



## **TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY ISSUES INTERIM INTERCONNECTION ORDER**

**MANAMA** – ١٧ **June** ٢٠٠٤ – The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) announced today that at midnight on ١٥ June, the Authority issued Batelco and MTC Vodafone Bahrain with a temporary interconnection order that sets the terms under which the networks of the two operators will continue to connect so that consumers from one network can still contact consumers connected to the other network.

The issuance of this order comes following the expiration of the interim interconnection order issued by the Authority on ١٥ March ٢٠٠٤, which provided the parties with a three-month period in which to independently reach agreement., expired after their inability to effectively reach consensus.

The terms and conditions of the newly issued interim interconnection order now incorporate the terms of Batelco's Reference Interconnection Offer dated ٢١ May for which the TRA granted its approval effective from ١٥ June. This order has a term of one month, unless terminated beforehand by the entry into a commercial interconnection agreement by the two operators, or if the TRA issues another order related to interconnection.

According to A. Andreas Avgousti, General Director of the TRA:

“The TRA continues to note the absence of a commercial interconnection agreement between the operators. It is hoped that now that the TRA has granted approval of Batelco's RIO, that this will provide the basis for the parties concerned to work together in good faith to conclude an interconnection agreement. The Authority is mindful of its duty to protect the interests of consumers at all times, and it is hoped that by granting approval of the RIO, that this provides greater certainty to encourage further entrants into Bahrain's newly liberalised telecommunications market from ١<sup>st</sup> July. Further entry of new operators can only lead to benefits for the economy as a whole and consumers in particular.

## **About the TRA**

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) was established by Legislative Decree No. 4 promulgating the Telecommunications Law. The TRA is an independent body and its duties and powers include, among other things, protecting the interests of subscribers and users and promoting effective and fair competition among existing and new licensed operators.