



Press release for immediate publication

HE Dr. Ahmed Al-Futaisi inaugurates the 7th Edition of the FTTH Council MENA Conference

Muscat- The 7th Edition of the FTTH Council MENA Conference was inaugurated by HE Dr. Ahmed Al-Futaisi, Minister of Transport and Communications at the Grand Hyatt, Muscat on 10th November 2015.

Following the opening ceremony, keynote speeches were delivered by influential decision makers in the ICT industry including Dr. Salim Sultan Al Ruzaiqi, *CEO of the Information Technology Authority*, Mr. Ebrahim Al Haddad, *Regional Director of the ITU Arab Regional Office &*, and Dr. Suleiman Al-Hedaithy, *Chairman FTTH Council MENA*. The Conference also included a “*World of Applications*” session which showcased the latest applications and e-services by various companies in a dedicated area.

Dr. Suleiman Al-Hedaithy, *Chairman FTTH Council MENA* explained that the decision of the Council to hold the 7th Edition of the FTTH Conference in Oman this year was to mark the extraordinary efforts taken by the Government and leading ICT stakeholders in introducing fiber optics infrastructure within the region.

He commented “A range of government initiatives are driving ICT adoption in Oman, with a vision set towards becoming a knowledge-based economy. The ICT market in Oman is progressing rapidly, particularly the recent push towards a fiber-based national fixed broadband Infrastructure. FTTH, the new generation of broadband, will provide the Omani market with unmatched benefits and reliability allowing for ultra-fast internet connectivity and content-rich applications that require high bandwidth and speeds. In this regard, the support of the Omani Government and related parties have not gone unnoticed”.

This support could be seen through the government of Oman’s interest in the national broadband strategy, over which OMR 450 million is being spent over the next 10 years to improve communications services across various governorates. In line with the overall strategy, MoTC and the TRA are progressing in their plans to provide broadband services to residents in all cities and rural areas through satellite & wired communications.

Dr. Suleiman Al-Hedaithy also commended the efforts of the Oman Broadband Company (OBC) in its plans to facilitate the development of the new fiber-based national broadband network. “OBC is already making progress. The company has signed agreements with Omantel and Ooredoo last April and with Awasr last night; which I had the pleasure of attending. OBC is focused in making broadband more affordable and expanding coverage of its existing fiber

network to a further 130,000 homes and business in the capital Muscat by the end of 2016. It is estimated that over 90% of the Governorate of Muscat by 2021; and most of the other urban areas outside Muscat will be covered by fiber optic by the end of 2030. The ultimate target is to connect all homes and businesses to the national broadband network across the Sultanate by 2040”

Putting Oman in the spotlight, the Conference saw a panel of experts presenting their views on the key drivers for developing a national broadband strategy and giving attendees insight into the best practices for economic development and the strategic role played by the ICT industry in the process. The Conference will be held until 11th November 2015 under the theme “The Edge of a Brighter Tomorrow”. The FTTH Council MENA also announced their plans to hold the 8th edition of their Annual Conference in Tunisia in 2016.

About the FTTH Council MENA

The FTTH Council Middle East and North Africa is an industry organization with a mission to accelerate FTTH adoption by all broadband stakeholders through information and promotion, in order to accelerate the availability of fiber-based, ultra-high-speed access networks to consumers and businesses. We promote FTTH because it delivers a flow of new services that enhances the quality of life, contributes to a better environment and boosts competitiveness. For more information on the event, please visit the website at <http://ftthcouncilmena.org>

For editorial enquiries, please get in touch with Ms. Zuleika Pereira at 24656039 or email at zuleika@m2o-oman.com