges during the term of the current members of the Council.

After having reviewed all the applications, the Council decided on 35 candidates who would be invited to take a common written examination to test their legal expertise and drafting ability.

The examination was sent to the candidates by e-mail and the candidates were given three hours from the time of opening the e-mail to complete the examination and submit their answers. Thirty-two candidates responded to the invitation and submitted their answers. The Office of Administration of Justice sent the completed examinations to each member of the Council after having eliminated all identifying elements from them so that no Council member would know the name, nationality or gender of the candidate.

On the basis of the written test, the Council selected 22 applicants to be interviewed for the vacant positions. In order to be selected for the interview, candidates had to display in their examination answers the writing skills and power of judicial analysis necessary for them to serve as excellent judges for the Tribunals.

The candidates were interviewed in The Hague on the premises of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia between 15 and 18 July 2014 (one candidate was interviewed by videoconference because of visa problems that prevented his entry into the Netherlands).

The recommended candidates, as well as those placed on the roster, met the qualifications and experience currently required under the statute of the United Nations Appeals Tribunal and the standards required under the proposed amendments to the statute.”

There were two (2) candidates for election by the United Nations General Assembly today. They are Judge Sabine Knierim from Germany and Her Honour Mrs. Deborah Thomas – Felix. One Hundred and Fifty-Six (156) Member States were present at the General Assembly for the elections; of these States nine (9) abstained. The successful candidate was required to receive a two thirds threshold of the votes namely Seventy-Nine (79) votes. HH Mrs. Deborah Thomas Felix received One Hundred and Three (103) votes and the candidate from Germany received Fifty-Three (53) votes.

This is the first time a national from the Caribbean and indeed from Trinidad and Tobago has been appointed to serve on the United National Appeals Tribunal. This appointment does not affect the President’s ability to serve in her position as President of the Industrial Court because her service as a Judge of the Appeals Tribunal requires that she travels for a week or less approximately twice a year to New York to adjudicate on appeals at the Tribunal.

For further information contact:

Communications Officer

Tel: 734-7532 / 623-1304-8 ext. 2211

Email: communications@industrialcourt.org.tt