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Page: 1/2

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE EXPANSION OF TRADE IN
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PRODUCTS**

COMMUNICATION FROM THE PARTICIPANTS TO THE ITA EXPANSION

The following communication, dated 16 December 2015, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Japan on behalf of the Participants to the ITA Expansion.

1. We, the Ministers representing the following Members of the World Trade Organization ("WTO") announced today the conclusion of negotiations on the expansion of trade in information technology products ("ITA Expansion"):

Albania	Malaysia
Australia	Mauritius
Canada	Montenegro
China	New Zealand
Colombia	Norway
Costa Rica	Philippines
European Union	Singapore
Guatemala	Switzerland ¹
Hong Kong, China	Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu
Iceland	Thailand
Israel	United States
Japan	
Korea	

2. The conclusion of ITA Expansion negotiations is a remarkably significant success to the WTO, on the occasion of its 20th anniversary. It is the first time since the original ITA in 1996 that WTO Members, both developing and developed Members, have reached such a significant tariff-eliminating deal which will benefit all WTO Members. The successful conclusion of ITA Expansion demonstrates that the WTO can deliver real, economically significant results.

3. We welcome the significant impact that the ITA Expansion will have on world trade. We recall that exports of IT products covered by the original ITA has more than tripled in value since 1996. We note annual world exports² in the 201 products covered by the ITA Expansion is valued at approximately US\$1.3 trillion per year, and accounts for approximately 10% of global trade today. As such, the agreed tariff elimination will greatly contribute to the increase of world trade.

4. We firmly believe that the ITA Expansion will contribute significantly to the dissemination of information technology and the expansion of global value chains. Since many new IT products, including parts and components, are covered by this ITA Expansion, this initiative will benefit not only the current major exporting WTO Members, but also those Members that seek to join global value chains and consumers and producers using these products directly or indirectly.

¹ On behalf of the customs union of Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

² Excluding intra-trade of the European Union and excluding re-export of Hong Kong, China.

5. Finally, we welcome the interest shown by some Members in joining the ITA Expansion. The number of participants in the original ITA has increased from 29 in 1996 to 82 Members today, and this change has affected not only trade but also investment flows of global industries. We look forward to seeing many other Members joining this important initiative.
