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WITSA Challenges Misconceptions and Threats to the Multilateral Trading System

Fairfax, VA: The World Information Technology and Services today published a statement of policy entitled “Globalization: Perception vs. Reality: *Why Opposition to International Trade and Open Borders is Misplaced, Counter-Productive and Harmful to our Future Security and Prosperity*”. The paper addresses some of the most worrisome misconceptions and threats to the multilateral trading system that has served the ICT industry as well as all other industries, citizens and consumers so well in modern times.

While anti-globalization forces are not new nor necessarily ICT specific, WITSA feels compelled to challenge them as the recent mushrooming of nativist populist leaders, including in certain key markets, are now engaging in dangerous rhetoric and implementing destructive policies that go well beyond discussions over protectionism or even past concerns over labor and environmental standards, and which -if unchecked- can have long-term detrimental implications for our current, rules-based international order as well as for the future and prosperity of our children and future generations.

Globalization has proved to work for most people and has improved countless lives. If this case isn't made and voiced in strong terms, the case for protectionism and nationalism remain as potent and dangerous as it has been for the past centuries. This paper attempts to debunk some the main misinformation and misconceptions that are all too often presented as “facts” and identifies several recommended actions and policy principles which WITSA believes can rekindle our faith and trust in international collaboration and trade, as an acknowledgement of our mutually shared interests, interdependencies, values and economic wellbeing.

“In this new era of multi-speed globalization, the strategic challenge for governments and industry in the years ahead will be to navigate a world that is simultaneously integrating and fragmenting”, stated WITSA Secretary General Dr. Jim Poisant. “WITSA recognizes that globalization is a force for good, but we all share a burden and a responsibility to better address the concerns and plight of those left behind through a concerted effort towards more sustainable governance of the global economy. The truth is, a trading system is sustainable only if everyone shares in the benefits. Therefore, we must ensure that trade is more inclusive and helps support sustainable development.”

By getting at the root causes of the discontent, perceived or real, WITSA believes progress and recovery is attainable, if not inevitable. Markets, countries and people are simply too well-connected. Protectionism is a dead end, and ultimately tends to impoverish those who practice it. Policy makers

share a responsibility to take citizens' concerns seriously and need to develop solutions that help reduce inequality, restore a greater sense of security, and improve upward economic and social mobility. Policy-makers must protect and maintain global openness while striving for inclusive growth that meets real human needs.

The statement, which features a number of policy principles which can rekindle faith and trust in international collaboration and trade, can be found on the WITSA web site at the following link: https://witsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Globalization-Perception-vs-Reality_final.pdf

About WITSA:

The World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) is the leading recognized international voice of the global ICT industry, whose members from over 80 countries and economies represent more than 90 percent of the world ICT market. WITSA is dedicated to advocating policies that advance industry growth and development; facilitating international trade and investment in ICT products and services; strengthening WITSA's national industry associations; and providing members with a broad network of professional contacts.

WITSA members are leaders in a globally interconnected marketplace. Because the challenges facing the ICT industry are undisputedly global in nature, WITSA members work together to achieve a shared vision on important issues of common interest. WITSA makes it possible for its members — ranging from Mongolia and Argentina to Kenya and the United States — to identify common issues and priorities, exchange valuable information, and present a united position on industry issues. For more information on WITSA, please visit www.witsa.org