

Welcome Address
Gala Dinner & OOCUR Awards Presentation
Ansord Hewitt – OOCUR Chairman
April 30, 2026

- Kevin Ramnarine, Former Minister of Energy of Trinidad and Tobago who will be our Keynote Speaker this evening
- Distinguished guests, colleagues, regulators, partners, award recipients, ladies and gentlemen—good evening.

It is my distinct pleasure, on behalf of the Executive and Secretariat of the Organisation of Caribbean Utility Regulators, to warmly welcome you to this Gala Dinner and OOCUR Awards Presentation, a signature moment of our Annual Conference programme.

After three gruelling days of arcane and technical discussion, spirited engagement and careful dissection of various proposed solutions, we pause this evening to recognize and celebrate excellence among our peers. Good regulation often requires the willingness to serve without recognition, to suffer the sling and arrows of public criticism and misunderstandings, and to make evidence-based and principled decisions, even when they are unpopular.

The irony of the regulator's role is that if the job is done well, i.e, there is safe, affordable, and reliable electricity, water, wastewater, and telecommunications services; the contribution of the regulator is likely to go largely unnoticed and uncredited. On the other hand, when these services are awry, we know who gets the blame.

Which reminds me of the little boy who was asked by his teacher – Which is more important the sun or the moon. Without appearing to need much time to consider the matter, he replied, the Moon. His teacher, bemused by the response, asked why. He replied, the moon shines at night when we really need it, while the sun shines in the day when it is not needed at all.

Tonight, we wish to recognise those individuals and institutions whose work exemplifies the highest standards of regulatory practice. Whether through innovation in electricity regulation, leadership in telecommunications policy, advancements in water and wastewater oversight, or in the pursuit of outstanding consumer protection initiatives, the awardees being honoured have set benchmarks not only within their jurisdictions but across the Caribbean.

I am particularly gratified by the Winston Hay Award for the Most Outstanding Consumer Protection Initiatives for 2025. For those who may not know, Winston Hay was the first Director-General of the OOCUR. He was appointed to the position in 1996 and oversaw the official opening of the OOCUR on January 6, 1997, chartering its organisational infrastructure, and the interpretation of its mandate.

This award recognises the contribution of a great regulator, who in every respect, embodies excellence. That we choose to memorialise him in this way serves as a reminder that what we offer in service excellence today, has the potential to carry forward to future generations. I look forward to seeing who copped this inaugural award.

Broadly speaking, tonight's awards speak to an important truth: **regional regulation matters**. Caribbean regulators operate in complex environments marked by small market sizes, climate vulnerability, rapid technological change, and evolving consumer expectations. Yet, as OOCUR was founded to demonstrate more than two decades ago, collective learning and collaboration transform individual challenges into shared solutions.

I commend the OOCUR Executive for institutionalising this awards programme, a deliberate step in honouring our own in the region. Too often

we seek validation from others outside of our jurisdiction paying homage to the observation that, “A king has no honour in his own country”. This evening we are demonstrating that this does not have to be the case.

By embedding recognition within our Annual Conference, we reinforce a culture of excellence, innovation, and accountability.

Importantly, these recognitions also strengthen the Conference itself. As participation in OOCUR conferences continues to grow, with record engagement, submissions, and regional interest in recent years, the inclusion of awards enhances the Conference’s role as the premier Caribbean platform for regulatory thought leadership, professional development, and peer learning. They remind us why we gather annually—not only to deliberate on policy, technology, and reform—but to celebrate impact and reaffirm our shared mission.

As we honour tonight’s recipients, let us also recognise the dedicated staff of regulatory agencies across the region whose daily work safeguards consumer interests and supports sustainable development. Your efforts ensure that regulation remains not just technically sound, but socially relevant and future-ready.

In closing, I thank our adjudicators, partners, Secretariat, hosts, and all who contributed to the success of this awards programme. Congratulations to this year's honourees. May your achievements continue to inspire collaboration, innovation, and excellence across OOCUR and the wider Caribbean.

Welcome once again, and enjoy the evening.

Thank you.

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