



April 03, 2009

Hon. Fernando de Mateo
Chairman
Council for Trade in Services, Special Session
World Trade Organization (WTO)
Centre William Rappard
Rue de Lausanne 154
CH-1211 Geneva 21 - Switzerland

Dear Ambassador de Mateo,

Information and communications technology (ICT) services have experienced enormous growth in recent years and have become one of the central driving forces in the development of knowledge-based economies. Even in these trying times, global ICT spending is projected to grow to more than \$4 trillion by 2011 (vis. WITSA's 2008 Digital Planet report). Therefore, we urge you and WTO Members to bear in mind the importance of information and communications technology services in the context of GATS negotiations. Their significance to trade and economic growth, especially during the current crisis, should not be underestimated.

We also believe that ICT products and services should be regarded as a key component of a pro-development agenda for the Doha Round. They are an important tool for economic development as a key driver of innovation, and due to their role in building and rationalizing infrastructure – everything from transportation systems, modern airports and secure trade lanes to reliable energy grids rely on ICTs. Moreover, rapid growth of the computer services sector market has led to employment creation in both developing and developed economies. Furthermore, the liberalization of ICT services helps economies to expand existing market activities and develop new export markets. Finally, ICT will not only promote innovation in other industries, but innovation in the ICT industry itself will create new value for the next generation. Thus, ICT will play an invaluable part in our ongoing efforts to overcome the current economic crisis.

As the global voice of the ICT industry, representing the national high-tech industry associations in 68 economies around the world, WITSA highlights the critical importance of rejecting protectionism and not turning inward in times of financial uncertainty. The private sector is the primary investor in and innovator of ICT infrastructure, products and services. Effective markets are therefore essential to ensuring a sustainable development and growth in an information society. ICT services support the creation of markets by fostering connected, educated and healthy populations that can increasingly become engaged in a wider range of economic activity.

I am enclosing a copy of the resolution on international trade negotiations and ICT products and services adopted in 2008 by WITSA members from around the world. We would appreciate it very much if you would be willing to share our communication with the Members of the Council for Trade in Services.

As in the past, WITSA urges WTO Members to reach the compromises needed to achieve a successful conclusion to the Doha Development Agenda with an ambitious and balanced outcome, including comprehensive results in services. We assure you that WITSA and its global network of ICT companies fully support your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip J. Bond". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "B".

Phillip J. Bond
President