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Global Services Coalition Urges TISA Trade Ministers to Push for a Timely and High Standard Outcome

Services across economies, particularly digital and digitally enabled services, are the lifeblood of twenty-first century economies. The Global Services Coalition (GSC) has a shared interest in ensuring that the sector continues to grow by strengthening global services rules and securing ongoing liberalization of existing and new services.

The GSC supports the intensification of efforts to complete the TISA negotiations and expects a high-standard agreement that strengthens disciplines and yields new market access commitments on a wide range of commercially meaningful sectors. Especially at a time when global growth is slow, achieving a high standard outcome will confer major benefits to global value chains, encourage expanded trade and investment, and promote growth and jobs.

We recognize that significant progress has been made to date in the TISA negotiations. We are also aware that gaps still remain in core discipline areas and in the degree of opening up reflected in market access offers which will ultimately determine the success of TISA. Significant work remains to be done in crucial areas such as rules on data flows and prohibitions on forced data localization for all sectors that will ensure that TISA Parties refrain from implementing trade related or other measures that restrict data flows or require local storage or processing of data.

We also ask TISA negotiators to strive to reach agreement on the movement of persons, coverage of new services and outstanding institutional issues, such as state-to-state dispute settlement. The GSC urges rapid resolution of these issues, in a way that produces a high-standard agreement.

The GSC looks forward to the submission of revised market access offers this week, and the prospect of further revisions next month. The benchmark for assessing the adequacy of these offers should include the following elements:

- “GATS plus” (i.e. significantly more market opening commitments and greater coverage than participants’ existing GATS commitments);
- An improvement on existing RTA commitments in commercially valuable traded services;

- Minimization of “policy space” reservations, given that TiSA’s general exceptions will provide ample room for legitimate, non-discriminatory policies;
- High Quality Mode 4 commitments that will facilitate easy temporary movement of services personnel to their business locations, and their clients, in other countries;
- Ensuring coverage of new services on a non-discriminatory basis, duly recognizing the right to regulate;
- Removal of discriminatory barriers at the subnational level and improved transparency for any that remain.

A high standard Trade in Services Agreement would serve as a new benchmark for world trade in services, encouraging other countries to join and contributing as a result to their economic development. It is also expected to have a helpful impact on the way services will be dealt with at the multilateral level in this difficult political environment around trade issues.

The GSC urges Trade Ministers in Oslo to instruct their negotiators to resolve all outstanding issues expeditiously so as to produce a high standard agreement.