August 31, 2011

Mr. Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As the window of opportunity for a robust deal on Doha Round is closing, with the United States now about to enter into an election mode, we make an appeal for Presidential leadership in the United States to put Doha into closure along with the three Free Trade Agreements that finally seem close to passage by bipartisan agreement.

The fear of the labour unions that trade with the poor countries produces poor in the rich countries is mistaken. The demand of the business lobbies that want ever more concessions from others is excessive. The contention of some experts that the gains from Doha are minuscule is flawed in neglecting the costs of the failure of Doha and the ensuing damage to the WTO. The retribution by a protectionist public is greatly exaggerated: many jobs today depend on both exports and imports and the polls reflect that.

President Obama: you have not failed to step up to the plate on issues like the repeal of the Don’t Ask and Don’t Tell policy in the armed forces. You can do so again to carry Doha past the finish line. You were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for the multilateralism that you promised. You can earn it with leadership on Doha, a multilateral venture par excellence.

Jagdish Bhagwati
Columbia University and CFR

Claude Barfield
AEI

Herminio Blanco
Former Secretary of Commerce and Industry, Mexico

Hugh Corbet
Cordell Hull Institute, Washington DC
W. Max Corden
University of Melbourne, Australia

Donald R. Davis
Columbia University

Alan Deardorff
Michigan University, Ann Arbor

Vivek Dehejia
Carleton University, Canada

Barry Desker
NTU and Former Ambassador to Indonesia, Singapore

Elias Dinopoulos
University of Florida

Peter Drysdale
Australian National University

Sebastian Edwards
UCLA

Frederick Erixon
ECIPE, Brussels

Simon Evenett
St. Gallen, Switzerland

Robert Feenstra
UC Davis

Ronald Findlay
Columbia University

K.C. Fung
UCSC

Ross Garnaut
University of Melbourne, Australia

Jan Willem Gunning
VU University of Amsterdam

Tatsuo Hatta
Osaka University and GRIPS

Mats Hellström
Former Minister of Foreign Trade, Sweden
Hal Hill
Australian National University

Douglas Irwin
Dartmouth College

Peter Kleen
ECIPE, Brussels

Pravin Krishna
SAIS and Johns Hopkins University

Anne Krueger
SAIS

Hosuk Lee-Makiyama
ECIPE, Brussels

Phil Levy
AEI

Rodney Ludema
Georgetown University

Petros Mavroidis
Columbia University and Neuchatel, Switzerland

Patrick Messerlin
Sciences Po, France

Devashish Mitra
Syracuse University

Piyusha Mutreja
Syracuse University

Leif Pagrotsky
Sveriges Riksbank and Former Minister of Foreign Trade, Sweden

Arvind Panagariya
Columbia University and Brookings Institution

Lourenco Paz
Syracuse University

Raymond Riezman
University of Iowa

Tom Prusa
Rutgers University
Peter Rosendorff
New York University

Razeen Sally
ECIPE, Brussels

André Sapir
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels

Robert Stern
Michigan University and UC Berkeley

Subidey Togan
Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey

Tony Venables
Oxford University

Shang-Jin Wei
Columbia Business School

David Weinstein
Columbia University

John Whalley
University of Western Ontario, Canada

Kar-yiu Wong
University of Washington