



TRA Bahrain Hosts Conference on “Achieving Ubiquitous Broadband Networks”

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Under the patronage of H.E. Sh. Ahmed bin Ateyatalla Al Khalifa, Minister of Cabinet Affairs, minister responsible for the telecommunications sector, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the Kingdom of Bahrain (TRA) has started today its two days conference activities under the title of “Achieving Ubiquitous Broadband Networks”.

In a statement on the conference H.E. Sh. Ahmed bin Ateyatalla Al Khalifa confirmed the Kingdom of Bahrain's keenness to develop the telecommunications sector and seeking to strengthen its competitiveness through the provision of affordable high-speed broadband services with advanced technical features to all areas in the Kingdom with a view to promote and support services provided to the public so that it ensures the transfer of the Kingdom's economy to service-based economy and productivity enhancement.

H.E. Sh. Ahmed bin Ateyatalla Al Khalifa said “One of the main catalysts identified for achieving the ambitions of the Kingdom 2030 economic vision is ICT, the Kingdom view ICT as an enabler to future economic growth, productivity increase and social development primarily through making appropriate telecommunications infrastructure available to all.”

Sh. Ahmed pointed out that “The Kingdom's 2030 vision is based on moving from oil wealth-based economy to productive economy that is capable of competing globally which the Government outlines its features, so that citizens enjoy high living standards due to increased productivity and high-paid jobs.” In order for users to avail themselves of advance communications, data and information services it is essential that there is appropriate capital investment committed to the development of ubiquitously available, high capacity, affordable access networks.”

“Bahrain ICT sector is one of the world's greatest success stories with mobile penetration 139% a year ago, over 80% of household with a computer, over half of the population using the internet and fixed broadband penetration is one of the highest in the region.”

Sh. Ahmed also said “Researches consistently show that investment in any sort of ICT infrastructure has a direct positive impact on GDP growth. A 10% increase in fixed line penetration seems to increase GDP by around 0.5%, the same increase in mobile penetration

increases GDP by 0.7%, and 10 % increase in the broadband penetration boosts GDP by 1.3%.”

Sheikh Ahmed said that the recent studies have shown a link between productivity and the standard of living of individuals. He said: "Productivity is a key factor in increasing living standards, as increased productivity by 5% achieves double the standard of living within 14 years while doubling the salary of the individual within 24 years if productivity increases by 3%. Other studies were also carried out showing a direct correlation between competitiveness and productivity on the one hand and the readiness of telecommunications networks on the other hand.”

H.E. Sh. Ahmed bin Ateyatalla Al Khalifa also said “Infrastructure has been extended beyond the geographic and administrative borders of the individual countries as the internet is itself without geographic boundaries. Consequently it is essential that the infrastructures are protected, redundant and diverse and policies implemented that include the international connectivity and the definition of critical national infrastructures that will ensure access to such networks is secured at all times.”

More than 100 telecom professionals, consultants and policy makers from more than 15 countries attended the first day. The conference hosted with the support of SAMENA Telecommunications Council, and on behalf of the Arab Regulators Network of Telecommunications and Information Technology (AREGNET).

This two-day conference which is being held at the Diplomat Hotel, aims at facilitating a better understanding of both the policy decisions that have been taken as well as the various broadband access solutions currently available and being deployed in countries such as Singapore, Australia, UK, USA, France and Germany.

The “Achieving Ubiquitous Broadband Networks” conference will feature policy makers who will address the key drivers for developing a successful broadband network and services followed by country-specific case studies by regulators and operators. A panel discussion will ensue to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the different solutions.

In his welcome speech at the opening of the conference Dr. Mohammed Al Amer TRA Chairman and Acting Director General said “We are delighted to host the broadband conference in Bahrain and exchange views and experiences on the best practices to achieve high speed internet network for all with internationally recognised experts and speakers. This conference will shed light on the issues that we all face when considering how best to achieve a more diversified economic base and sustainable growth in the broadband market. It brings together case studies from six countries in which Broadband rollout is currently happening, that will assist TRA in ensuring that Bahrain is at the forefront with respect to international best practices in achieving Ubiquitous Broadband Networks.”

Dr. Al Amer went on to say “The country case studies to be delivered tomorrow will allow us to draw comparisons between the different implementations in each of these countries which will include financial aspects, network dimensioning, technologies, services, competitive landscape and regulatory framework. The last sessions of tomorrow will try to draw together the main commonalities and difference between these case studies and finally the outcomes of the conference with respect to the key policy initiatives required to achieve ubiquitous broadband networks.”

Speakers at the first day of the conference include a number of high profile industry experts such as Dr. Hamadoun Toure, Secretary General of ITU, Eng. Saud Al Daweesh, Chairman, SAMENA and Group CEO of Saudi Telecommunication Company (STC), Eng. Abdulla Al Durrab, Deputy Governor of Communications & Information Technology Commission at the Saudi Regulator and Dr. Mohammed Al Amer, Chairman and Acting Director General of TRA, Bahrain among others.

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

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