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NEWS RELEASE

Parliamentarians Pivotal to Improving Global Trade Relations

1. Against a backdrop of growing global trade and increasingly complex trade issues, the role played by parliamentarians in paving the way for good international trade relations is now more pivotal than ever. In light of the need to enhance the capacity of these parliamentarians and keep them updated with the latest developments, the Centre for Multilateralism Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have organised the RSIS-WTO Parliamentarian Workshop 2015 that will take place from 25-27 May. This workshop is co-sponsored by the WTO Secretariat, and the Temasek Foundation under the auspices of the Temasek Foundation Series on Trade & Negotiations.

2. Ambassador Roberto Azevêdo, Director-General of the WTO, will deliver the keynote address titled "The World Trade Organization at the Age of 20: What Challenges for the Future?" On that same morning, Ambassador Azevêdo will also speak at a RSIS-MTI Trade Academy Distinguished Public Lecture on the topic "WTO's 20th Anniversary: Building a Stronger Global Trading System."

3. This three-day workshop provides a platform for 40 parliamentarians from ASEAN and Asia to engage in discussions on trade issues. There will be eight sessions that cover topics in key areas of international trade:

- How the WTO Works
- The Bali Package and Beyond: How to Finish the Doha Business
- Climate Change and Trade
- The Trade Facilitation Agreement: State of Play and Way Forward
- The Trade Facilitation Agreement: What Impact for the Asian Region
- Singapore's Experience of Trade Facilitation
- Encouraging New Trade Patterns: Joining Global Value Chains
- Managing Disputes Over Trade

4. Temasek Foundation has been supporting this event since 2011. This year's workshop also marks the start of the third cycle of funding from Temasek Foundation, which will provide RSIS with a grant of more than \$500,000 over a three-year period from 2015 to 2018. This funding will go towards providing training in trade and negotiations to countries in Asia. Through these collaborations, Temasek Foundation hopes to build capability and capacity through programmes that benefit host communities and contribute to the development of their economy and public administration systems.

5. This workshop will bring together a distinguished group of international trade experts representing some of the most important international and local organisations on global trade:

- Alan Bollard, Executive Director, APEC Secretariat
- Esteban B. Conejos, Permanent Representative of the Philippines in Geneva, Chair of the Preparatory Committee on TFA at the WTO
- Michael Ewing-Chow, WTO Chair holder, National University of Singapore
- Fook Seng Kwok, Climate Change Negotiator, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore
- Peter Govindasamy, Director, International Trade Cluster, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore

- Said El Hachimi, Counsellor, External Relations, WTO
- Margaret Liang, Adjunct Senior Fellow, RSIS
- Gerard McLinden, Lead Trade Facilitation Specialist, World Bank
- Michael Pulch, Ambassador of the European Union to Singapore
- Keith Rockwell, Chief Spokesman, WTO

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About the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

The **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)** is a professional graduate school of international affairs at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. RSIS' mission is to develop a community of scholars and policy analysts at the forefront of security studies and international affairs. Its core functions are research, graduate education and networking. It produces cutting-edge research on Asia Pacific Security, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Conflict Studies, Non-Traditional Security, International Political Economy, and Country and Region Studies. RSIS' activities are aimed at assisting policymakers to develop comprehensive approaches to strategic thinking on issues related to security and stability in the Asia Pacific.

For more information about RSIS, please visit www.rsis.edu.sg.

About the World Trade Organization

Established in 1995, the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** and its predecessor organisation, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), have helped to create a strong and prosperous international trading system. The WTO's primary purpose is to open trade for the benefit of all. It provides a forum for negotiating agreements aimed at reducing obstacles to international trade, and ensuring a level playing field for all, thus contributing to economic growth and development. The WTO also provides a legal and institutional framework for the implementation and monitoring of these agreements, as well as for settling disputes arising from their interpretation and application. The WTO currently has 161 members, of which 117 are developing countries or separate customs territories. Singapore has been a WTO member since 1 January 1995 and a member of GATT since 20 August 1973.

About the Temasek Foundation, Singapore

Temasek Foundation is a non-profit philanthropic organisation anchored in Singapore that seeks to contribute to sustainable growth and a bright future of hope and opportunities for people in Asia. The foundation works with partners to support programmes that build people through health care and education, programmes that build bridges between peoples, programmes that build institutions of excellence through governance and ethics, and programmes that rebuild lives and livelihoods affected by natural disasters.

For more information, visit www.temasekfoundation.org.sg.