



From right: Professor Velma Newton, Regional Director IMPACT Justice Project; Attorney General, Adriel Brathwaite, with facilitators Anne Diaz of the Faculty of Behavioural Science, St. Augustine and President of the ADR Association of Barbados, Kumar Hathirmani, at the official launch of the programme at the UWI yesterday.



A section of the 22 participants of the 40-hour Practical Mediation Skills Training, Think Mediation before Litigation programme which began yesterday.

## Alternative to heading to court for unresolved matters

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just for lawyers or doctors or trained professionals, but a wide cross-section of individuals. You want to be the face of the community so that people can feel comfortable coming to you.

"In many parts of the US, there are lots of community mediation associations, so our size does not negate the fact that there is a role to be played by many of you when you have been trained. Whether it be disputes, church, families, schools, among cricket teams.

"We have to do some training in terms of chang-

ing that thinking, and after your training you yourself will have to go into your communities and spread the word that there is an alternative to heading to court if you want the matter resolved," he said.

The attorney general stressed that it is not the mediator's role to put his or her view on the matter beforehand. "It is the role of the mediator to express their views and hopefully in so doing be able to reach an accommodation between themselves. Facilitate the hearing of both parties and in so doing, in an informal environment that they will

reach an accommodation." "Quite often people just want an answer, so they can move on with their lives. That is the biggest complaint about the time it takes to have certain matters resolved because people almost have to leave their lives on hold."

He stressed that this is in no way seeking to take away clients from attorneys-at-law. "The modern thinking is, and we are I believe in tune, that in fact you spend less time in court, more time in alternative mechanisms to have matters resolved so that they can get on with their lives," he said.

# PROMOTE MEDIATION

— to ease burden on the Court system

THE average Barbadian is not aware that there are alternatives to solving a dispute outside of the law courts.

So says Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs, Adriel Brathwaite, who said in some jurisdictions the

ideal situation would see only 20 per cent of the cases set down for hearing actually reaching the Court system, while using other mechanisms such as mediation or arbitration to deal with

these matters.

He was at the time delivering the featured address at an Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean Practical (IMPACT Justice Project) Mediation Skill Training.

held in the Shell Suite of the University of the West Indies yesterday.

Brathwaite noted that mediation is an important component of improving access to justice in the region and

reducing the backlog in courts. To this end, he commended the 22 community practitioners yesterday for undergoing the 40-hour week-long training programme.

"I believe firmly that

there is a role for community practitioners and certainly a role for community mediators. And I think it is not by accident that Professor [Velma] Newton invited such a wide cross-section of individuals. Not a role

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