

## REMARKS

**Congressman Gregory W. Meeks**

**Team TiSA Kickoff Event**

**June 18, 2014**

Good afternoon! It's truly a pleasure to be here today. As I look out at you all, I see friends from many of Washington's embassies, I see leaders of some of America's most thriving businesses, I see representatives from the Departments of State and Commerce – I see people from many different backgrounds and occupations who have been brought together today by their belief in the importance of trade in services.

For me, that is a victory in and of itself. The fact that I can stand here with my colleagues from both sides of the aisle, and together we can offer bipartisan support for this critical issue is a victory. Trade in services is something that all Americans *can* support – and something all Americans *should* support. No matter your ideological stance on other issues, the fact of the matter is that the Trade in Services Agreement – “TiSA” – stands to benefit us all.

TiSA is proof that we *can* craft plurilateral trade agreements which appeal to a wide range of WTO member states. Fifty countries are now involved in TiSA negotiations, accounting for 70% of the global services trade! TiSA is proof that the viability of ambitious trade agreements did not end during the Doha Negotiations in 2011. We *can* and *will* find ways to reach consensus so that we can remove barriers to trade, so that we can implement common-sense measures to facilitate the free flow of services, and so that we can eliminate discrimination against U.S. companies in foreign markets.

Despite the negativity pro-trade advocates sometimes face, I want to emphasize just how many good-news-stories there really are. To begin with, this event itself is good news. In fact, it's *great* news. I'm thrilled by the creation of a "Team TiSA Coalition," and I can't wait to see what this group will accomplish. I know my friends in the Coalition of Services Industries have worked very hard to get this group off the ground, and I'm confident it's going to foster precisely the kind of *dialogue* and *collaboration* required in order to take TiSA across the finish line.

Part of the good news story is the facts themselves. The United States is the world's largest services market and the world's leader in cross-border imports and exports of services. Services account for over \$10 trillion in private sector GDP –

close to 80% of GDP – and three out of every four American jobs are in the services sector. Ninety-five percent of the world’s consumers live beyond America’s borders, and in my home state of New York, trade-related employment grew more than three time faster than total employment from 2004 to 2011. And I’m not just talking solely about large corporations. The fact of the matter is that middle class jobs in my district depend on selling to foreign markets, and the vast majority of New York exporters are small- and medium-sized companies with less than 500 workers. As I said – the Trade in Services Agreement stands to benefit us *all*.

The last good news story I’d like to emphasize is just how far we’ve come since Doha. If we think for a moment about the history of TiSA, it becomes even more obvious just how important this proposed agreement really is. When negotiations stalled in 2011, the 22 WTO member states belonging to the so-called “Really Good Friends of Services Group” decided to take action. It’s important to note that this was not a permanent, exclusive body of countries. On the contrary, it was an *ad-hoc*, inclusive coalition open to any country interested in promoting trade in services and committed to adhering to the high standards a successful agreement would require. The spirit of that initial coalition is evident here today, I think, and, like I said, I’m thrilled that we have such a diverse audience here to support this

kickoff event. Thank you again for having me here today, and thank you for all you do to support smart trade policies which benefit America.