



Adopted on 25 July 2024

at the Regional Judicial Conference on

Integrity and Judicial Well-being

Held in Nauru

Organized by UNODC | Nauru Judiciary | Department of Justice

Nauru Declaration on Judicial Well-being

RECALLING Article 11 of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (the Convention), which recognizes the crucial role of the judiciary in combating corruption and requires that States parties, in accordance with the fundamental principles of their legal system and without prejudice to judicial independence, take measures to strengthen integrity and to prevent opportunities for corruption among members of the judiciary, including rules with respect to the conduct of members of the judiciary;

NOTING the role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in supporting States in their efforts to effectively implement the Convention, including through establishing the UNODC Global Judicial Integrity Network as a platform for judges and judiciaries to share experiences and jointly address emerging judicial integrity-related challenges;

APPRECIATING the knowledge products and tools developed by UNODC and the UNODC Global Judicial Integrity Network on different aspects of the implementation of Article 11 of the Convention, including the United Nations Convention Against Corruption Implementation Guide and Evaluative Framework Guideline for Article 11 and the Global Survey Report on Exploring Linkages between Judicial Well-being and Judicial Integrity;

ACKNOWLEDGING the findings of the above-mentioned report on the global survey conducted by UNODC, and other studies on judicial stress and well-being conducted in various jurisdictions, collectively revealing high levels of occupational stress within judiciaries globally, and low levels of acknowledgement and action regarding the same;

REAFFIRMING that a well-functioning judiciary exemplifies the six core judicial values enshrined in the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct: Independence, Impartiality, Integrity, Propriety, Equality, Competence and Diligence;

RECOGNIZING that the judiciary is made of human beings – individual and independent persons appointed to judicial office; therefore, the judiciary is fundamentally a human system, dependent upon the collective human capacities and faculties of individual judges;

APPLAUDING the fact that judiciaries are becoming more diverse and inclusive, and recognizing that this diversity strengthens the judicial system and enhances public trust;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the physical and mental well-being of judges is crucial for promoting competence and due diligence, as acknowledged in paragraph 194 of the Commentary on the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, which highlights the importance of addressing judicial stress and the necessity of providing appropriate support;

We, the members of judiciaries and other justice stakeholders here gathered, in person and virtually, on 25 July 2024 at the Civic Centre in Nauru, declare:

1. Judicial Well-being is essential and must be recognized and supported.

Judicial well-being may be described as a continuous process enabling judges to thrive across all aspects of their lives, including occupational, physical, social, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual, which are universally recognised well-being domains. Judicial well-being is essential for individual judges' occupational health and sustainability, for court users' experience in court, for the quality of justice and ultimately for public confidence in the courts. As such, judicial well-being warrants attention and investment commensurate with other institutional priorities, such as access to justice, the upholding of judicial values, judicial training and judicial efficiency.

2. Judicial stress is not a weakness and must not be stigmatised.

Judicial stress may be described as the subjectively negative psychological, physiological and/or behavioural responses a judge may have to the demands of judicial work. Judicial work is increasingly demanding, and stress is a natural human response. The historical stigmatisation of stress in legal and judicial culture compounds inherent work challenges with isolation and shame, and is a major barrier to help-seeking and recovery. Judicial leaders have a particular role in promoting healthy cultural messages about judicial stress and well-being.

3. Judicial well-being is a responsibility of individual judges and judicial institutions.

Judicial well-being is a shared responsibility, requiring action on the part of both individual judges and the judicial institutions. Individual judges must take active steps to maintain their well-being. Courts, including the judicial leadership and court management, must create working conditions conducive to judicial well-being.

4. Judicial well-being is supported by an ethical and inclusive judicial culture.

Collegial connection is a key predictor of judicial well-being. All judges should have an equal opportunity to experience well-being in their work. The court environment and culture must demonstrate zero tolerance for corruption, discrimination, harassment, bullying and other negative behaviours.

5. Promoting judicial well-being requires a combination of awareness-raising, prevention, and management activities.

Judicial leadership and judicial institutions must commit to promote judicial well-being. A systemic approach to judicial well-being must be holistic, involving activities that promote judicial well-being and capitalise on available sources of judicial job satisfaction. This approach should raise awareness of judicial well-being and judicial stress, prevent avoidable sources of judicial stress, and help manage the inherent demands of judicial work. Where possible, initiatives and interventions should be evidence-based and continuously assessed and evaluated. Judicial well-being is never ‘done’- it must always remain on the agenda.

6. Judicial well-being initiatives must suit the unique circumstances and requirements of national jurisdictions.

The drivers of judicial stress and well-being are strongly shaped by local contextual factors that vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, including economic, social, cultural, political, religious, and environmental influences, as well as crisis situations. To be effective, initiatives and activities to enhance judicial well-being must be responsive to relevant contextual factors and cater to the requirements of national jurisdictions.

7. Judicial well-being is enhanced by human rights.

As stated in the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, judges are entitled to fundamental rights of freedom of expression, belief, association, and assembly, subject to their duty to preserve the dignity of their judicial office and uphold the impartiality, integrity and independence of the judiciary. This balance is vital to maintain both judicial well-being of individual judges and the integrity of the judicial system as a whole.