

## **Intervention by Jamaica**

**2May 2006**

**Thematic Discussion: Improving Access to reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy services**

One of the goals of the Jamaica Energy Policy is ensuring that the poor and vulnerable in society are provided with affordable energy, including those in deep rural Jamaica. In this regard, under the Rural Electrification Programme, the task of which was to bring electricity to all rural communities throughout the island there has been significant contribution to the improved standard of living of rural householders and stimulated economic activity.

The programme has also helped stem the migration from rural areas to the cities. Up to March 2005, 4,800 km of electrical distribution pole line have been extended, and over 69,000 houses wired. This has raised the percentage of electrification from around 50% when the programme started to 90% today. Based on surveys that have been done in the fields, it is estimated that another 15,600 houses are left to be wired and another 860 km of pole line to be built to give these households access. Under the REP, the government provided homeowners with a loan a no interest cost with repayment required over a 48-month period. As part of the project also, some homes were fitted with photovoltaic systems.

As an extension of the REP, an Urban Electricity Regularization Programme (UERP) was established to assist residents in the inner-city areas to regularize their house wiring and to access electricity legally. Currently an amnesty has been granted by the local electricity provider for householders that are illegally connected, to go in and regularize their connections without facing sanctions. To date there has been some success.

Challenges include: 1) Lack of finance for rural energy programmes and 2) financing to maintain these programmes.