



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Statement from Chairman as regional regulatory group
celebrates 10 years

Georgetown, GUYANA - July 25, 2012: I am pleased to be serving as chairman of The **Organisation of Caribbean Utility Regulators (OOCUR)**, which commemorates its 10th anniversary this year, having been established by agreement as a non-profit body on 26th July 2002. It comprises a membership of twelve full members, including regulatory bodies with responsibilities in telecommunications, electricity, natural gas, water and transportation sectors in the Caribbean.

OOCUR is dedicated to improving utility regulation and fostering transparent and stable utility regulation through autonomous and independent regulators in member countries. Since its founding, OOCUR has organised an annual meeting where professionals and staff from among its members and from companies and entities throughout the Caribbean, and regulatory professionals from other regions share relevant information and experiences. The annual gathering not only contributes to the advancement of utility policy, regulation and management, but also aids members in meeting their training and development needs and goals.

Plans are underway to ensure the success of the 2012 conference, which is being held under the theme *Utility Regulation in the Caribbean: A Case of the Harmonization of Approaches to Regulation*, and is being hosted by the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) in Freeport, The Bahamas.

This year's conference will provide participants an opportunity to assess the extent to which OOCUR as a regional organisation has succeeded in its objectives.

More importantly, however, members should take the opportunity to consider how the adoption of the best regulatory principles and practices might be applied to the development and progress of regional countries and their people.

Conference presenters have been invited to focus on *Telecommunications and ICT, Water and Waste Water, and Electricity*, the sectors in which members have jurisdiction, and on areas common to regulation such as the legal and institutional framework and the interests of various stakeholders. While the interests of consumers are a concern of all regulators, consumer protection and competition have been designated as the specific areas of focus for some of the members, and as such these will be areas that will be addressed. Two of the members are responsible for the regulation of transportation; thus there is interest in issues specific to this sector.

OOCUR is dedicated to promoting independent, efficient and transparent utility regulatory practices in the Caribbean. The Executive Council, which is responsible for ensuring the good governance of OOCUR and promoting its public profile, has recently reviewed the amended agreement. The review was geared to ensuring that OOCUR's constitutive and governance structures are fit for achieving its goals and objectives and fulfilling the purposes over the next ten years. The amendments and any other recommendations emanating from this review will be presented to the General Assembly in November. The General Assembly, which comprises all full members, is the supreme decision making body of OOCUR. It sets overall policy and determines the strategic direction.

OOCUR's founding membership included:

- Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS);
- Fair Trading Commission, Barbados;
- Office of Utilities Regulation, Jamaica;
- Public Utilities Commission, The Bahamas (succeeded by URCA);
- Public Utilities Commission, Guyana; and
- Regulated Industries Commission, Trinidad & Tobago.

Since OOCUR's establishment, full membership has been granted to:

- Independent Regulatory Commission, Dominica
- Public Utilities Commission, Anguilla
- Public Utilities Commission, Belize
- Telecommunications Commission, Turks & Caicos Islands
- Virgin Islands Public Services Commission, US Virgin Islands
- Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, British Virgin Islands

Associate membership is open to non-Caribbean utility regulators and associations of utility regulators.

OOCUR members, I can say with much pride, do not see regulation as an end in itself but as a means to achieving better performance from service providers as to price and quality of service for the benefit of consumers and the public at large. As regulators, OOCUR members need, on one hand, consumers to have confidence that their interests will be protected and, on the other, service providers to have confidence that there will be clarity and predictability in regulations.

In a few days, my term as chairman will come to an end. I do leave office, however, comforted that OOCUR over the next ten years will continue to strive for transparency, clarity and predictability in regulation. These qualities are essential to a sound regulatory system that would benefit consumers, the service providers and all other stakeholders.

###

CONTACT: Wayne J. Aranha - wjaranha54@hotmail.com
Chairman

OR

Justice Prem Persaud - prem1932@yahoo.com
Secretary General (Ag)

July 25, 2012