July 23, 2013

The Honorable WANG Yang
Vice Premier
People’s Republic of China

Dear Vice Premier Wang:

Representing thousands of companies from around the world that assign great importance to our trade and investment relations with China, our associations are writing you regarding China’s participation in the negotiations to expand product coverage of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA).

Despite tremendous progress over the past year, the ITA expansion talks were suspended in Geneva last week during what we had all hoped would be the final round of negotiations. As voiced by countries participating in the negotiations, this delay was necessary because China presented a disproportionately large product sensitivities list. In fact, it was more than twice as long as any other country’s sensitivities list and included a request for the removal of roughly 100 product lines from the negotiating table.

Global industry regards the ITA as one of the most commercially successful World Trade Organization (WTO) trade pacts, contributing enormously to promoting jobs, increasing competitiveness, lowering consumer prices, boosting economic growth, and fostering innovation around the world. Unsurprisingly, global industry support for an expanded ITA continues to grow. Please see attached the most recent global industry statement supporting ITA expansion. There are now 81 associations from 31 economies and regions around the world on the statement.

While we appreciate China’s involvement in this important initiative, your government’s large sensitivities list has suddenly emerged as the chief obstacle to our shared goal of obtaining an ambitious ITA expansion outcome this year.

An ambitious, balanced, and commercially significant expansion of the ITA would provide an important boost to the WTO as an institution and the global economy. By one good estimate, ITA expansion would add $190 billion to global GDP annually. As a significant player in the global tech industry, China stands to be one of the largest beneficiaries of an expanded ITA, which would give a boost to the Chinese economy and help to strengthen China’s innovation capacity.

Mr. Vice Premier, we urge China to continue to view this moment in trade history as a leadership opportunity to bolster global commerce in information and communications technology goods, spur worldwide growth, and give greater relevance to the work of the WTO.

We would therefore appreciate your government taking this pause in negotiations to seriously consider a significant reduction in the size of China’s sensitivities list, both qualitatively and quantitatively, and quickly return to the negotiating table with a list that will act as a catalyst for bringing this important initiative to a strong conclusion this year.
Given that it took 16 years to finally get serious about expanding the ITA, there is no assurance we will have another opportunity to do this important work again anytime soon. Consequently, we must achieve ambitious results now. We look forward to continuing to work with your government to ensure a successful, mutually beneficial ITA expansion outcome.

Sincerely,

Hendrik Abma
Director General
European Semiconductor Industry Association

Thomas J. Donohue
President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Evan R. Gaddis
President and CEO
National Electrical Manufacturers Association

Karna Gupta
President and CEO
Information Technology Association of Canada

John Higgins, CBE
Director General
DIGITALEUROPE

David Chen
President
Taiwan Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers Association

Alexander C. Feldman
President
US-ASEAN Business Council

Michael D. Gallagher
President and CEO
Entertainment Software Association

Nguyen Phuoc Hai
General Secretary
Vietnam Electronic Industries Association

Sandy Kennedy
President
Retail Industry Leaders Association

Calman J. Cohen
President
Emergency Committee for American Trade

John Frisbie
President
US-China Business Council

Dean C. Garfield
President and CEO
Information Technology Industry Council

Tsutomu Handa
President
Japan Electronics & Information Technology Industries Association

George Kerchner
Executive Director
Rechargeable Battery Association
Dr. Dan C. Lachica  
President  
SEIPI, Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines

Hideo Nakanishi  
Executive Managing Director  
Japan Business Machine and Information System Industries Association

Matt Reid  
Senior Vice President, External Affairs  
BSA | The Software Alliance

Peter M. Robinson  
President and CEO  
United States Council for International Business

Ulf Schneider  
President  
Singapore Semiconductor Industry Association

Jim Taggart  
President and CEO  
Electro-Federation Canada

Dennis McGuirk  
President and CEO  
SEMI

Kazuo Ohki  
President  
Communications and Information Network Association of Japan

William A. Reinsch  
President  
National Foreign Trade Council

Bernhard Rohleder  
Director General  
BITKOM, Federal Association for Information Technology, Telecommunications and New Media

Grant Seiffert  
President  
Telecommunications Industry Association

Jay Timmons  
President and CEO  
National Association of Manufacturers

Bruce Mehlman  
Executive Director  
Tech CEO Council

Matt Roberts  
Managing Director  
United States Information Technology Office

Shaifubahrim Saleh  
President & CEO  
PIKOM, National ICT Association of Malaysia

Gary Shapiro  
President and CEO  
Consumer Electronics Association

Brian C. Toohey  
President & CEO  
Semiconductor Industry Association
Attached: Global Industry Statement Supporting ITA Expansion

CC: The Honorable GAO Hucheng, Minister, Ministry of Commerce
    The Honorable LOU Jiwei, Minister, Ministry of Finance
    The Honorable MIAO Wei, Minister, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology
    The Honorable LIU He, Vice Minister, National Development and Reform Commission