



For immediate release

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Global Services Coalition Expresses Disappointment with WTO Services Text; Reiterates Call for Strong Services Offers

In response to the release of the Doha Round services text yesterday by the Chairman of the WTO Council for Trade in Services in Special Session, the Global Services Coalition issued the following statement:

“The Global Services Coalition is disappointed with the services text issued yesterday by the Chairman of the WTO Council for Trade in Services in Special Session. At this point in the negotiations, a text is needed that provides political guidance on the level of ambition in the Doha Round services negotiations. This version illustrates that members are still ‘consulting’ and demonstrates how little progress has been made in the services negotiations. Critical components (operative language calling for new market access and bindings of existing market access) still remain in brackets - highlighting that it is only provisional or subject to further discussion.

It is well established in the Doha Declaration and subsequent Ministerial declarations that the purpose of this Round is to stimulate world trade, economic development and prosperity for all. This objective will be fulfilled by commitments to liberalization, including binding current levels of market access and, especially, providing new market access opportunities. Thus the Global Services Coalition believes the bracketed language must be made an integral part of the final services text.

As the Global Services Coalition has said since the outset of the Doha Round, agriculture, non-agricultural market access (NAMA), and services are the three pillars of market opening in the Round. The three are inextricably linked, and the Round will only be brought to a successful conclusion when there is substantial progress in all three. The language of the Chairman’s draft, reflecting current divisions among WTO members, diverges significantly from the recently released texts on Agriculture and NAMA, both of which set the stage for strong binding obligations. With the services negotiations lagging so far behind the Ag and NAMA negotiations, the right framework for a balanced outcome has not been set.

For services, the ultimate objective is substantial liberalization of trade; the Global Services Coalition looks forward to a Ministerial-level signalling conference that will clarify and reinforce the commitments which WTO members, including those who have advocated a substantial outcome on services, will need to make. WTO members’ real intentions for services market-opening must be clearly stated, to

pave the way for substantive and detailed discussions on balancing the three pillars.

Two-thirds of world economic output is generated by the service sector, and countries at all levels of development will benefit from ready access to efficient, competitive services. A successful conclusion to the Round, especially against the current background of global economic uncertainty, will send a very positive signal not only to traders and investors but also to consumers and workers around the world.”

The Global Services Coalition is comprised of the leading service industry associations from Australia, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, the EU, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Taiwan, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, and other countries.

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