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COMMUNICATION FROM HONG KONG CHINA, JAPAN, MEXICO, THE SEPARATE CUSTOMS TERRITORY OF TAIWAN, PENGHU, KINMEN AND MATSU, AND UNITED STATES

Joint Statement on the Negotiations on Audiovisual Services

The following communication dated, 30 June 2005, from the delegations of Hong Kong China, Japan, Mexico, the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu, and United States is being circulated to Members of the Council for Trade in Services.

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1. Audiovisual services, like all services under the GATS, are an integral part of the services negotiations. They play a valuable role in supporting national economies and international trade, especially in developing countries. Trade rules that promote transparency and stability can further open significant regional and global opportunities for exchanges of audiovisual services.
 2. Opening the market for audiovisual services benefits the domestic industry by introducing new technologies, which have in turn led to the development of a multitude of new services. These new technologies also increase use of the network, helping to create an environment that will encourage investment in the digital networks of tomorrow.
 3. At the same time, a growing number of countries have come to recognize the spill-over effects to other service sectors that can result from opening the audiovisual sector. Countries interested in improving their tourism sector or attracting foreign students to develop educational services, for example, benefit from being recognized as the site of successful programming.
 4. We express great concern over efforts by some key participants in the negotiations to create an a priori exclusion for such an important sector. This is inconsistent with the Negotiating Guideline for the services negotiations of the DDA and with the full and open dialogue on which this institution is based.
 5. GATS provides much flexibility that permits Members to make commitments in the audiovisual sector in line with their national policy objectives. Out of the 61 initial/revised offers, 26 include offers in the audiovisual sector, mainly in motion picture and video tape production and distribution services and motion picture projection services. There have been 6 initial/revised offers that have contained new-revised offers in this sector.
 6. We urge all Members to consider carefully the broad economic benefits from including audiovisual commitments in their offers. Above all, trade in audiovisual services results in cultural exchange, the best way to promote cultural diversity.
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