



**CABLE & WIRELESS**

**4 March, 2009**

### **MALDIVES OPERATING LICENCE RENEWED**

- **15 year licence extension for fixed-line, mobile and broadband services**
- **Licence fee remains unchanged**

Cable & Wireless International's Maldives operation, Dhiraagu, has been granted a 15-year extension to its operating licence by the Communications Authority of the Maldives (CAM).

Under the terms of the extended licence, Dhiraagu will continue to provide the range of fixed-line, broadband and mobile telecommunications services across the Indian Ocean-based islands until 2023. The licence fees remain unchanged for the term of the new licence.

Dhiraagu is the leading provider of telecom services in the Maldives, with its network spanning the country's 20 Atolls. Established in 1988, Dhiraagu is the only full service telecommunications company in the Maldives offering fixed-line, mobile, broadband and data services.

Serving more than 300,000 mobile customers, an 80% share of the mobile market, Dhiraagu's mobile network has 100% coverage across all 200 inhabited island plus an additional 120 islands that are developed for tourism, fishing, agriculture, and other industries.

Commenting, Tony Rice, the CEO of Cable & Wireless International said:

"For the past twenty years Dhiraagu has continuously invested in infrastructure in the Maldives including the roll-out of a countrywide GSM mobile network, internet service and a submarine cable system between the Maldives and Sri Lanka. This has boosted the country's economic growth and development of its tourism industry. Cable &

Wireless International is proud to have worked in partnership with the Government of the Maldives in building this infrastructure and the Dhiraagu business.”

“Dhiraagu provides a world class service to the people and businesses of the Maldives. With this extension we will now be able to invest further in our broadband network and expand services in the Atolls,” he added.

While broadband penetration in the capital Male is high, there remains significant opportunity to expand broadband services across other islands, where penetration is around 30%. Dhiraagu is considering solutions, including the wireless broadband technology WIMAX, to increase connectivity on the islands. It has also recently partnered with the provider Thuraya to provide a satellite phone service, so that the fishing and live-aboard dive operators, which are vital to the islands’ economy, can stay in touch when out of mobile range.

Dhiraagu is a joint venture between Cable & Wireless International and the Government of the Maldives, with Cable & Wireless International owning a 45% stake in the business. It is one of the Group’s operations in the Indian Ocean and sits within the Monaco & Islands portfolio. Cable & Wireless International also has operations in the Caribbean, Panama and Macau.

***Ends.***

### **About Cable & Wireless International**

Cable & Wireless International creates and manages world class regional telecoms businesses in small to medium sized markets around the world. With four major operations in the Caribbean, Panama, Macau and Monaco & Islands it operates in 39 countries and offers mobile, broadband, domestic and international fixed line services to residential and business customers.

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