



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 13, 2013

Contact: Dr James Poisant jpoisant@witsa.org + 1 703 728-4547

Global Business Leaders Announce São Paulo Declaration on *avoiding protectionism*

São Paulo, November 13, 2013: At the successful conclusion of 5th WITSA Global Policy Action and Trade Summit (GPATS), to consider effective public policies to deliver the promises of the Digital Age (GPATS 2013), the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) today issued the “São Paulo Declaration” on *avoiding protectionism*

In the Declaration, WITSA commits to work with all governments, stakeholder organizations and business leaders to remove barriers to trade and avoid any actions that may limit access by all the world’s people to the Internet, so that everyone can participate and receive its benefits, and thus deliver the promises of the Digital Age.

The Declaration draws on key issues and questions raised during presentations and discussions held during the Summit. It also reflects the experience of thousands of ICT companies that are part of the network of 80 national ICT industry associations constituting WITSA.

In releasing the Declaration, WITSA Secretary General, Dr James Poisant noted that the Summit identified significant achievements by many nations in developing and implementing digital agendas that enable and support the significant transformational impact of ICT and other digital technologies.

“More is being done online, everywhere, and more is planned, enabling people, wherever they are, to connect to services, commerce, friends and contacts, and to engage and participate in society – locally, nationally and globally. These transformations are unrelenting, and accelerating such that in many, many different and significant ways, creative application of these technologies is improving lives and societies, health and education, solving formerly impossible problems, informing, empowering and enabling humankind wherever there is access.”

“WITSA applauds national and regional governments who identify and implement best practices and policy actions that have the greatest potential to deliver the promise of the digital age to everyone”, said Dr Poisant.

“Most governments now clearly understand the importance of developing and implementing proven policies based upon four key building blocks: they build thriving ICT sectors; they actively use and promote ICT as a key tool to enable and deliver sustainable economic growth; they enthusiastically apply ICT to boost the delivery of efficient and effective public services; and they take active measures to protect the information infrastructure, and information”, continued Dr Poisant.

“The evidence is there for all to see.”

Dr Poisant warned that a number of recent developments threaten progress, and even have potential to drive growth backwards.

“There was extensive discussion at the Summit regarding the revelations that the US, and many other countries, are undertaking extensive surveillance of information stored on, and transmitted across the Internet. This is being done in the name of national security, but the extent and nature of these activities is threatening a number



of core principles that undermine trust and confidence in Internet-based services. Worse, a number of countries have reacted adversely to these revelations, proposing protective counter-measures, which will restrict access.”

WITSA called on governments to exercise better control over their national security agencies.

“There needs to be much more disclosure, and greater transparency from governments about these activities. This includes ensuring there is clarity about when, where, why and how such surveillance can take place, and the checks and balances in place to ensure these are not abused,” said Dr Poisant.

“There is great concern around the world about what has been happening,” he continued “But this should not be used to justify proposals that increase regulation of the Internet, unilateral actions to create closed national networks, or create other barriers to trans border data flows. These reactions, while we understand the concern, are very damaging, and will restrict trade and development.”

“The evidence is unambiguous: when governments take unilateral action to open their economies, and remove barriers, economic growth and national income grows,” noted Dr Poisant. “This is why, in the Declaration, we are also calling upon all countries to recommit to the key principles of multilateral trade liberalization, to “most favored nation” and “national treatment”, championed by the World Trade Organization.”

Dr Poisant said it was no accident the adoption of these principles, and the development of non-discriminatory trade agreements coincided with a significant increase in global economic growth, with benefits especially flowing to the many of the world's poorest nations. “Turning away from this will increase world poverty. It is that serious,” he warned.

The Declaration is WITSA’s fifth, drawn from its program of annual summits and congresses and builds on the 2009 Bermuda Declaration¹, the 2010 Amsterdam Declaration², the 2011 Guadalajara Declaration³, the 2012 Montreal Declaration⁴ as well as WITSA’s 2011 Policy Actions to Deliver the Promise of the Digital Age⁵, which consolidates this experience and identifies recommended policy actions for national governments and multi-national institutions; actions that will help harness the capability of the global ICT industry to deliver the benefits of a truly digital age.

The Montreal Declaration is posted at http://www.witsa.org/gpats2013/Sao_Paulo_Declaration_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.

1 The Bermuda Declaration (link; see WITSA website)

2 The Amsterdam Declaration (link; see WITSA website)

3 The Guadalajara Declaration (link; see WITSA website)

4 The Montreal Declaration (link; see WITSA website)

5 Publication: "Policy Actions to Deliver the Promise of the Digital Age" (link; see WITSA website)



WITSA hosts both the World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT), the premier global industry sponsored ICT conference, and the Global Policy Action and Trade Conference (GPAC).

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