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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Number Portability**

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) wishes to notify the general public of the imminent launch of Number Portability in Guyana.

The 5<sup>th</sup> of October 2020 heralded the liberalization of the telecommunications sector. The advent of liberalization brought with it the prospect of better quality of service, competitive rates, better prices and better choices. Number Portability is perhaps the key drive of liberalization intended to facilitate competition and enhance consumer choice. Number portability when implemented will allow subscribers to switch service providers while retaining their existing telephone number.

As the regulator for the telecommunications sector, the Commission is responsible for the implementation and general oversight of the number portability process in Guyana. To this end the Commission has established a Number Portability Working Group (NPWG) to oversee the process. The Working Group is chaired by a Member of the Commission and it comprises of representatives from all the telecommunications service providers, namely GTT Inc., Digicel, and ENet, together with the Telecommunications Agency. The Telecommunications Agency has the responsibility to process telecommunications licences, issuance of telephone numbers and the regulation of spectrum used for both mobile and wireless radio communication.

Central to the technical process is the Clearinghouse service provider. Porting XS the selected Clearinghouse from the Netherlands now licensed in Guyana is responsible for providing number portability administrative services to the service providers. The Clearinghouse provider will manage the central database with telephone numbers and technically manage which numbers may be ported upon the request of the consumer.

Admittedly, whilst the Commission had anticipated an earlier launch date for number portability, the delay in the licensing of the clearinghouse provider and the completion of multiple detailed processes especially the numerous porting tests between the service providers impacted on several key milestones. The critical stage of the live testing of numbers amongst the service providers is now a daily exercise. This testing component is an involved science which includes but not limited to the interconnection with the Clearinghouse provider; exchange of telephone numbers for porting tests and certification of every completed test. The configuration of the routing of calls when a number is ported to another service provider, and testing of short message signal (SMS) during the porting processes all form the basis for the best practices towards a seamless Number Portability regime in Guyana.

The Commission wishes to assure the public that it continues to actively participate and monitor each testing phase and that we remain committed to ensuring the successful implementation of number portability. We at the Commission understand that an assigned telephone number, especially mobile numbers have evolved and it has become synonymous with a person's identity as a recovery contact for social media and other electronic platforms.

As we strive to make Number Portability a reality in Guyana, please be assured that we will continue to provide the general public with updates and ultimately the new launch date.

*September 5, 2023*