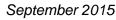# Global Industry Calls on ITA Negotiators to Show Restraint on "Staging"

Over 80 industry associations from around the world welcome the hard-fought agreement achieved in July on the product list to expand the Information Technology Agreement (ITA). Attention now turns to the important work that each ITA expansion party must undertake to finalize their schedules of commitments to eliminate tariffs on a wide range of tech products before the World Trade Organization (WTO) convenes its next ministerial conference in Nairobi in December.

Importantly, the negotiating parties are scheduled to meet in Geneva the week of September 28 to negotiate implementation timeframes ("staging") for the products covered by ITA expansion. While the standard phase-out (or staging) period for tariff elimination under ITA expansion is three years, we urge the negotiators to show as much ambition as possible and embrace the important provision in the formal July 28 WTO declaration on ITA expansion that encourages "autonomous immediate elimination of customs duties or accelerated implementation..." We trust the negotiating parties will seek to be as faithful as possible to this ambition. Similarly, we urge all negotiating parties to show restraint in seeking staging periods longer than three years, given the short innovation cycles for high-technology products.

The agreed product expansion of the ITA -- and expansion of its geographic scope -- will yield immediate and substantial economic benefits. Rapid removal of tariffs on a vast array of tech products will bolster global growth, innovation, accelerate productivity, create countless jobs, lower consumer prices, and help bridge communities the world over in ways unimagined 19

years ago when the agreement came into being. Limited requests for extended staging and more quickly lifting the burden of tariffs on economic growth will intensify the benefits of this historic triumph for global trade. It will also give greater credibility to the WTO by delivering an even stronger outcome at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi December 15-18.