



For Immediate Release

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ICT is key in reviving global trade

- *WITSA Chairman says ICT is an enabler of all industries*

Melbourne – Information and communications technology (ICT) is an enabler of growth and development for all industries that together contribute an estimated US\$19.5 trillion in global trade this year.

Although ICT constitutes only about 20% of merchandized and services exports, its impact on economic growth far exceeds its share of total global trade, says the Chairman of the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA).

As such, WITSA Chairman Dato' Dan E. Khoo pointed out that ICT is an essential tool to revitalize cross-border trade and revive the world economy in the wake of the recession caused by the financial crisis of 2008.

Addressing an audience of ICT players at the Asia-Pacific Digital Innovation Summit (APDIS 2009) here, he said: "As a horizontal tool, ICT is an enabler of growth and development for all other industries that collectively contribute to the other 80% of global trade."

"For it is ubiquitous in any and every industry, from traditional sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, medical and education to new ones like biotechnology and green tech."

ICT tools like e-commerce, mobile commerce, web portals, business matching and customer relationship management systems are bringing a whole new dimension to how other industries operate, do business and reach out to markets, added Khoo.

According to WITSA, global ICT spending totalled US\$3.8 trillion in 2008, a figure that technology research house Gartner Inc. predicts will drop by 4% this year.

Khoo also cautioned against the move by some governments in adopting protectionist measures to reduce unemployment as well as current account and trade deficits, saying they could instead hamper global economy recovery.

“No country can protect its way out of a recession. History has taught us that protectionist measures in the years following the Depression had brought on a double dip of economic pain. Instead, what we need is a reversal of this approach. What we need are aggressive promotion and active facilitation of global trade as the means of revitalizing the world economy,” he said.

Stimulating trade, he said, would have the knock-on effect on the global economy as promoting domestic consumption to rescue national economies from downturns and recessions.

Trade creates jobs and builds businesses, which in turn, would generate demand and fuel supply in both the developed and developing worlds, added Khoo.

With this in mind, he noted that the World Bank is set to introduce a new ‘Aid for Trade’ program, which is expected to be launched at the World Economic Forum in Davos next month. With an initial reserve of 40 million US dollars, this new facility will provide funding for trade facilitation projects.

About WITSA

Founded in 1978, the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) is a leading consortium of ICT industry associations from over 70 economies. WITSA’s members represent more than 90 percent of the world ICT market.

As the leading global voice of the ICT industry, WITSA aims to drive transformation and grow the industry. WITSA believes ICT is the key driving force to enable governments, businesses and societies for global development and economic growth.

WITSA is dedicated to the following:

- Advocating international public policies that promote the industry’s growth and development;
- Facilitating international trade of and investments in ICT products and services through its global network of contacts;
- Promoting industry cooperation and strengthening national associations that are its members through the sharing of knowledge, experience, and critical information;
- Publishing global ICT research through the WITSA Digital Planet;
- Staging its signature events, the World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) and the Global Public Policy Summit (GPPS), through its members that host these high-impact platforms in different countries around the world; and
- Organizing and hosting the Global ICT Excellence Awards to recognize the most outstanding ICT users and innovators.

For more information on WITSA, please visit www.witsa.org