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Middle Eastern telcos get the IPTV ball rolling

London, UK – 12 October 2009 - As more telcos in the Middle East and Africa prepare to launch IPTV services, and yet others move beyond phase 1 of their deployment, the region's pay-TV industry appears to be undergoing a considerable change.

While cable and IPTV remain youthful platforms in the MEA region at present, many telcos are investing substantial amounts in their broadband networks, in line with government drives to keep ahead of the ICT curve, and regulatory barriers are starting to fall and content production values to increase.

According to a recent report from the Arab Advisors Group, there were six countries in the MENA region offering IPTV services as of May 2009 (Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar and the UAE), compared to four service providers in three countries in August 2007. There are also thought to be ongoing or planned projects by service providers and/or governments in seven other countries in the region which would enable the future launch of IPTV - Bahrain, Egypt*, Kuwait, Oman, Tunisia, Yemen and Saudi Arabia**.

Another recent report from Informa Telecoms & Media states that while IPTV is at present a "minor" platform in the MENA region, it is growing quickly, assisted by a number of factors: an ongoing overhaul of outdated media legislation, a youthful demographic skew in many countries, which minimises the barriers to new technologies being accepted, and the rise of devoted media zones such as Dubai Media City, which is having a favourable effect on content production values in the region.

To this we can add the readiness of many telcos to invest in their broadband networks: UAE telco **Etisalat** meanwhile was recently reported as nearing completion of its city-wide Fibre-to-the-Home (FTTH) network in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates. Meanwhile, fellow UAE telco **du** recently concluded an AED 100mn (US\$ 27.23mn) investment in upgrading its IP-based core network, enabling the telco to offer some of the fastest Internet speeds in the Middle East, as well as high-definition IPTV services.

As these and other developments pick up speed and weight, the IPTV Forum Middle East & Africa event (www.iptv-mea.com) will once again tackle the big issues facing the region's IPTV industry, as well as giving regional players the chance to learn from each other and from other IPTV operators from further afield.

This year's IPTV Forum MEA will be held in Dubai's Jumeirah Hotel once more, on November 15th-16th. The exhibition will be free to attend for all visitors, while delegates from Asia and Africa will also gain free entry to the conference sessions.

There will additionally be a focus on the Indian IPTV market on Day 2 (November 16th) of the event, featuring speakers from Indian IPTV operators such as **MTNL** and **Bharti Airtel**, and from the **IPTV India Forum**.

Members of the Press are welcome to attend. To register for a complimentary press pass, please email Steve Outridge, steve.outridge@informa.com or call +44 (0) 20 7017 5822.

For more information and to register please click here www.iptv-mea.com

* Conference speakers from Egypt confirmed to attend include **Ahmed Ossama**, *MD of TE Data*

** Conference speakers from Saudi Arabia confirmed to attend include **Saad Dhafer Al Qahtani**, *VP Residential Sector at Saudi Telecom*

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