

**[ REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10900, July 21, 2016 ]**

**AN ACT EXTENDING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO BELL TELECOMMUNICATION PHILIPPINES, INC., AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7692, ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING TO BELL TELECOMMUNICATION PHILIPPINES, INC., A FRANCHISE TO INSTALL, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES"**

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

SECTION 1. The franchise of Bell Telecommunication Philippines, Inc. granted under Republic Act No. 7692 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SECTION 1. *Nature and Scope of Franchise.* – Subject to the provisions of the 1987 Philippine Constitution and applicable laws, rules and regulations on public telecommunications, Bell Telecommunication Philippines, Inc., hereunder referred to as the grantee, its successors or assignees, is hereby granted the right, privilege and authority to carry on the business of providing telecommunications services in and between provinces, cities and municipalities in the Philippines and between the Philippines and other countries and territories and, for this purpose, to establish, operate, manage, lease, maintain and purchase telecommunications systems, including mobile, cellular and wired or wireless telecommunications systems, fiber optics, satellite transmit and receive systems, and other telecommunications systems and their value-added services such as transmission of voice, data, facsimile, control signals, audio and video, information service bureau, and all other telecommunications systems technologies as are at present available or be made available through technical advances or innovations in the future, or construct, acquire, lease, and operate or manage transmitting and receiving stations and switching stations, both for local and international services, lines, cables or systems, as is, or are, convenient or essential to efficiently carry out the purposes 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 assigned 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 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 the 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 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 altered, changed or disturbed 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 the 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 the services and in such case, the NTC may extend the time within which the grantee shall furnish the 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 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 thereof is a privilege conferred upon the grantee by the State, and may be withdrawn anytime 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 operate continuously for two (2) years."

"SEC. 9. *Tax Provisions.* –The grantee shall be liable to pay the same taxes on its real estate, buildings and personal property exclusive of this franchise, except on its antennas, radios, base transceiver stations,