

## **Media Release**

**FOR RELEASE: Wednesday January 20, 2010**

### **“OUR begins consultations towards developing Quality of Service Standards for telecoms industry”**

The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has begun a series of consultations with public organisations and the telecoms industry with the aim of developing Quality of Service standards for the sector.

The exercise is being undertaken as *the Office* reviews the developments in consumer protection and quality of service monitoring for the telecommunications sector, with the intention of making the necessary Rules pursuant to Sections 43, 44 and 45 of the Telecommunications Act 2000.

Funding for the project is being provided, in part, by the Multi-Lateral Investment Fund (MIF) operated by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) as well as local counterpart funding. *The Office* through a competitive tender process awarded the consultancy services to Antelope Consulting of the United Kingdom and Openvision Consulting and Broadcast of Kingston, Jamaica.

The consultants will study all telecommunications services and all consumer issues in relation to quality of service standards in residential and commercial as well as retail and wholesale. The consultants from the UK are currently in Jamaica discussing these issues with consumer user groups and service providers.

Prior to this round of consultations, the Office had invited several consumer user groups to submit their views on telecoms services in Jamaica and some of those groupings are currently involved in this round of consultations.

Among them are the Consumer Advisory Committee on Utilities (CACU), the Consumer Affairs Commission (CAC) and the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce (JCC).

The major telecommunications service providers Flow, LIME, Digicel and Claro as well as some small internet service providers (ISPs) will also be part of the consultations taking place this month.

Some of the issues under discussion are off-net call charges, complaint handling processes, contracts and interconnection agreements, fault repair times, frequency of faults, dropped calls, broadband internet services, dial-up internet services as well as billing and payment procedures.

The consultants will also engage the staff of the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) in a series of discussions and workshops on consumer protection and quality of service issues.

The overarching project **Strengthening Competition in Telecommunications** under which this consultancy is housed is expected to be completed by June of this year with the final wrap up expected at year end.

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CONTACT: Michael A. Bryce  
Director - Consumer & Public Affairs  
968 6053-4