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WTO Declaration a “Useful Springboard” for Doha Round Services Talks

For immediate release

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(Hong Kong) The Global Services Coalition today called the services language in the World Trade Organization Ministerial Declaration a “useful springboard” which can help define a way forward for services trade liberalization in the Doha Round of global trade talks.

“The services annex which WTO members have embraced is manifestly in the interest of developing countries,” the Coalition said. “Moreover, it provides guidance on negotiating objectives in the four modes of supply of services, and it clarifies developing country concerns about a complimentary plurilateral negotiating approach which is intended to supplement the request-offer negotiating mechanism.” Services negotiations by their nature are extremely complex and time-consuming, and the plurilateral approach envisaged in the text provides a way of making negotiations more practical, while not in any way obliging any country to liberalize against what they see as in their interests.

“We need the plurilateral groups to organize themselves quickly to utilize this mechanism. We have approximately one year until the end of the Round; in services negotiations, this is not a long time. In addition, we call upon governments, including those of key emerging services markets, to be ambitious and move quickly into negotiating mode early in 2006.”

“The agreement on the services language in the declaration is important, but it is negotiations, not text alone, that will yield trade liberalization and new opportunities for developed and developing countries alike,” the Coalition said.

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