

MEMO# 11369

November 1, 1999

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION SERVICES 2000 NEGOTIATIONS

[11369] November 1, 1999 TO: INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE No. 46-99 RE: WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION SERVICES 2000 NEGOTIATIONS

_____ Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) will begin a new round of services negotiations next year under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). As you may recall, the 1997 Financial Services Agreement represented a significant step in the efforts to open asset management markets around the world. In the 1997 Agreement, most countries agreed to make market access commitments that reflected the level of access the country already provided to foreign firms (with a few countries agreeing to change their laws or policies to provide additional access). Under GATS and the WTO process, countries that make market access commitments cannot diminish access levels in the future. Therefore, although the 1997 Agreement, as a general matter, did not break new ground in the level of market access, it did provide a measure of legal certainty for foreign-owned firms doing business in other countries. The new round of negotiations in 2000 presents an opportunity to improve on the 1997 Agreement. The Institute intends to work with US negotiators from the Department of the Treasury and the Office of the United States Trade Representative to assure that the specific countries and barriers of most concern to Institute members are covered during the 2000 negotiations. Therefore, we would like your views on the issues and countries on which the Institute should focus. Attached is a discussion of current market access levels and barriers in key countries. We plan to discuss these issues at the November International Committee meeting. Accordingly, if you have comments, please provide them to me by phone at (202) 326-5810, by fax at (202) 326-5841, or by e-mail at jchoi@ici.org by Wednesday, November 10, 1999. Jennifer S. Choi Assistant Counsel