

## **Spectrum sharing and trading guidelines on the anvil: Ravi Shankar Prasad**

### ***Government creating enabling policy environment to enhance private sector's participation in 'Digital India' programme***

**NEW DELHI, July 3, 2015.** The Government is in the process of finalizing the spectrum sharing and trading guidelines and is working towards creating an enabling ecosystem to make India a digitally-enabled society, stated **Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Communications & IT, Government of India**, here today.

While addressing a CEOs Roundtable on the theme **'Investment in the NexGen Digital Infrastructure'**, organized by FICCI in collaboration with the Ministry of Communications & IT, to give an impetus to the recently launched 'Digital India' programme, Mr. Prasad said that in the last 18 months, the government has been able to set a benchmark with its approach in spectrum auction. He added that the private sector has a pivotal role in driving the 'Digital India' programme.

Mr. Prasad said that the government is working towards 'Digital Inclusion'. In this regard, the process of digitally linking services, such as healthcare and postal, with community centres in rural areas have already begun. 'Digital India' programme needs massive investments, said Mr. Prasad and urged the industry to take advantage of the opportunities in the sector.

Mr. Prasad said that electronic manufacturing has been one of the neglected sectors, which holds great promise. Hence, his ministry has been pursuing it vigorously and has been able to take the entire country onboard to drive this initiative. He added that the success of 'Digital India' would lead to employment generation, both primary and ancillary, and enhancing digital literacy of the citizens.

While highlighting the initiatives of the government, **Mr. Rakesh Garg, Secretary, Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications & IT, Government of India**, said that harmonization of spectrum had begun and by the yearend this process would be complete for majority of bandwidth. He added that Mobile Number Portability is now possible throughout the country and Bharat Net by way of National Optic Fiber Network, would connect 2.5 lakh gram panchayats in India.

Mr. Garg underlined cyber security, local testing labs for cyber security and cloud computing as some of the promising areas for private sector investment. He added that with the expansion of digitization services such as e-health would become a reality where a person from rural area would be able to consult doctors in cities through a virtual platform.

**Mr. Tapan Ray, Additional Secretary, Department of Electronics & Information Technology, Ministry of Communications & IT, Government of India**, said that 'Digital India' programme aims to provide a seamless communication between the government and its citizens. For this, the government in its 'Digital India Week' launched services like Digital Locker and E-sign to enable every citizen to seek services from the government.

India is marred with a digital divide, said Mr. Ray and added that there is a need to bridge this gap with the creation of digital infrastructure. He called upon the industry to invest in digital infrastructure as the sector required massive funding which the government alone could not provide. Highlighting the areas for investments, Mr. Ray said that

cyber security is one of the biggest challenges for the sector, which provides a huge opportunity to the private sector to explore as continuous vigilance would be needed to safeguard systems against cyberattacks.

**Dr. Jyotsna Suri, President, FICCI**, said that public-private partnerships would play a major role in shaping the future of 'Digital India' programme, by bringing efficiency along with much needed funding required for sustainability and scalability. She added that industry needs to understand the nature of the opportunities being offered by the government programmes like 'Digital India' hence FICCI has initiated the 'Digital Bharat' series as a platform for having transformative exchanges and deliberations.

During the roundtable, **Mr. Virat Bhatia, Chairman, FICCI Communications & Digital Economy Committee** and **Mr. Rajat Mukarji, Co-chair, FICCI Communications & Digital Economy Committee**, also shared their perspectives.

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