



*News Release*

## **GCC Telecommunications Ministers Approve Maximum Cap for International Roaming within GCC Countries**

Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain - Saturday 19 June 2010

The GCC Telecommunications Ministers Committee in their 19<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Kuwait on June 8<sup>th</sup> 2010 approved the recommendation of the Telecommunications Steering committee for setting a maximum cap on mobile roaming tariffs within GCC countries. TRA Bahrain is currently working on an appropriate approach for the implementation of the roaming recommendation by September 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.

The GCC mobile roaming recommendation was a result of the GCC working group committee led by TRA Bahrain where it sets maximum price cap to be implemented over a two years staged approach for origination calls or calls made by the roaming customers either back to their home country or any other GCC country. The approved recommendation will provide up to 38% reduction on roaming charges currently paid by GCC consumers.

Commenting on the approved recommendation, TRA chairman and acting General Director Dr. Mohammed Al Amer stated "First of all I would like to thank H.E. Shaikh Ahmed Bin Atiyatallah Al-Khalifa Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Minister responsible for the Telecommunications Sector who supported the approval of this recommendation and the team within TRA who worked on this recommendation to benefit the Bahraini and GCC consumers. This recommendation, when implemented, will support cross border business activities and support growth in the roaming traffic."

Adel Darwish, Manager of Market and Competition and head of the Bahrain delegation in the Working Group committee stated that "current roaming charges for Bahraini customers within other GCC countries reach as high as 550 fils and with this recommendation approved consumers will benefit and will feel more comfortable in using their mobiles while roaming".

The approved recommendation will set the price ceiling at around 340 fils in the first year and down to 250 fils in the second year. The recommended rates will also be reviewed on annual basis to ensure that consumers benefit from the updated prices. Operators will still have the opportunity to agree special rates amongst each other and provide lower than the recommended prices to their customers.

The Working Group committee consisting of other regulatory bodies within the GCC has also worked closely with the operators since 2009. Having accomplished this first milestone, the next objectives assigned to the working group include studying roaming charges for SMS, MMS and Data. The Working Group will also make sure that the approved recommendation is implemented by all members of the GCC countries.

### **About TRA**

Since its establishment in 2002 the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the Kingdom of Bahrain (TRA) has been working with government, consumers, operators and investors to develop the Kingdom of Bahrain into the region's most modern communications hub and to facilitate the growth of the market. As an exemplary Regulator for the region, TRA independently carries out its duties in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner. More information about TRA can be viewed at [www.tra.org.bh](http://www.tra.org.bh)

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