



March 12, 2009

To Leaders of the G-20:

In our November 3, 2008 joint letter, the Global Services Coalition was among the first to urge that G-20 leaders adopt a forceful commitment to refrain from imposing new trade barriers and other restrictions on market access in services and other sectors and to resume the Doha Round of trade negotiations. We were gratified that leaders responded with a pledge to do so, albeit for a period limited to 12 months.

The WTO recently noted numerous instances in which countries are raising trade barriers. We are extremely concerned that the letter and spirit of this limited commitment have already been breached by many of its signatories, both developed and developing countries alike. These ill-advised inward-looking actions, which continue apace, are significantly compounding the uncertainty already plaguing the world economy.

The current crisis is obliging governments to stimulate immediate demand. Some of that demand will naturally flow through to imported goods and services in a globalised world economy. If global markets are kept open then exports, and the jobs they support, will be maintained as well. Trade has long been a major driver of sustainable global economic growth, development and alleviation of poverty. And trade will be a part of the recovery, provided that we maintain an open approach. Short-term stimulus measures must therefore be designed not to compromise international trade and global growth.

Continued respect for economic efficiency will be central to restoring business and investor confidence. We therefore call on leaders to reinforce the moratorium on new trade barriers and to extend its time frame (we are already nearly halfway through the original 12 month moratorium). In addition, the WTO should be given a strengthened mandate to monitor adherence to the standstill, and should be provided with the necessary resources to carry out that mandate, to ensure that the standstill is respected.

Renewed and reinforced commitments by leaders to maintain open markets and to provide enhanced opportunities for growth through further liberalization are needed urgently. Completing the Doha Round is one of the most effective ways of achieving an early global stimulus through expanded trade liberalisation on a worldwide basis. The scale of the global economic crisis demands an ambitious and urgent outcome, which must include new and rapid market-opening commitments to make a substantial contribution to global economic recovery.

We call upon the G20 participants to bridge their remaining differences in WTO agriculture and goods liberalisation proposals and to avoid seeking exceptions that would undermine the Round's core liberalisation objectives. At the same time, negotiators should agree an early deadline for the tabling of schedules of new and improved WTO services commitments. This will enable progress to be made on delayed services negotiations and ensure that the trade commitments actively sought by the economically important services sectors could also contribute meaningfully to global economic recovery.

Such commitments are not only an appropriate response to current economic problems, but will also promote longer-term economic growth, development, and poverty alleviation worldwide. Now is the time for a clear political decision to conclude the negotiations of the Doha Round by the end of this year.

We look forward to working together with you in any way we can.

Sincerely yours,

Australian Services Roundtable
Barbados Coalition of Service Industries
BRASSCOM (Brazil)
Canadian Services Coalition
Coalition of Service Industries (US)
European Services Forum
Financial Leaders Group
Hong Kong Coalition of Service Industries
International Financial Services London
Japan Services Network
NASSCOM (India)
Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries
Taiwan Coalition of Service Industries
Wellington Regional Chamber (New Zealand)