

Joint Statement on the Negotiation on Maritime Transport Services

The following communication has been received from the delegations of Australia, Canada, Chile, the People's Republic of China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Estonia, the European Communities and their member states, Gambia, Georgia, Guatemala, Hong Kong, China, Iceland, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Romania, Singapore, Slovenia, Switzerland, and the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu with the request that it be circulated to Members of the Council for Trade in Services.

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1. We are encouraged by the commencement of the request-offer negotiations on trade in services, including maritime transport services, in accordance with the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the 4th Ministerial Conference, held in Doha in November 2001.
 2. Maritime transport is an important facilitator of world trade. Four-fifths of world trade by volume is carried by sea. Seaborne trade is continuing to expand at some 9% for containerized cargoes annually. More than purely a facilitator, maritime transport is also a significant exportable service in many countries, making direct contributions to their national GDP. In view of its importance, binding substantive liberalization of the maritime transport service sector is crucial to ensuring the overall success of this current round of trade negotiations.
 3. Access to a global network of reliable, efficient and cost-effective maritime transport services is beneficial to all Members, including developing and least developed Members whose trade in price-sensitive goods often comprises a significant component of their economies. Restrictions on maritime transport services can adversely affect a number of economic factors, including export and import prices, and the location of foreign direct investment. Liberalization is key to reducing maritime transport costs, providing greater

choices to shippers, and ensuring fast and efficient deliveries. Liberalization in the sector will also encourage foreign investment, which will not only enhance employment opportunities within the sector itself, but will also promote the growth of other related service sectors. The multiplier effect of the maritime transport service sector extends to ship repair/maintenance, ship classification, distribution, professional services, communications, banking and insurance services, etc.

4. We call for the active participation of all Members in the on-going negotiations with a view to achieving meaningful liberalization of the maritime transport service sector, consistent with sustainable development, security and safety, and thereby securing broad coverage of this sector in the multilateral trading system and the GATS framework.
