# TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

## 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2006

## PRESS RELEASE NO.37/2006

## TRAI releases Recommendations for permitting usage of * and # in provisioning of value added intra-network services like USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) by Access Providers

TRAI today issued its Recommendations for permitting usage of * and # in provisioning of value added intra-network services like USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) by Access Providers.

The Access Providers are using these special characters * and # in provision of value added Intra-network services like USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) wherein the subscriber of a network uses these special characters not at the time of dialing, but subsequently once he has entered their network for uses of supplementary services.

The National Numbering Plan 2003 is silent about the usage of above special characters in provisioning of intra-network value added services.

Based on the Access Providers comments and keeping in view the interest of consumers TRAI recommended that relevant provisions of NNP-2003, viz. clause 1.6 of Introduction Part and Numbers for Special Services described in Annex IV, be elaborated and clarified so that the usage of special characters * & # is explicitly allowed in provisioning of intra-network value added services.

The detailed recommendations are available on TRAI's website at: www.trai.gov.in.

(Arvind Kumar)
Joint Advisor (FN)

**Recommendations for permitting usage of * and # in provisioning of value added Intra-network services like USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) by Access providers**

**1. Background:**
The Authority observed that the Access Providers were allowing their subscribers to use special characters such as * and # in provisioning of intra-network value added services like USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data).

The Authority sought clarification from all the Access Providers who are presently using special characters/symbols along with details.

**2. Analysis of the response of Access Providers:**
After analyzing the responses from the Access Providers the observations are:
- The Access Providers are not using any special character for any of the voice services i.e. for dialling out a subscriber

- These special characters are used in provision of value added **Intra-network** services like USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) wherein the subscriber of a network uses these special characters not at the time of dialling, but subsequently once he has entered their network for use of supplementary services.

The National Numbering Plan 2003 (NNP 2003) does not permit the use of any special characters for voice services i.e. for dialling out a subscriber, whether intra-circle or inter circle. However, it does not encompass the mode/procedure by which the subscriber can access the service provider's physical network per se.

The National Numbering Plan was designed when over all telecom service industry was in nascent stage, and hence the usage of special characters in provisioning of intra-network value added services would not have been incorporated in the plan. It may also be noted that TRAI on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2006 issued recommendations for permitting usage of strings containing #, $, £ etc. for accessing High Speed Data Services in Wireless Networks duly after consultation process.

Hence it is required that NNP 2003 should be reviewed and amended to accommodate the intra-network services also by using special characters such as * and # with in the service provider's network.

**3. Recommendations:**

In view of above it is recommended that relevant provisions of NNP-2003, viz. clause 1.6 of Introduction Part and Numbers for Special Services described in Annex IV, be elaborated and clarified so that the usage of characters such as *and # for provisioning of intra-network value added services through access provider's networks may be specifically permitted.

To,

      Dr. J.S.Sarma
      Secretary,
      Department of Telecommunication,
      Sanchar Bhavan
      Ashoka Road
      <u>New Delhi</u> – 110001

**<u>Subject</u>: Recommendations for permitting usage of * and # in provisioning of Intra-network services like USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) by Access Providers**

Sir,

      Most of the Access Providers are using the special characters such as * and # in provision of value added intra-network services like USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) wherein the subscriber of a network uses these special characters not at the time of dialling, but subsequently once he has entered their network for use of supplementary services

      The National Numbering Plan 2003 is silent about the usage of such special characters and also does not encompass the mode/procedure by which a subscriber can access the service provider's physical network per se.

      TRAI obtained the comments of Access Providers and after consideration of the submissions by them and keeping in view the interests of consumers, the Authority has finalized its recommendations pertaining to need for elaboration and clarification in NNP-2003 for enabling the above.

      The recommendations are enclosed for the consideration of Government.