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**BUSINESS COMMENDS NEGOTIATORS' TECHNICAL LEVEL EFFORTS
TOWARDS A POSITIVE OUTCOME IN THE WTO E-COMMERCE JSI NEGOTIATIONS
AND CALLS ON MINISTERS TO BUILD POLITICAL LEVEL MOMENTUM
TO INAUGURATE GLOBAL TRADE RULES FOR THE DIGITAL ECONOMY**

Members of the Asia Pacific Services Coalition (APSC) and the Global Services Coalition (GSC), together with business associations and services industries across the world, commend the participants' efforts in the recent April round of Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) negotiations on E-Commerce, which has been described as the concluding phase of JSI discussions at the technical level. The GSC welcomes this significant progress noting the reported terms of a subsequent Chair's text issued by the JSI Co-Convenors in early May 2024.

Recent months have witnessed closer identification of the landing zones where consensus looks likely, while also catering for the trade and investment needs of digitally dependent businesses across all sectors of the global economy. The GSC appreciates the significant multilateral convergence achieved among notable developed and developing countries alike. As negotiations pivot to the critical next political step forward, we call on Ministers to deliver an outcome that promotes the growth of e-commerce in a manner that benefits developed and developing participants, especially MSMEs. We look forward to the launch of a benchmark global trade framework for the digital economy.

A deal on e-commerce will do much more than shore up WTO credibility with business. It also matters for workers and consumers. Indeed, it matters for every single citizen everywhere: an inclusive deal to ensure ongoing access to the benefits of the internet alongside protection of personal data; a deal to deliver the benefits of global connectivity while allowing space for domestic regulation that builds the trust of all persons and all enterprises in digital innovation.

The GSC urges Ministers to ensure that the pending agreement remains broad in scope and covers all sectors of business activity and a wide range of interests of all participants. Ministers should also ensure that privacy can be protected without becoming an unnecessary barrier to cross-border data flows that are at the heart of the digital economy. The emerging agreement will then achieve three important milestones. First, it will be commercially meaningful for businesses, large and small, in economies worldwide at all stages of development, that rely on digital means in their trade. Second, it will lay the foundation for further negotiations, in due time, on outstanding issues that remain to be resolved as the digital economy evolves, including some core data issues including data flows, data localisation, and source codes. Third, it will take

consideration of developing countries interests and remain open to other WTO members to join the agreement when they consider it relevant.

GSC members have proven staunch advocates of the negotiations on E Commerce since their initiation over five years ago. We have established and agreed collective ambitions for these negotiations. We hope that Ministers will share the same collective purpose and achieve timely conclusion of an Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Electronic Commerce which meets these objectives.

Members of the ASPC and GSC join in unison to add their views at this critical juncture:

“Ministerial declaration of a deal on E Commerce will be the defining 21st century moment for the multilateral trading system and not a minute too soon for global economic development, MSME revival and jobs growth. All trade is becoming more digitally dependent, and this is particularly true of global trade in services. We urge all participating governments to pave the way for a global framework for digital trade that can be built upon. We urge Ministers to take advantage of this important window of opportunity.”

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