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Media Release

TSTT MANDATED TO IMPLEMENT FIXED NUMBER PORTABILITY

The Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT) is pleased to advise that Fixed Number Portability is one step closer to implementation in Trinidad and Tobago.

In a ruling today High Court judge, Justice Seepersad declared that local telecommunications provider TSTT is legally obligated to implement fixed number portability. Once implemented, fixed-landline customers can change their service provider without changing their telephone number.

This judgement was made in relation to the matter of an application for leave to seek judicial review between Columbus Communications Trinidad Limited (CCTL) (Claimant) and the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT) (First Defendant) and the Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT) (Interested Party).

In his ruling Justice Seepersad said, “citizens deserve an open telecommunications market characterised by the competitiveness of price, quality and service... and that Citizens should not be forced, ...into staying with a telecommunications provider because of fear of inconvenience or uncertainty”.

Noting that Monopolistic operations should be discouraged and they have no place in a free market capitalist state, Justice Seepersad stressed ... “In this pandemic, the need for effective and efficient communication avenues cannot be marginalised and the ability of a customer to change service

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providers but retain the same fixed-line telephone number is paramount. Many citizens, corporate and private, have used the same fixed-line telephone numbers for decades. These numbers are an integral part of their existence, and a change of number can occasion significant distress, inconvenience and expense, especially for corporate citizens whose advertisements and marketing campaigns may have to be revised.”

In delivering his judgement Justice Seepersad noted that “the Court is satisfied that TATT acted within its statutory mandate and displayed procedural fairness as it methodically addressed all the material and relevant considerations attendant to the implementation of FNP.”

The ruling stated “The Court considered the fact TSTT’s joinder in the instant matter, enabled the Court to hold that TSTT is legally obligated to implement FNP and as a consequence TSTT’s misapprehension, whether genuine or by convenient design, as to whether it was legally mandated to implement FNP, has been corrected.

Given the prevailing and operative circumstances and mindful of its discretion, this Court holds the view that its determination that TSTT has a legal obligation to implement FNP has removed the pre-litigation uncertainty upon which TSTT relied.”

Given today’s judgement, TATT intends to move promptly to implement Fixed Number Portability and work with TSTT and other fixed telecommunications service providers towards that goal.

END