

to Reduce the Economic and Social Impacts of COVID-19

Telecom Sector Helps in Reducing Direct Communication between Individuals

Doha, March 28, 2020: With the support of the Ministry of Transport and Communications (MoTC), the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) took the initiative in cooperation with local telecom service providers (Ooredoo Qatar and Vodafone Qatar) and with one of the sector's key players and international partners (Microsoft), to take a set of measures and provide offers and packages for telecom services in the telecom sector to help people of Qatar to work remotely from home easily and securely during the precautionary measures taken to limit the spread of COVID-19.

According to the measures, priorities were set for the telecom sector in Qatar; the first priority was ensuring telecom networks continuity and readiness to handle the additional traffic without affecting the quality of services provided to the consumers, and to provide consumers with the best possible quality of service and price. In addition to ensuring that the employees who are working in this sector are following all possible prevention measures to stay healthy, which will secure the needed resources for business continuity. These measures will support all telecom services like voice calls and internet to facilitate the work remotely from home during this period, where consumers need faster connectivity services and additional data, at prices affordable by the community.

In this regard, the CRA contacted Ooredoo Qatar and Vodafone Qatar and requested their unite efforts to meet consumers' needs by introducing many promotional packages, and setting its duration based on the circumstances. Both Ooredoo Qatar and Vodafone Qatar have doubled the speed of internet for existing residential customers and doubled the mobile data for residential and business customers, free of additional charges. In this regard the CRA indicates that both (Ooredoo Qatar and Vodafone Qatar) have made an effort to connect more customers to the internet services, either waiving the connection

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fees or introducing new affordable mobile broadband services; to provide residential and business customers - operating either in strategic sectors or in sectors which revenues are impacted by this emergency - with speed and bandwidth upgrade for free; to support units of the Government at the forefront of the fight against the COVID-19 with additional mobile data and/or minutes; and to provide unlimited support for the health and education sectors by ensuring to increase internet capacity that is needed to meet their needs.

The full list of packages can be found by visiting Ooredoo Qatar and Vodafone Qatar websites. Both companies have ensured that they will continue supporting their customers during this difficult period, in coordination with the MoTC and the CRA. Additional promotional packages might be introduced into the market, consistently with the CRA's Code on Advertising Marketing and Branding, Telecom Consumer Protection Policy and the Retail Tariff Instructions.

The measures also included facilitating the remote operation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), while following the precautionary measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, by enabling them to access collaboration tools for free through cloud computing platform of Microsoft, which is one of Qatar's international partners in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector, as it has launched an initiative to provide a number of free services nationwide, such as the customized package of "Office 365". Microsoft provides users with a range of software and tools that significantly facilitate businesses remote operation, like voice and video conference calls, along with documents and forms management and storage. The CRA confirms that businesses can get access to these products for free for a certain period of time by contacting Microsoft's partners.

The CRA has published on its website, the Microsoft's partners contact details and related information <https://cra.gov.qa/en/Consumer/Work-from-Home>. The CRA will also launch an outreach campaign in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry that will target SMEs to inform them about how they can benefit from these free services.

Also, businesses can contact the CRA through the specified contact channels available on its website to inform the CRA about ICT related challenges that they have faced during the COVID-19. This matter is important for the CRA as a regulator for the ICT sector, as this

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helps in detecting the challenges, in order to take them into consideration and develop future solutions for them, and perhaps to develop regulations to support these needed solutions.

“I would like to sincerely thank MoTC for its support to these initiatives and to thank Qatar's international partner and local telecom service providers for their efforts and world-class performance. This broad range of partners have enabled the ICT sector to respond quickly to this emergency. The presence of a highly efficient infrastructure has helped to continue providing reliable services that ensures work continuity of various entities without interruption, and that all citizens and residents of Qatar are able to stay up to date with the latest updates related to the COVID-19 and stay in touch with their families and friends,” said His Excellency Mohammed Ali Al-Mannai, President of CRA.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed Al-Thani, Chief Executive Officer (Acting) at Ooredoo Qatar, said: “For the health and safety of our employees and customers in these uncertain times, we were among the first companies in Qatar to have taken extreme preventive measures by asking our employees to work remotely and encouraging our customers to use our available digital platforms for all their transactions. More than ever before, we're aware of the importance of reliable telecommunications to our customers, our businesses and our economy. We've seen the demand for connectivity, and for fast, reliable internet, rise exponentially as our communities work from home, home-school, distance themselves socially and self-isolate, and in response we have significantly boosted network performance and enhanced internet speeds, including for schools and universities. Our #StayHomeWithOoredoo campaign features many facets, including the promotion of our digital channels for customer service, free data and minutes, the addition of educational channels to Ooredoo tv and free transactions for international remittances using Ooredoo's Mobile Money. We've also been supporting Qatar's efforts to manage this unprecedented situation by working with government bodies including the Ministry of Public Health to raise awareness of COVID-19 among all sectors of our community; via SMS, social media and more, and by using our social media platforms to share messages from the Supreme Committee for Crisis Management. We are proud to be enabling the communities we serve by providing much-needed relief measures, innovative solutions and reliable digital services.”

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The spread of COVID-19 is having a significant impact on our day-to-day lives but we're in this together. Vodafone Qatar is committed to doing its utmost to support the State of Qatar's government in combatting the spread of this novel virus, and meeting the needs of our customers and wider society during this unprecedented time. As a provider of critical connectivity and communications services enabling our digital society, we are acutely aware of the massive responsibility we shoulder, and have been quick to introduce several measures in response to this rapidly evolving situation. This includes adding extra capacity to our fixed, broadband and mobile networks to cope with the increase in demand, increasing customers' data allowances for free, offering customers door-to-door delivery of all our products and services to customers and disseminating health information to the public via SMS," said Sheikh Hamad bin Abdulla bin Jassim Al-Thani, Chief Executive Officer of Vodafone Qatar.

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