



**OFFICE OF UTILITIES REGULATION**

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*Regulating Utilities for the Benefit of All*

**OUR UPDATES JAMAICA'S AMBASSADOR to the US**

**(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2016 February 25):** Representatives of the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) paid a courtesy call on Jamaica's Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Ralph Thomas, on Wednesday, February 17, 2016, at the Jamaican Embassy in Washington DC, USA. They used this opportunity to update him on a number of the OUR's activities.

The OUR's representatives, Maurice Charvis, Deputy Director General, Ambassador Peter Black, Secretary to the Office, and Yvonne Nicholson, Director of Consumer and Public Affairs, were in Washington D.C. attending Winter Committee Meetings of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). Jamaica is an associate member of NARUC, which represents utility regulators in all 50 states of the US, and the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

Details of the OUR's activities, particularly in the energy sector, were outlined to Ambassador Thomas during the visit. These included the OUR's role in the procurement of 37 Megawatts of new generation capacity from renewable energy sources for the national grid, and Jamaica's energy policy in general. The Ambassador described the interest that private investors in the US were showing in Jamaica's energy sector.

Founded in 1889, NARUC is a non-profit association of public service commissions which regulate the utilities that provide essential services such as energy, telecommunications, water, and transportation. The Winter Committee Meetings provide a forum for discussions and presentations by Commissioners, policy makers, and experts, covering topical issues related to all the regulated utility industries, and are also an opportunity for participants to share best practices and to establish beneficial contacts. Many of the topics addressed, for example, renewable energy, smart grids, consumer related issues, water issues, regulation of the gas sector, infrastructure challenges, competition in the telecommunications sector including broadband, and cyber security, are of direct relevance to Jamaica and the OUR's work. NARUC also has an active international programme which supports the work of associate member regulators in developing countries, such as Jamaica. The OUR is currently in discussion with NARUC about such a cooperation programme.