



The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority Announces the Departure of its General Director

Manama 22 August 2006 – The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority has confirmed today that, as previously announced, Mr. A. Andreas Avgousti will be stepping down from his post as the General Director of the TRA at the end of this month.

Dr. Mohammed J.K. Alghatam confirmed that the functioning of the TRA as an organization will remain as it is and its policies will not change as a result of Mr. Avgousti's departure. The TRA has always worked to implement the requirements of the Telecommunications Law to build a fair and competitive market whilst protecting the interests of users and subscribers, and will continue to do so.

The Chairman of the Board, Dr. Alghatam, also said: "I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to Mr. Avgousti both in my capacity as the Chairman and on behalf of the members of the Board of Directors for his efforts during the past three years. We note with satisfaction the milestones that the TRA has achieved under his management. Perhaps the most evident of these is his share in the transition of the Kingdom's telecommunications market from a state of monopoly to full liberalization in 2004, in accordance with the vision of the wise leadership of the Kingdom as promulgated in the Telecommunications Law. We are equally proud of the work he has done in building the foundation blocks for the TRA as a dynamic and transparent organization on a par with established regulators worldwide."

It is worth noting that under Mr. Avgousti's directives, the telecommunications sector witnessed major developments in a relatively short period. In July 2004, the telecommunications sector was fully liberalized and, since then, the focus of the TRA has been on establishing the basis upon which a liberalized sector can operate efficiently. Mr. Avgousti, in his efforts to ensure that the TRA carries out its duties in line with best international practices, announced in December 2004 the establishment of the Annual TRA Development Review Panel. The aim of the Panel is to review the work of the TRA and to identify areas where further improvement is required. The TRA also established a consumer advisory group and a business user advisory group in 2006 in line with its efforts to establish open channels of communication and feedback with consumers.

During the past three years the telecommunications sector in the Kingdom has been undergoing a transition to a liberalized environment, with active competition in the mobile and international calls sector, in addition to internet via satellite for corporate customers. The TRA has also managed to complete the regulatory framework for access and interconnection, with the recent availability of the Reference Access Offer and the issuance of the Spectrum Policy document for the Kingdom in conjunction with the Ministry of Transportation.

Mr. Avgousti in response said: “I would like to thank the Chairman and Board Members of the TRA for their support over the past three years, as well as each and every member of staff, without whose support and commitment to the role of the TRA we would not have been able to achieve our targets. I would also like to publicly express my thanks to the wise leadership of the Kingdom for their vision and determination to ensure that the telecommunications sector of the Kingdom develops into a thriving and competitive market and for their support in achieving these aims. With hindsight one can look back at what has been done and how and certainly, in my case too, I can see areas that things could have been done differently or better. However at the same time that does not detract from our achievements as a new authority in establishing the foundations and rules for a competitive market. A lot has been achieved by a small sized TRA in a very short time and we are all proud for it.”

Note to Editors:

About the TRA

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) was established by Legislative Decree No. 48 of 2002 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. More information regarding the TRA can be viewed at www.tra.org.bh