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SERVICES COALITION CALLS FOR INTENSIFIED APEC ACTION TO SUSTAIN MOMENTUM TOWARDS A MORE COMPETITIVE REGIONAL SERVICES ECONOMY

One year has passed since APEC Leaders adopted the APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap and its Implementation Plan. “Services business leaders are encouraged that APEC economies are largely on track to spur trade in services and achieve the Roadmap targets, so that exports and imports of services from APEC as a whole exceed the global average by 2025”, said **Arturo Field**, Lima Chamber of Commerce. “Services play a big role across all APEC economies - the more we promote services growth, the stronger our economies will be”, said **Bill Luz**, Philippines Services Coalition. “We encourage continued progress to develop principles on domestic regulation as an important ongoing part of APEC’s work on services”, said **Christine Bliss**, President of the Coalition of Services Industries (US).

Services champions from around the Asia Pacific region came together in Kuala Lumpur on 2-3 October at APDiTS, the region’s first Asia Pacific Digital Technology Symposium, hosted by the Malaysian Services Providers Confederation, which also featured an APEC Public Private Dialogue on “New Technologies and the APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap”. Business leaders stressed the particular need for APEC to grasp the enormous opportunities for productivity gains presented through digital transformation, the rise of digitally-enabled services and the 4th Industrial revolution.

“New technologies are impacting on regional trade and investment - APEC needs to grasp the opportunities and take action that helps trade to flourish.” said **Michael Landry**, Canadian Services Coalition. **Jane Drake-Brockman**, Australian Services Roundtable Vice President said “The Coalition calls on APEC Leaders to act on the outcomes emerging from two years of reflection and business consultation by the Ad Hoc Steering Group on the Internet Economy and adopt a Roadmap to take the APEC region forward.” “We hope to see new collective APEC commitments emerge, under the Services Competitiveness Roadmap, to embrace the structural revolution underway and lay a path forward for regional cooperation”, said **James Liu**, SYSCOM, Chinese Taipei.

“We certainly need bolder, more strategic action”, said **Devi Ariyani**, CEO of the Indonesian Services Dialogue “to ensure that all APEC economies can participate in and benefit from the digital transformation.” “We congratulate and support Papua New Guinea in its quest to tackle this issue by hosting an APEC Digital Economy Symposium in Port Moresby next year”, said **Choo Kok Beng**, Malaysian Services Providers Confederation.

“Digitisation of trade offers untold new opportunities to reduce business costs, stimulate growth and enable greater economic inclusion for MSMEs, for women, for youth, for remote

and rural communities”, said **Chey Scovell**, Papua New Guinea Business Council, “and we need to see active regulatory and policy engagement.”

“All trade in both goods and services – from the placing of an order to confirmation of delivery - now involves the electronic transfer of data and increasingly of digitally-enabled services. Data-transfer is today’s all-purpose means of business communication, spurring economic growth and innovation in all industries”, said **Christine Bliss**, President of the Coalition of Services Industries (US).

“The reality is”, said **Yerka Yukich**, Santiago Chamber of Commerce, “digitally enabled services lie at the heart of modern competitive economies. The associated flow of data across borders has become the life blood of 21st century trade.” **Deborah Biber**, Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBECE) observed that “internet speed has become the key emerging driver of competitiveness for services firms of all sizes in all regional locations.”

“The Coalition congratulates those APEC governments that have been active in services trade-related capacity building”, said **Catherine Beard**, Business New Zealand, noting that “we hope to see continued effort on the part of APEC to engage with services stakeholders in dialogue and capacity-building programmes.”

Joanne Guo, Singapore Business Federation said that “the Coalition stands ready to work with APEC and other partners including the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) and the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) to achieve the APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap objectives”. “Improving the availability and accessibility of reliable, timely and relevant metrics and data tools needs to be an ongoing priority, if we are effectively to monitor progress”, said **David Dodwell**, Hong Kong Coalition of Services Industries.

Background

The Asia-Pacific Services Coalition (APSC) is the world’s largest coalition of services industries. Its mission is to foster growth and efficiency in all services sectors through trade and investment, innovation and skills development, and pro-growth regulation in all APEC economies. The Coalition was formed in 2015 when APEC ratcheted services to high priority on the APEC agenda, initiating a new set of regional objectives for trade and investment in services. The Coalition has an official role, conferred by APEC Leaders, to monitor and evaluate progress towards the services targets adopted in the APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap 2016-2025. Implementation of the Roadmap will deliver benefits for all services organisations doing business in Asia-Pacific markets.

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