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**US Coalition of Service Industries Calls Services Offers Important Step,
Asks Other Countries to Engage**

Dean R. O'Hare, Chairman of the Coalition of Service Industries, called the WTO offer tabled today by the United States "important, because it is a substantial improvement over existing US commitments in the GATS. By including the changes in US law applying to services, this offer demonstrates US determination to keep its WTO commitments up to date."

The services negotiation in the GATS is an important one. "It is the first comprehensive services negotiation since 1994", O'Hare said.

"There is an urgent need to remove existing, very substantial barriers abroad to global trade in services. With the most advanced services economy in the world, representing 80 percent of US jobs, no country has a greater stake in the success of this effort than the United States, which is extremely competitive in services. Developing countries also have much to gain, because liberalization of services trade is essential to their economic growth and development ."

O'Hare "called on all the major trading nations including developing countries", to join the US in making initial offers that reflect their current levels of liberalization, and then to seek to improve their WTO commitments through the bargaining that will be launched by the offers process.

The Doha Development Round Declaration set the timetable for services negotiations. It called for countries to table "requests" of each other starting on June 30 last year, and to table offers on March 31 this year.

CSI is the leading business organization dedicated to reducing barriers to U.S. services exports and mobilizing support for domestic U.S. policies, including tax policies, which enhance the global competitiveness of its members. CSI was formed in 1982 to ensure that U.S. trade in services would become a central goal of U.S. trade policy and trade negotiations. It played a major role in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and in the advocacy effort leading to the 1997 World Trade Organization (WTO) Basic Telecommunications and Financial Services Agreements. CSI's knowledge of the process of services trade negotiations, its ties to the WTO and its network of relationships with governments and industry in other countries are unmatched. For a complete list of CSI members, visit our website at www.uscsi.org.