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TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

For Immediate release

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TRAI releases consultation paper on issues relating to entry of certain entities into broadcasting and distribution activities

New Delhi, 25th February, 2008 - TRAI has today released a consultation paper on the Issues relating to entry of certain entities into Broadcasting and Distribution activities. At present, in India, the activities relating to the broadcasting sector, which include owning a TV or a Radio channel as well as its distribution through various distributing platforms, are mainly in the hands of Prasar Bharati (an autonomous body created by an Act of Parliament) and the private sector.

In the past, certain State Governments had also shown interest to get into this sector, but were not granted the permission under the extant policy of the Government of India. Recently, some more requests have been received by the Government of India for undertaking broadcasting and distribution activities by the State Governments and certain other entities. These requests raised certain broader policy issues relating to entry of different entities into the broadcasting sector. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India has requested TRAI to examine the matter of allowing State Governments, urban and local bodies, 3-tier Panchayati Raj bodies, publicly funded bodies, political bodies and religious bodies to enter into the broadcasting activities and has requested for submission of its recommendations as per the provisions of Section 11(1)(a) of TRAI Act, 1997. The recommendations on the disqualification with respect to religious bodies to enter into broadcasting sector were also sought by the Government.

The consultation paper focuses on various factors involved in deciding the future policy, in the interest of broadcasting sector and public at large, on the entry of these entities into this sector. The consultation paper throws up questions to stakeholders about the entry and extent of involvement of these entities into broadcasting domain alongwith the safeguards required to prevent any possible misuse by these entities. The paper also highlights the constitutional provisions relating to Central and State Governments on the subject.

The Authority invites all the stakeholders to respond to the issues raised in this consultation paper by the 25th March, 2008. The full text of the consultation paper is available on TRAI's website: www.trai.gov.in.

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