



*Press Release*

## **TRA Praises Telecom Operators for Their Investments in Expanding New Telecommunications Services**

Wednesday, December 12, 2007

Mr. Alan Horne, the General Director of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) said “The telecommunications sector collectively has significant responsibility in supporting the economic development of Bahrain. TRA will work closely with all operators in support of this aim and use its powers to maximize collective success and minimize failures. The success of the licensees will ensure that consumers in Bahrain should receive increased choice of services and better value for money”

Mr. Horne was commenting at TRA’s end of year review meeting with members of the telecommunications industry held at the Gulf Hotel on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> December . The aim of the meeting was to review what worked well in 2007 and what lessons could be learned to enable TRA and the telecommunications industry to improve in 2008.

In his opening address, Mr. Alan Horne also said that “In order to achieve a win - win situation for licensees and the consumers it is also important to enable growth in the market. This can be supported for example by working in partnership with the Government to support initiatives such as eGovernment, eHealth, eEducation, and to support the education of consumers of the benefits of new services. Success will not only assist the Licensees but Bahrain's consumers and importantly the general economy”.

Mr. Horne praised the financial institutions, the share holders and staff within the licensees for their faith and commitment to Bahrain’s market and for their investments in new technologies, in providing new telecommunications services, and in the progressive increase in quality of service.

During the meeting; TRA's Market and Competition Director Mr. Robert Middlehurst briefed the attendees on TRA's current consultation regarding Batelco's Reference Offer, which outlines conditions on which competing operators can buy wholesale services from Batelco. “The consultation provides an important opportunity for the Licensees to provide input on how they believe the offer could be improved in such areas as forecasting and quality of service targets” said Mr. Middlehurst.

TRA's Legal Affairs Director Mr. Eamon Holley presented the process of investigating disputes between licensed operators and explained how this process can be improved by Licensees understanding and following the procedures with care. Mr. Holley took the opportunity to announce that TRA will be issuing a complaints guideline in early 2008.

TRA's Chief Economist Dr. Alexandre Serot presented an update on the Strategic and Retail Market Review. He announced that “TRA will, early in the New Year, publish for further consultation, its proposals on a range of issues including retail price regulation, competition in the mobile services market and number portability”.

During the meeting members of the industry highlighted a number of issues of concern for the industry. Three main issues remain as top priorities: the need to increase competitive availability of international connectivity, facilitating access to public and private land for the purpose of deploying new networks to end customers and the importance of the availability of wholesale services from Batelco with reasonable charges and conditions.

The attendees complemented TRA for being responsive to their issues throughout 2007 and for providing opportunities to debate issues of concerns and requested a similar meeting to be held during June next year.



### **About TRA**

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) was established by Legislative Decree No. 48 of 2002 promulgating the Telecommunications Law. 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 TRA can be viewed at [www.tra.org.bh](http://www.tra.org.bh)