Global High-Tech Industry Calls for Swift and Ambitious Expansion of the Information Technology Agreement

High-tech industry associations from around the world strongly support the ambitious tariff-elimination initiative to significantly expand product coverage of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA), which is one of the most commercially successful trade agreements in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The ITA has helped to drive innovation, accelerate productivity, increase employment, lower consumer prices, and bridge communities across the globe in ways unimagined 16 years ago when the ITA was established. Product expansion of the ITA, as well as expansion of geographic scope of the agreement would yield immediate and substantial benefits, removing tariffs on a vast array of tech products not currently covered.

We welcome the momentum negotiators in Geneva have achieved in their monthly meetings to develop a strong list of products to be considered for ITA coverage. And we applaud APEC trade ministers for recently reaffirming APEC’s support for an expanded agreement, calling for the outcome of negotiations to be “commercially significant” and completed by “the middle of the year.”

A window has opened to conclude the talks by late summer of this year. Given that not a single product line has been added to the ITA since it was born 16 years ago, we must seize the moment to achieve this trade win for our economies and the global economy, and bring greater relevance to the work of the WTO. We may not get another opportunity to significantly expand the ITA for many years.

We therefore call on ITA members to build on the current momentum, aim high for an ambitious,
commercially significant outcome, and complete their negotiations to expand this critically important agreement by mid-2013.

We continue to be deeply committed to working closely with our governments to achieve a swift and ambitious outcome that will expand trade, stimulate growth, increase jobs, spur innovation, and promote prosperity around the world.