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Hong Kong Coalition of Service Industries
香港服務業聯盟



台灣服務業聯盟
Taiwan Coalition of Service Industries



Press Release

Global Services Coalition Priorities for WTO MC 13

The Global Services Coalition (GSC) members represent services and digital industries including (but not limited to) financial services, telecommunications and IT services, transportation, logistics, and express delivery services, business and professional services, construction, distribution, education, health, energy and environmental services and audio-visual services. The GSC is strongly represented at this year's WTO Public Forum, with a full programme of meetings with many WTO missions during the event. It has also issued a Paper outlining its MC 13 priorities, including a summary of research on the benefits of the WTO E-Commerce Moratorium, highlighting important new studies on the benefits to developing country MSMEs and the advantages of VATs over import duties on electronic transmissions.

WTO Reform: The GSC is a longstanding supporter of the multilateral rules-based system for global trade and is concerned by the lack of progress on dispute settlement reform. We strongly endorse the WTO Director General's call to make WTO reform one of the deliverables at the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) in Abu Dhabi in February 2024.

Addressing 21st Century Services and Digital Issues: Services and digital trade are now the driving forces in the global economy, with a key role notably in a) Supporting all Economic Sectors and Creating New Jobs; b) Promoting developing markets' economic diversification and growth; c) Fostering Small Business Growth; d) Providing Greater Opportunities for Women; e) Facilitating Clean Economies and Combating Climate Change; and f) Enabling Sustainable and Resilient Supply Chains.

High Standard E-Commerce JSI: To secure these benefits, the GSC believes that the ongoing WTO E-Commerce JSI negotiations must produce a high standard outcome and has listed the elements necessary to produce that outcome in its MC13 Priorities Paper¹.

The GSC commends the progress achieved to date in the JSI negotiations on E-Commerce. However, to achieve a high-standard, commercially meaningful outcome, the JSI negotiations must go further and achieve high standard provisions for cross-border data flows, data localization, protection of personal data, prohibitions on mandatory transfer of source code, a permanent moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions, secure and interoperable e-payment systems, and commitments on e-commerce related services market access, in a framework that is fully compatible with the well-established principle of a government's right to regulate.

Multilateral Extension of the E-Commerce Moratorium: Recent studies and analyses provide strong evidence of the benefits that would result from extending the WTO Moratorium in particular for MSMEs in developing countries and should be helpful in responding to questions raised in the dedicated E-commerce Work Programme discussions. Therefore, the GSC calls upon WTO members to extend the WTO E-Commerce Moratorium and extend the WTO E-Commerce Work Programme at MC13.

The GSC appreciates the continued strong leadership of Director General Okonjo-Iweala in addressing the importance of services and digital issues. We look forward to working with her and WTO members in the critical period leading up to MC13.

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¹ Link to [GSC Paper on Priorities for WTO MC13](#)