
**13th Annual Shirley Playfair Lecture:
The Prospects for Competition in the Electricity Sector:
from generation to distribution**



SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE OPENING REMARKS

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Colleagues, Friends, Welcome

Today, we meet again to engage the public in a discussion on a particular competition issue in Jamaica. Last year we discussed the competitiveness of the motor vehicle insurance market and today we will focus on the electricity sector: a sector that impacts on all of us, as we all in our own way, try to reduce our electricity bill.

The lecture honors the contribution of Mrs. Shirley Playfair who worked diligently to put Jamaica's competition legislation, the Fair Competition Act, into being, and to start the Agency which is charged with the responsibility of enforcing the legislation. She served as Chairperson for several years and closely monitored the building of the foundation for the FTC.

A special welcome to Dr. Lori Playfair, daughter of Shirley Playfair; and I also welcome past Chairman Dr. Peter-John Gordon who is here with us today, and who had ably carried on the work that was started by Mrs. Playfair.

In June of this year, Honourable Minister Anthony Hylton appointed a new set of Commissioners. They are Chairman Mr. Christopher Samuda, attorney-at-law, who has asked that I convey an apology for his absence today; Miss Dena Davis, insurance specialist, Miss Michelle Brown, attorney-at-law; and Dr. Densil Williams, Lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences, UWI. We are confident that they will continue to build on the work that Mrs. Playfair started just over 20 years ago.

The electricity sector is important to a significant number of consumers, I dare say, to all Jamaicans, and it contains several complexities. Whether you are a manufacturer, a trader of goods, an importer, an exporter, a service provider, or just a consumer, electricity is key to our day to day life, a necessity, that we all include in our monthly budget.

As Dave Barry once said “We believe that electricity exists, because the electric company keeps sending us bills for it, but we cannot figure out how it travels inside wires.”

Much is being said about the different options for sources of electricity, much is being said about the monopoly status of the JPS, as well as the pricing policy of Petrojam - we are here today because we believe that a discussion on promoting competition in the electricity sector is timely, and so we are adding to the discourse...especially given the thrust of the Government to facilitate competition and improved efficiency in the provision of electricity in Jamaica. As we have seen in other sectors, competition can bring about lower prices to households and businesses.

The theme today is **“The Prospects for Competition in the Electricity Sector: from generation to distribution”**

Given the different stages of the electricity sector, ie: generation, transmission, distribution, and supply to final consumers, we at the FTC think it is useful for us to explore the possibility of competition in each of these stages. Perhaps there could be benefit from encouraging competition in one or two of these stages, with the Government of course, playing the role of facilitator.

Today, we will hear from Professor Evan Duggan who will deliver the lecture.

Our own Dr. Kevin Harriott, Competition Bureau Chief, will provide some insight into the market from a competition perspective. The FTC has commenced a study which examines the factors which influence the level of competition within each of these stages. Dr. Harriott will speak on some of these issues.

We invite you to share in the event by participating in the discussion section.

I now invite Honourable Minister Anthony Hylton, Minister of Industry Investment & Commerce (MIIC), to say a few words.

Thank you.