

**SUMMARY ON THE MOBILE NUMBER PORTABILITY (MNP)  
IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT:  
(15<sup>TH</sup> TO 16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2012, DAR ES SALAAM TANZANIA)**

**By: TCRA**

## **1.0 Introduction**

Number Portability in telecommunications means the ability to change service provider, service or location without changing your telephone number. It therefore implies that Mobile Number Portability (MNP) is a service that allows mobility subscribers to keep their numbers when changing from one mobile service provider to another.

The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) hosted and sponsored the Mobile Number Portability (MNP) International Summit that was organised by BSP Media Group UK. The workshop was held at Mlimani City Conference Centre in Dar Es Salaam from 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012. The objective of hosting the fifth International Mobile Number Portability Summit in our country was to provide an experience sharing forum as a preparatory process towards the anticipated launch of Mobile Number Portability in Tanzania.

The opening of the summit was graced by the Minister for Communication, Science and Technology Professor Makame M. Mbarawa (MP) who urged the participants as they discuss those pertinent MNP issues, to also ensure other related critical solutions like Carrier Selection and Central Equipment Identification Register (CEIR) in the mobile industry are timely implemented.

The Summit was attended by about 100 participants with resource persons drawn from TCRA (Tanzania), Republic of Kenya (CCK), Number Portability of South Africa, Caughill-Palitz International Ltd, Laurasia (UK), Reforcia (Sweden), Rabion Consultancy (The Netherlands), Porting XS, Mediafon (Lithuania), Telcodia and Interconnect Communications Consulting (UK).

Most of the Participants came from ICT key stakeholders in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania. Following is the Summary of the Workshop.

## **2.0 The Workshop:**

### **2.1 Noted:**

- i. That Mobile Number Portability is a sensitive undertaking and will only be implemented once, it is therefore critical to get it done right at this very first time;

- ii. The role of the Regulator in ensuring the successful implementation and Management of MNP: by:-
  - A. Setting the framework for efficient and successful porting;;
    - (i) *Simple, Quick, Cheap, Reliable*
    - (ii) *Setclear rules for fair competition*
  - B. Pulling the operators together to;;
    - (i) *Overcome Technical, Process and Commercial issues*
    - (ii) *Provide leadership for implementation & direction*
  - C. Championing Consumers by;
    - (i) *Driving public awareness and education on MNP*
    - (ii) *Developing aligned and effective communication messages.*
- iii. There are countries in Africa (Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Morocco and Egypt) who have already implemented MNP, and others are at different stages of implementation;
- iv. Implementing MNP may seem costly and can rarely be justified through conventional Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA). Hence the cost of MNP implementation should be considered as cost of doing business by Operators;
- v. That when MNP is properly implemented, can make the porting process as simple and easy as registering a new subscriber.

## **2.2 Acknowledged:**

- i. The fact that Telephone numbers have become personal to owners as a means of being contacted, communication hence it is important that they are able to preserve their unique numbers while making a choice of which service provider to use;
- ii. That MNP is an opportunity and operators can gain substantially;
- iii. That MNP does not necessarily affect the market shares or cause price competition but can cause a disastrous effect if and when competitors starts fighting price wars;
- iv. The need to have cost efficient Number Portability in Tanzania through appropriate benchmarking.

- v. The need for continuous education and awareness to consumers so that they are informed in the MNP process and in turn will have confidence in porting.

### **2.3 Learnt:**

- i. That Tanzania MNP Clearing House shall be operated by an independent trusted and licensed third party;
- ii. That Tanzania has opted for a Direct Routing All Call Query with a Centralised approach as it allows for a single consistent ported number, this allows the operators to control their own numbers and it is flexible on further addition or deletions of operators;
- iii. The Regulator is keen in implementation of MNP in Tanzania and the process has so far involved consultative processes in making of legislation and regulations that are been followed by licensing a Clearinghouse Administrator, supervision of MNP programme and roll out activities and compliance and enforcement;
- iv. That there are other countries like South Africa where MNP Clearing House is jointly owned by the Mobile Operators through a company with equal shares among them;
- v. Operators need competing value proposition to attract subscribers and bundle MNP with a combination of suitable Product and Services targeted to appropriate segments;
- vi. Operators need to launch or enhance the loyalty Retention Programs;
- vii. All operators will also be recipients of customers from competitors hence MNP should not be seen as a threat but rather opportunity;
- viii. MNP is a tool that is used by the Regulator to foster competition leading to improvement of quality of service and stimulated innovations;
- ix. For the MNP to be successful the differences between the on-net and off-net tariff needs to be negligible;
- x. In some countries notably Ghana, the subscriber does not pay for the porting fee. The porting cost is borne by the recipient network;
- xi. The MNP Regulations in Tanzania stipulates Number Porting *Approach, Solution and Conditions*.

## **2.4 Recommended that:**

- i. Mobile Number Portability specifications in Tanzania need to be issued so as to guide the operators;
- ii. The Regulator and operators in the country play their respective roles to ensure the Mobile Number Portability is successfully implemented and managed in Tanzania using the published Electronic and Postal Communications (Mobile Number Portability) Regulations, 2012;
- iii. In implementing the MNP in Tanzania, the Regulator need to address the issue of tariff transparency including possibility of retrieval of Mobile Banking Funds and review on interconnection rates so as to minimise the on-net and off-net tariff differences.

## **3.0 Closing Ceremony**

The closing ceremony of the summit was graced by Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology Dr. Florens Turuka who reverberated on the Minister's speech.

On his side as government the Permanent Secretary confirmed that he will capitalize the challenges that were shared during the event as opportunities to better plan and launch the MNP in Tanzania using the published Electronic and Postal Communications (Mobile Number Portability) Regulations that stipulates Number Porting Approach, Solution and Conditions.

And in conclusion, he thanked the Organizers and the lead Sponsor for the well organised international event.