MEDIA RELEASE

September 13, 2021

Contact: Dr. Jim Poisant. Mobile: +1 703 728-4547 E: jpoisant@witsa.org
Dr. Sean Seah. Mobile: +60 12 336-1933 E: sean.seah@pikom.org.my

Count-down Begins: "Olympics of IT" Returning to Malaysia
WITSA Lauds PIKOM's Perseverance through Global Pandemic to Host Grand Event on September 13-15, 2022

Fairfax, VA: The World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) today announced that the 26th World Congress on IT (WCIT 2022) will take place in Penang, Malaysia on September 13-15, 2022, with the theme "Connecting and Transforming the World", setting Penang as a gateway to ASEAN and a linkage to the world. Often referred to as the "Olympics of the information and communications technology industry", the WCIT was first held in 1978. WITSA's flagship event is unique in its global perspective on ICT issues and its ability to draw users, providers, media and academia from around the world. Global business, government and academic leaders discuss emerging markets, legal and policy issues, political and economic trends, emerging technologies, ICT user perspectives and business opportunities in the global marketplace. Among the featured speakers are the most distinguished and internationally recognized leaders from government and industry.

The National Tech Association of Malaysia (PIKOM), in collaboration with the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), had originally won the bid to host WCIT in 2020. The event was ultimately postponed to 2022 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In its place, PIKOM hosted a spectacular three-day "Techfest Live featuring Road-to-WCIT 2022" virtual event on November 18-20, 2020. The event paved the way for the return of the WCIT to Malaysia in 2022 as the gateway to Southeast Asia with a market size of 650 million people. "WITSA is proud of PIKOM's perseverance amidst the global crisis and for successfully planning the return of the World Congress on IT to Malaysia in 2022", said WITSA Chairman Yannis Sirros. "With the return of the WCIT, PIKOM demonstrates how the world can recover from this crisis with digital technologies as a driver of prosperity, economic growth and innovation, introducing a new digital future, all over the world," continued Mr. Sirros. "Among all the lessons derived from the COVID-19 pandemic, none is more important than stressing the importance of ICT development. Crises will come and go but falling behind in the *Digital Age* will cast nations into perpetual poverty and hardship. Catching up is quite possible if nations act NOW with a sense of Urgency. WCIT

2022 will put a spotlight on how countries, societies and businesses can succeed in a post-pandemic world by embracing digital transformation and by accelerating digital investments to match changing customer needs, improve business operation through use of data and AI, modernizing technology capabilities selectively to boost growth, and enhancing organizational agility to adapt quicker to market changes".

"I wish to thank WITSA for the continued support of PIKOM and Malaysia's quest to launch a successful WCIT in Penang next year", said Dr. Sean Seah, Deputy Chairman of WITSA and PIKOM. "WCIT 2022 will put a spotlight on Penang, which is known as the Silicon Valley of the East for its ground-breaking and innovative industries", continued Dr. Seah. "Penang is not only one of Malaysia's most vital economic powerhouses, with the highest Gross Domestic Product per capita among all Malaysian states but is also home to one of the most distinguished UNESCO World Heritage Sites. I am looking forward to welcoming delegates from all corners of the world next September, which will further position Malaysia and Penang as the digital hub for ASEAN countries and connecting Malaysia to the world. A state-wide digital experience festival, TechFest 2022, is scheduled from 8th to 18th September 2022 to coincide with WCIT 2022."

"I know that everyone in the 85-country wide global WITSA member community is looking forward to the reschedule World Congress in Penang next year", stated WITSA Secretary General Dr. Jim Poisant. "Malaysia is one of only two countries to have hosted the WCIT twice in its storied 43-year history", continued Dr. Poisant. "Malaysia last hosted the WCIT event in Kuala Lumpur in 2008 and managed to secure total sales and investments worth RM8.3 billion (USD2 billion) with 20,000 jobs created as a result of over 800 business meetings held during the event, creating more than RM1.24 billion (USD 300 million) in business opportunities for the Malaysian information and communications technology (ICT) industry. WCIT2022 will be a key factor for Malaysia's economic transformation and a platform to bridging the digital divide and ensuring that the needs of most vulnerable in society are addressed."

For more information about WITSA's World Congress on ICT, please see our "WCIT Proud History" brochure at https://witsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/WITSAs-World-Congresses-on-IT-A-Proud-History.pdf.

About WITSA:

The World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) is the leading recognized international voice of the global ICT industry, whose members from over 80 countries and economies represent more than 90 percent of the world ICT market. WITSA is dedicated to advocating policies that advance industry growth and development; facilitating international trade and investment in ICT products and services; strengthening WITSA's national industry associations; and providing members with a broad network of professional contacts.

WITSA members are leaders in a globally interconnected marketplace. Because the challenges facing the ICT industry are undisputedly global in nature, WITSA members work together to achieve a shared vision on important issues of common interest. WITSA makes it possible for its members - ranging from Mongolia and Argentina to Kenya and the United States - to identify

common issues and priorities, exchange valuable information, and present a united position on industry issues. For more information on WITSA, please visit https://witsa.org/.