



TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY HOLDS PUBLIC HEARING ON BATELCO LICENSES

MANAMA – 31 May 2003 – The next step in the ongoing consultation process between the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) and the telecommunications industry took place this morning when the industry was given the opportunity to make oral representations to the TRA on the draft Batelco licenses at a public meeting in Manama. These licenses include Batelco's national fixed services license, mobile telecommunications license, international telecommunications facilities license, international telecommunications services license, internet services license, value added services license, public access mobile radio service license, paging license, very small aperture (VSAT) license and frequency license.

This public meeting follows the receipt by the TRA of detailed written comments by the telecommunications industry on several prior occasions. The main purpose of the public meeting was for the telecommunications industry to highlight issues of specific concern to them. Some of the important issues that were discussed, and which are still under consideration by the TRA, are the rebalancing of tariffs prior to the introduction of competition in the international segment of the market by July 2004 as envisaged by the Telecommunications Law, a numbering plan, the equitable treatment of Batelco and the newly licensed mobile operator, MTC Vodafone Bahrain, as well as numerous technical and definitional issues.

Deputy General Director of the TRA, Mr. Keith Gilbert, said that the TRA will "take the utmost care to ensure that the interests of all the parties affected by the telecommunications industry are taken into account, including the interests of consumers and the operators."

About the TRA

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) was established by Legislative Decree No. 48 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

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