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Global Information Technology Alliance Urges Focused Approach to World Summit on the Information Society

Arlington, Virginia- The World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) today released a statement strongly urging governments, in preparation for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), to identify and focus on a set of priority issues that highlight the fundamental building blocks of an information society. The statement comes amidst industry concern that if the WSIS agendas for the December 2003 and 2005 meetings are overly broad, it will be difficult to create a meaningful framework for demonstrable progress towards long-term sustainability of a truly global information society.

“Governments should learn from their experiences with the failure of the August 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to set priorities among the wide range of development-related issues,” said WITSA Executive Director Allen Z. Miller, who is also representing the global alliance in the Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI), which is providing input into the preparations for WSIS. “The lesson from the WSSD is that if a summit is about everything, it is ultimately about very little.”

The WITSA Statement recommends that WSIS should focus on three priorities: (1) the role of government in facilitating competition and a favorable regulatory environment to enable the underlying information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure; (2) education; and (3) the benefits of applications, and in particular, e-government, e-health, and e-learning. The WITSA statement encourages the use of public/private partnerships as an important tool in facilitating these applications. The statement is available online at <http://www.witsa.org/papers/wsiss-roadmanp.pdf>.

About WITSA

The World Information Technology and Services Alliance is a consortium of 49 information technology (IT) industry associations from economies around the world. As the global voice of the IT industry, WITSA is dedicated to advocating policies that advance the industry's growth and development; facilitating international trade and investment in IT products and services; strengthening WITSA's national industry associations through the sharing of knowledge, experience, and critical information; providing members with a vast network of contacts in nearly every geographic region of the world; and hosting the World Congress on IT, the only industry sponsored global IT event. Founded in 1978 and originally known as the World Computing Services Industry Association, WITSA has increasingly assumed an active advocacy role in international public policy issues affecting the creation of a robust global information infrastructure. For additional information about WITSA and its activities, go to <http://www.witsa.org>. The WITSA Secretariat is currently hosted by the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA). For more information about ITAA, please visit its web site at <http://www.itaa.org>.