

GOUVERNEMENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE DU VANUATU
Autorité de Régulation
des Services Publics
Ministère des Finances et de la Gestion Economique

BP 9093
Port-Vila VANUATU

Téléphone : (678) 29795 / 23335 / 23521
Télécopie : (678) 27426
office@ura.gov.vu



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU
Utilities Regulatory Authority

Ministry of Finance and Economic Management

PMB 9093
Port Vila VANUATU

Phone: (678) 29795 / 23335 / 23521
Fax: (678) 27426
Twitter: @URAvanuat

Feature Story: 25 July 2012

Vanuatu is more than a dot on the map!

Experience of overseas travel to other countries for me always begins with telling people “Vanuatu is a dot on the world map! ... Yes, right there!”

Vanuatu is more than a dot on the world map, isn't it?

As a Ni Vanuatu seldom travelling abroad on government missions, trainings and attending forums, it strikes me with pride and gratitude to introduce myself, the part of the world I belong to and the business I represent: “I am the Manager Regulation at the Utilities Regulatory Authority of Vanuatu!”

Vanuatu is the only small island nation in the South Pacific that has an efficient energy regulator and I was proud to represent my country at the 5th World Forum on Energy Regulation in Quebec, Canada (May 2012), among 311 energy regulators.

Regulation in Vanuatu's electricity sector was only established four years ago as an initiative which the Government of Vanuatu ought to be congratulated for.

The forum is the world's foremost conference in energy regulation with about 500 representatives from over 75 countries. It was created as a cooperative effort by the world's main regional regulatory associations. It aims at providing a venue where energy regulators and other energy market stakeholders may discuss issues and share experiences of common interest.

For me and many others, it was a time of learning, networking and building capacity. I was presented with the dynamics of the developed and developing regions' frameworks for regulation and it left me to think where that places Vanuatu's regulator.

The forum presented me with the opportunity to learn and discuss issues and topics that we have in common with other regulatory offices. There I came to appreciate the importance of our office in Vanuatu and the importance of all the players involved in its electricity market.

The most striking part about the forum was the common and main objective of all the regulators present: ‘to protect the long-term interest of customers’ – which is exactly what the legislation in Vanuatu promotes.

The forum made me see that my Vanuatu, that country, that dot on the world map is capable like any other regulator office to be out there among over 500 delegates to present its case, discuss issues and experiences and to be recognized for this.

More recently in June, the URA was represented at the Asia Clean Energy Forum at the headquarters of the Asian Development Bank in Manila, Philippines. The URA was invited along with other high-level experts, professionals and practitioners from the region and internationally to be part of the many substantive discussions covering all aspects of clean energy with respect to technical issues, policy and regulation, finance and investment, business models, and energy access.

Our staff have undergone basic and advanced trainings with the Public Utility Research Center in Florida, USA.

Vanuatu is also represented by URA staff every year at East Asia and Pacific Infrastructure Regulatory Forum, the regional regulatory forum which also organizes a week-long training. Vanuatu is not only a member but our country also holds chairmanship for the related association.

As the URA's Manager Regulation, I am pleased to say that even if the URA is only four years old and at its infancy stage in regulation, our Project Managers benefit from these trainings overseas and the courses taken in Port Vila. We are given all the opportunities necessary to carry out regulatory tasks in order to complete our mission: to implement Government policies, to ensure utilities' viability and to protect the long-term interests of electricity and water consumers.

I am proud to say, Vanuatu is not just a dot on the world map, it carries in magnitude, wealth of regulatory practice and its position in the regulation sector. Staff continuously require training, whether in-house or abroad, to build on their existing experience and learn international best practice for the benefit of the people of Vanuatu.

And everywhere we go, we talk about that little dot on the map and share our experiences and knowledge, so that people learn from us as an efficient regulatory office and hear about our beautiful country.

By Lizzie Taura
Regulation Manager
Utilities Regulatory Authority

###

About the Utilities Regulatory Authority

The URA was set up under the *Utilities Regulatory Authority Act No. 11 of 2007*. The Authority acts independently of the Government and its primary purpose is to increase access to safe, reliable and affordable electricity and water services, and to protect the long-term interests of consumers throughout Vanuatu. In the electricity sector, the Authority monitors the concessions operated by UNELCO in Malekula, Port Vila and Tanna; and Vanuatu Utilities and Infrastructure Ltd (VUI) in Luganville. In addition, the Authority manages consumer disputes and advises the Government on matters related to electricity and water. It also reviews tariffs under the rules of the Concessions Agreements and relevant legislation.

Contact Information

Utilities Regulatory Authority

Email: office@ura.gov.vu

Phone: (678) 23335

Address: Vanuatu National Provident Fund Building, Ground Floor

Postal address: PMB 9093 Port Vila VANUATU

Website: www.ura.gov.vu

Twitter: @URAvanuatu