

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10902, July 21, 2016]

AN ACT GRANTING THE METRO CONNECTIONS AND TELECOM CORP. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE PHILIPPINES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Nature and Scope of Franchise.* – Subject to the provisions of the 1987 Philippine Constitution and applicable laws, rules and regulations, there is hereby granted to Metro Connections and Telecom Corp., hereunder referred to as the grantee, its successors or assignees, a franchise to construct, install, establish, operate and maintain for commercial purposes and in the public interest, throughout the Philippines, with its central base of operations located at San Juan City, wire and/or wireless telecommunications systems including, but not limited to, mobile, cellular, paging, fiber optics, satellite transmit and receive systems, switches, and their value-added services such as, but not limited to, transmission of voice, data, facsimile, control signs, audio and video, information services bureau and all other telecommunications systems technologies as are at present available or will be made available through technological advances or innovations in the future; and/or construct, acquire, lease and operate or manage transmitting and receiving stations, lines, cables or systems as are convenient or essential to efficiently carry out the purpose of this franchise.

SEC. 2. *Manner of Operation of Stations or Facilities.* – The stations or facilities of the grantee shall be constructed and operated in a manner as will, at most, result only in the minimum interference on the wavelengths or frequencies of existing stations or other stations which may be established by law, without in any way diminishing its own right to use its selected wavelengths or frequencies and the quality of transmission or reception thereon as should maximize rendition of the grantee's services and/or the availability thereof.

SEC. 3. *Authority of the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC).* – The grantee shall secure from the NTC a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity or the appropriate permits and licenses for the construction, installation and operation of its telecommunications systems/facilities. In issuing the certificate, the NTC shall have the power to impose such conditions relative to the construction, operation, maintenance, or service level of the telecommunications system. The NTC shall have the authority to regulate the construction and operation of its telecommunications systems. The grantee shall not use any frequency in the radio spectrum without authorization from the NTC. Such certificate shall state the areas covered and the date the grantee shall commence the service. The NTC, however, shall not unreasonably withhold or delay the grant of any such authority, permit, or license.

SEC. 4. *Excavation and Restoration Works.* – For the purpose of erecting and maintaining poles or other supports for said wires or other conductors for the purpose of laying and maintaining underground wires, cables or other conductors, it shall be lawful for the grantee, its successors or assignees, with the prior approval of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) or the local government unit (LGU) concerned, as may be appropriate, to make excavations or lay conduits in any of the public places, roads, highways, streets, lanes, alleys, avenues, sidewalks or bridges of said province, cities and/or municipalities: *Provided, however,* That a public place, road, highway, street, lane, alley, avenue, sidewalk or bridge disturbed, altered or changed by reason of erection of poles or other supports or the underground laying of wires, other conductors or conduits, shall be repaired and replaced in workmanlike manner by the said grantee, its successors or assignees, in accordance with the standards set by the DPWH or the LGU concerned. Should the grantee, its successors or assignees, after the ten (10)-day notice from the said authority, fail, refuse or neglect to repair or replace any part of public place, road, highway, street, lane, alley, avenue, sidewalk or bridge disturbed, altered or changed by the said grantee, its successors or assignees, then the DPWH or the LGU concerned shall have the right to have the same repaired and placed in good order and condition at double expense to be charged against the grantee, its successors or assignees.

SEC. 5. *Responsibility to the Public.* – The grantee shall conform to the ethics of honest enterprise and not use its stations/facilities for obscene or indecent transmission, or for dissemination of deliberately false information or willful misrepresentation, or assist in subversive or treasonable acts.

The grantee shall provide basic or enhanced telephone service in any city and/or municipality in the Philippines where it has an approved Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the establishment, operation and maintenance of a local exchange service, without discrimination to any applicant therefor, in the order of the date of their applications, up to the limit of the capacity of its local telephone exchange and, should the demand for the telephone service at any time increase beyond the capacity thereof, the grantee shall increase the same to meet such demand: *Provided,* That in case the total demand to be satisfied by the expansion is less than the smallest viable local exchange available in the market as determined by the NTC, the grantee shall not be obliged to furnish such service unless the applicant for telephone service defrays the actual expenses for the installation of the telecommunications apparatus necessary for such services and in such case, the NTC may extend the time within which the grantee shall furnish such service.

The grantee shall operate and maintain all its stations, lines, cables, systems, and equipment for the transmission and reception of messages, signals, and pulses in a satisfactory manner at all times, and as far as economical and practicable, modify, improve, or change such stations, lines, cables, systems, and equipment to keep abreast with the advances in science and technology.

SEC. 6. *Rates for Services.* – The charges and rates for telecommunications services of the grantee, except the rates and charges on those that may hereafter be declared or considered as nonregulated services, whether flat rates or measured rates or variation thereof, shall be subject to the approval of the NTC or its legal successor. The rates to be charged by the grantee shall be unbundled, separable,

and distinct among the services offered and shall be determined in such a manner that regulated services do not subsidize the unregulated ones.

SEC.7. *Right of Government.* – A special right is hereby reserved to the President of the Philippines, in times of war, rebellion, public peril, calamity, emergency, disaster, or disturbance of peace and order: to temporarily take over and operate the stations, transmitters, facilities, or equipment of the grantee; to temporarily suspend the operation of any station, transmitter, facility, or equipment in the interest of public safety, security, and public welfare; or to authorize the temporary use and operation thereof by any agency of the government, upon due compensation to the grantee, for the use of said stations, transmitters, facilities, or equipment during the period when these shall be so operated.

The radio spectrum is a finite resource that is part of the national patrimony and the use there of is a privilege conferred upon the grantee by the State and may be withdrawn any time after due process.

SEC. 8. *Term of Franchise.* – This franchise shall be in effect for a period of twenty-five (25) years from the date of the effectivity of this Act, unless sooner cancelled. This franchise shall be deemed *ipso facto* revoked in the event the grantee fails to comply with any of the following conditions:

- (a) Commence operations within one (1) year from the approval of its operating permit by the NTC;
- (b) Commence operations within three (3) years from the effectivity of this Act; and
- (c) Operate continuously for two (2) years.

SEC. 9. *Acceptance and Compliance.* – Acceptance of this franchise shall be given in writing to the Congress of the Philippines, through the Committee on Legislative Franchises of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Public Services of the Senate, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act. Upon giving such acceptance, the grantee shall exercise the privileges granted under this Act. Nonacceptance shall render the franchise void.

SEC. 10. *Bond.* – The grantee shall file a bond with the NTC in the amount that it shall determine to guarantee compliance with and fulfillment of the conditions under which this franchise is granted. If, after three (3) years from the date of the approval of its permit by the NTC, the grantee shall have fulfilled the conditions, the bond shall be cancelled by the NTC. Otherwise, the bond shall be forfeited in favor of the government and the franchise *ipso facto* revoked.

SEC. 11. *Right of Interconnection.* – The grantee is hereby authorized to connect or demand connection of its telecommunications systems to other telecommunications systems installed, operated and maintained by any other duly authorized person or entity in the Philippines for the purpose of providing extended and improved telecommunications services to the public, under such terms and conditions mutually agreed upon by the parties concerned and the same shall be subject to the review and modification of the NTC.

SEC. 12. *Gross Receipts.* – The grantee, its successors or assignees, shall keep a