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U.S.- India Business Council

August 9, 2013

Dr. Rahul Khullar
Chairman
Telecom Regulatory Authority of India,
Mahanagar Doorsanchar Bhawan, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, New Delhi – 110002

Dear Mr. Chairman,

The U.S.-India Business Council, comprised of 350 members in the U.S. and India representing leaders in all industries including the media and entertainment sector, is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the request of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) through the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) to comment on recent proposed changes in Foreign Direct Investment in the Broadcasting Sector.

The Council is very supportive of the direction initiated recently by MIB to create a more open environment to investment in the Indian broadcasting industry. Specifically, the Council is pleased that 100% investment (up from 74%) is under consideration for Teleport, DTH, HITS, Mobile TV and Cable TV networks. Additionally, the proposal to increase FM Radio and the up-linking of News and Current Affairs TV Channels to 49% (from 26%) is also a positive signal that the Government of India is committed to a vibrant media market.

U.S.-based media companies like Viacom, Sony Entertainment, Time Warner and 21st Century Fox over many years have not just sold their content to Indian broadcasters but have also heavily invested in local content production. Offered in multiple languages across the length and breadth of India, they now reach more than 400 million viewers on a weekly basis. In addition to their localized content offerings, these investors demonstrate state of the art techniques and have introduced new production (HD, 3D) and broadcasting technologies from companies including Cisco and Intel. Thousands of jobs have been created as a result.

Investment flowing from increased FDI limits in news offerings specifically, will permit American companies to bring best practices to the marketplace in terms of journalistic professionalized news reporting, news gathering technologies and much needed funding for financially challenged broadcast news television channels in India.

The USIBC appreciates the efforts of the MIB to expand FDI and stands ready to be helpful in any manner deemed appropriate.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ron Somers
President
U.S. India Business Council

CC: Mr. Wasi Ahmad, Advisor (B&CS), Telecom Regulatory Authority of India