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Utilities Regulation & Competition Authority

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URCA Launches Number Portability Survey

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) has launched a survey inviting public reaction to the introduction of Number Portability in The Bahamas. Number Portability is a service that allows subscribers to keep their existing telephone number(s) even though they might change from one service provider to another.

Presently, the Bahamas Telecommunications Company Limited (BTC) and Systems Resources Group (SRG) are the main providers of services to consumers. There is a possibility of greater choice through future offerings by other licensed providers in the market such as Cable Bahamas Limited (CBL) and IP Solutions International (IPSI), and cellular competitors to BTC at the expiry of BTC's cellular exclusivity.

The survey is intended to gather information from a cross-section of the population, to assist in the development of a forthcoming consultative document by URCA. This consultation gives the public and stakeholders an opportunity to take part in providing their views on the subject.

Number Portability is not a new idea internationally; many countries have mandated it and carried out it successfully. The idea was also discussed, and received support, as part of the Government's consultation on the New Regulatory Framework in December 2008, and more recently in responses to URCA's consultation on the draft National Numbering Plan.

URCA's Director of Policy and Regulation, Mr. Usman Saadat, stated "Number Portability is one of the last significant barriers to competition and has several benefits, including enabling service provider choice, convenience to consumers, and avoids having to inform friends, family and business contacts about a number change. There are several options available on how best to carry out number portability which will be part of URCA's consultation. The survey is a first step in assessing consumer preferences. We at URCA encourage the public to complete the survey by filling in the questionnaire that is available at URCA's website (www.urbahamas.bs)."

URCA is the independent regulator of electronic communications services and networks in The Bahamas and acts in a manner that is transparent, fair and non-discriminatory.

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