

**STATEMENT BY MR. CRIS SEECHERAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (ag),
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AT A
NEWS CONFERENCE, OFFICE OF THE AUTHORITY, WEDNESDAY JULY
18TH 2007.**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen of the media, we have invited you here today to inform you of some of the key initiatives being undertaken by the Authority and to provide you with an update on a number of matters related to the operations of the Authority.

July 2007 marks three years since the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago became operational. Given our mandate to open the Trinidad and Tobago's telecommunications and broadcasting markets to competition, as you are aware specific initiatives were immediately set in train in July 2004 to realize this mandate.

In particular, the following actions have been undertaken by the Authority to date:

- The authorisation of two additional providers in the mobile telephone market;
- The authorisation of seven (7) companies to provide subscription broadcasting services, via cable or satellite;
- The authorisation of nine (9) additional companies to provide international facilities and services and
- The authorization of thirty six (36) free-to-air radio stations and six (6) free-to-air television providers that were originally licensed under the Wireless Telegraphy Ordinance.

Key initiatives currently underway include:

1. FREE TO AIR TELEVISION

Ladies and gentlemen I am pleased to announce today that the Board of the Authority at its last meeting agreed to open the free-to-air television market to allow for:

- 3 additional National providers
- 2 additional Major Territorial providers; and
- 2 additional Minor Territorial providers.

Towards this end, the Authority will be issuing a Request for Proposals by the end of August 2007.

At the end of that process, if applicants are successful in securing all available concessions for the delivery of services, there would be total of thirteen (13) providers of free to air television services, as opposed to 6 which exist currently. This scenario would allow for an increased variety of programming in Trinidad and Tobago.

This decision was taken by the Board following the receipt of twelve (12) responses to an Expressions of Interest notice issued by the Authority in April 2007.

The Authority will publish a document concurrent with the RFP process which will outline the VHF and UHF broadcast channels to be allocated for the provision of additional 'Free To Air' broadcasting services in accordance with industry needs and public policy objectives.

This document will also outline the authorisation process to be implemented by the Authority in respect of additional 'Free-to-Air' TV providers as well as specific licensing conditions to be applied.

2. BROADBAND WIRELESS SERVICES

In anticipation of demands for broadband wireless services such as WiFi, WiMAX, broadband Internet access, wireless subscription broadcasting services (i.e. wireless

Cable TV) and voice telephony the Authority initiated a process early in 2007 towards making radio frequency spectrum available to individuals/companies for this purpose.

As a precursor to this, the Authority prepared and published a spectrum plan which identified radio frequency spectrum in the following bands allocated for providing Broadband Wireless Access (BWA) services:

400 MHz

Lower and Upper 700 MHz

2.3 GHz

2.4 GHz

2.5 GHz

3.5 GHz

5 GHz

12 GHz

28 GHz

Spectrum in the Lower 700 MHz, 12 GHz and 28 GHz bands were allocated for public services and are being made accessible through a competitive process. Successful bids will be selected through an auction process.

Based on a recent prequalification exercise the following five companies have become eligible to take part in an auction process which would take place by October 2007:

- Sigma Communications Limited.
- Green Dot Limited.
- Telstar Cable System Limited.
- Open Telecom Limited.
- Columbus Communications Trinidad Limited.

The Authority has already identified a preferred auction manager through a recently conducted RFP process.

By the end of September 2007 the Authority will institute a framework for class licences in the 2.4 GHz and specific ranges in the 5GHz band which will be made available for public and private use for low interference potential and mass market consumer devices without an individual licence.

The Authority has also engaged existing users of the 400 MHz, Upper 700 MHz, 2.3 GHz, 2.5 GHz and 3.5 GHz Bands in a process to determine an equitable allocation of resources. This process commenced in January 2007. The 2.3 GHz, 2.5 GHz and 3.5 GHz Bands can be used for services such as WiMax while the 400 MHz and Upper 700 MHz bands can be used for wireless Internet access and subscription broadcasting technologies respectively. On completion of this exercise the Authority will formally announce the authorization process for access to these bands by new users. This announcement will be made before the end of the year.

This initiative by the Authority is aligned with the broadband strategy of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago which is effectively meant to ensure that more citizens access affordable ICTs such as television, Internet, radio and telephone services.

3. DIGITAL DIVIDE SURVEY STARTS

The Authority has embarked on a Digital Divide Survey. Results from the survey which officially started last Monday July 9th will be used to measure the gap between those persons who can access and make effective use of telecommunications and broadcasting services and those who cannot.

This initiative is aimed at achieving the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's Universality Policy objectives which were established in recognition of the economic and social value to be derived from the ability of individuals to access telecommunications and broadcasting services.

The government's Universality policy specifies that affordable Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), inclusive of telecommunications and broadcasting services should be available as far as possible to all parts of the country and that citizens should be able to access a full range of basic services, taking into account the different needs of the user population.

The survey is targeting 5000 households and is being conducted by the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) of the University of the West Indies on behalf of the Authority.

The data gathered from this exercise will assist the Authority in identifying the un-served and the under-served areas of Trinidad and Tobago as it pertains to the availability and accessibility of affordable telecommunications and broadcasting services, and will inform the approach to be adopted in the Authority's Universality Implementation Plan which will seek to institute measures within the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors that will facilitate the reduction of the existing digital divide.

The Authority is hoping for maximum participation from the public in order for the survey to be a success.

4. BROADCASTING CODE

During the period April to May 2005 the Authority issued a draft Broadcasting Code for public comment. A wide variety of comments were received which effectively indicated the need to redraft the document.

By way of an RFP, the Authority contracted a team of expert consultants to prepare the document. The team is led by Joannah Bharose and also includes Kevin Baldeosingh, Sharon Pitt and Bruce Paddington.

The team has been working on the document and is expected to deliver the draft to the Authority by the end of, July 2007 after conducting specific stakeholder consultations.

On receipt of the document from the consultants the Authority will initiate a full Public Consultation process, as was done previously.

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