

## PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

B/32 The Honourable Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac (**Mr Jahangeer**)

*To ask the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities –*

**Whether, in regard to the Utility Regulatory Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the composition of the Board thereof, indicating the achievements thereof as at to date?**

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## REPLY (TUESDAY 26 MARCH 2019)

Madam Speaker,

The URA Act was enacted in 2004 and remained dormant until September 2016, when this Government revived the matter and appointed the Board of the URA.

The Board is currently chaired by Mr Philip Ah Chuen and the Commissioners are Mr Rampiar Luchmun Roy and Mr Sadatmanund Narain. Mrs Rosemary Elizabeth Winifred Anodin was appointed as a commissioner in May 2018 . Unfortunately she passed away last August.

I am in the process of proposing the appointment of another person to act as Commissioner.

As regards achievements, I wish to point out that regulation of the electricity sector is highly complex and require competent professionals, specialized training and technical skills.

The URA has faced a number of setbacks since the appointment of the Board, namely, the resignation of the previous chairperson, the untimely demise of one commissioner and the difficulties of recruiting a Director.

The post of Director was advertised a first time but the selected candidate declined the post. After a second advertisement, Mr. Alfred Byigero, a Rwandan citizen was appointed on 09 October 2017. He resigned on 22 December 2018 for family reasons.

The post has been re-advertised in January 2019 and URA will shortly appoint a Director.

The initial years of the URA has been spent on recruitment of a Director, technical staff, training, setting up the administrative and organizational systems, office accommodation, logo and website.

Despite the impediments, the URA has been working on the fulfillment of its mandate, namely –

- (i) a road map has been developed with the assistance of National Renewable Energy Laboratory of USA providing for the phased implementation of the Electricity Act 2005, with licensing of operators in the first phase, developing tariff methodologies in the second phase and establishing grievance handling procedures;

- (ii) the African Legal Support Facility of the African Development Bank (AfDB) has supported the URA to develop a strategic plan;
- (iii) URA organized two stakeholders' meetings in November and December 2018 at Business Mauritius to discuss the Strategic plan and the licensing framework;
- (iv) a one week in-house training was carried out in July 2018 for the staff and Board members;
- (v) a high-level seminar on electricity regulation was organized by URA from 16 to 18 August 2018 for the public and private sector including IPPs.

URA has established networking with regional organisations in order to benefit from training and exchange of information. It is now a member of the Regional Association of Energy Regulators of Eastern & Southern Africa (RAERESA)/ COMESA's Energy Regulatory arm and the "Reseau Francophone des Regulateurs de l'Energie"- RegulaE.Fr,

It has been given observer status in the Regional Electricity Regulators Association (RERA)/ SADC Electricity Regulatory arm, pending approval of full membership.

The URA has also initiated a network of regulatory bodies of the Indian Ocean which has had three formal meetings in Seychelles, Comoros and Mauritius.