



For Immediate Release

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Contact: Anders Halvorsen, ahalvorsen@witsa.org
Tel. +1 571 633-0620

WITSA Calls for Trade Pact in Services, Warns Against Protectionism
ICT Services Key to Global Trade and Economic Recovery and Growth

Geneva, Switzerland— At today's meeting of the Special Session of the World Trade Organization Services Council in Geneva, Switzerland, the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) urged negotiators to reject temptations to revert to protectionist policies and instead reach a services agreement as part of a successful conclusion to the Doha round of international trade talks. Information and communications technology services are critical to economic development and recovery, and as such, should be subject to liberalized trade policies, contended WITSA President Phillip J. Bond.

Shaken by the current financial crisis and uncertainty in global markets, the business community is looking to negotiators for confidence-building signals, wrote Mr. Bond in a letter to Special Session Chairman Hon. Fernando de Mateo. The letter urged trade leaders to therefore refrain from raising trade barriers and new restrictions on market access in services and other sectors, and to achieve a successful conclusion to the Doha Development Agenda with an ambitious and balanced outcome, including comprehensive results in services.

"Countries that open their markets grow at several times the rate of other countries because they attract and allow private sector activity to develop and thrive", asserted Mr. Bond. "ICT services is a key ingredient in a successful recipe for economic growth. Trade officials in Geneva and around the world need to signal strong and concerted political determination: We must ensure that the growth opportunities of freer trade and market access can and will be offered to all corners of the world".

"Even in today's economy, global ICT spending is projected to grow to more than \$4 trillion by 2011", said WITSA Chairman Dato' Dan E. Khoo , in quoting WITSA's benchmark study, Digital Planet 2008. "These trying times provide an unprecedented opportunity to link the goals of opening markets to international trade and the benefits for economic development", continued Dato' Khoo. "This is a critical opportunity to stimulate truly global prosperity and encourage economic development for all countries. Its potential must not be missed".

The WITSA letter is available on the WITSA web at <http://www.witsa.org>.

The World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) is a consortium of nearly 70 information technology (IT) industry associations from economies around the world. WITSA members represent over 90 percent of the world IT market. 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; hosting the World Congress on IT, the premier industry sponsored global IT event; and hosting the Global Public Policy Summit.

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