Press Release

COAI Statement on the IARC Classification

1st June 2010: The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) which is a part of WHO (World Health Organization) on 31 May 2011, has classified exposure to radio frequency (RF) electromagnetic fields, which are emitted by mobile phones, wireless devices, radar and radio and television broadcasts as Group 2B. Classification details provided in annexed document.

IARC explained the results as follows:

The evidence was reviewed critically, and overall ***evaluated as being limited[1] among users of wireless telephones for glioma[2] and acoustic neuroma[3], and inadequate[4] to draw conclusions for other types of cancers. The evidence from the occupational and environmental exposures mentioned above was similarly judged inadequate.***

Mr. Rajan S Mathews, Director General responding to the above announcement by IARC said that ;

"it is significant that IARC has concluded that RF electromagnetic fields **are not a definite nor a probable human carcinogen**. Rather, IARC has only concluded that it may still be possible that RF fields are carcinogenic and has identified areas for further research". It may be noted that that a hazard is possible but not likely. IARC have only assessed the possibility of risk not the likelihood of risk in normal use. Their assessment will now be considered by health authorities who will determine its overall impact."

He also pointed out that the classification of "possibly" carcinogenic to humans has been given to 240 other agents, including the pesticide DDT, engine exhaust, lead and various industrial chemicals and in fact, even pickled vegetables and coffee.

Mr. Mathews further responded that, COAI recognises that there is a public concern about the safety of mobile communications. It may however, be noted that the present safety standards remain valid and the **IARC result should be understood as indicating the need for further research**. In India we have adopted ICNIRP standards which are highly recommend by WHO as they have enough safety margins for all group of people including children.

While there is still further long-term epidemiology research to be done to clarify this possibility, we recommend that if people are concerned they can easily reduce their exposure to mobile phone radio signals. For example the World Health Organization provides the following information on how to effectively reduce mobile phone exposure:

---

[1] '***Limited evidence of carcinogenicity'***: A positive association has been observed between exposure to the agent and cancer for which a causal interpretation is considered by the Working Group to be credible, but chance, bias or confounding could not be ruled out with reasonable confidence.

[2] A **glioma** is a type of tumor that starts in the brain or spine. It is called a glioma because it arises from glial cells. The most common site of gliomas is the brain.

[3] An acoustic neuroma is a slow-growing tumor of the nerve that connects the ear to the brain. This nerve is located behind the ear right under the brain. An acoustic neuroma is benign, which means it does not spread to other parts of the body or invade the tissue around it. However, it can damage several important nerves as it grows.

[4] ***'Inadequate evidence of carcinogenicity'***: The available studies are of insufficient quality, consistency or statistical power to permit a conclusion regarding the presence or absence of a causal association between exposure and cancer, or no data on cancer in humans are available.

In addition to using "hands-free" devices, which keep mobile phones away from the head and body during phone calls, exposure is also reduced by limiting the number and length of calls. Using the phone in areas of good reception also decreases exposure as it allows the phone to transmit at reduced power."

He reaffirmed that **COAI and the mobile industry remain fully committed to the issue of safety of mobile communications and health of their consumers and the public at large** and will continue to closely monitor the scientific research and studies in the area of mobile phones, base station and health.

About COAI:
The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) was constituted in 1995 as a registered, non-governmental society dedicated to the advancement of communication, particularly modern communication through Cellular Mobile Telephone Services. With a vision to establish and sustain a world-class cellular infrastructure and facilitate affordable mobile communication services in India, COAI's main objectives are to protect the common & collective interests of its members. Prominent private service providers and the infrastructure vendors are members of COAI, and work closely on various Industry issues. More about COAI at: (http://www.coai.in)

****