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For Immediate Release:

TRADE GROUP LAUDS CANADA'S APPROACH TO RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS CONDUCT ABROAD

TORONTO, ON – The Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT) welcomes the recent announcement of two new initiatives to strengthen Canada's approach to responsible business conduct for Canadian companies doing business and operating abroad, which aim to set a new global standard for Corporate Social Responsibility.

The first is the creation of an independent Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE), the first of its kind in the world. The CORE will be mandated to investigate allegations of human rights abuses linked to Canadian corporate activity abroad. The CORE will seek to assist wherever possible in collaboratively resolving disputes or conflicts between impacted communities and Canadian companies. It will be empowered to independently investigate, report, recommend remedy and monitor its implementation. The CORE's scope will be multi-sectoral, initially focusing on the mining, oil and gas, and garment sectors, with the expectation to expand to other business sectors within a year of the Ombudsperson taking office. The second is the creation of a multi-stakeholder Advisory Body to advise the Government and the CORE on responsible business conduct abroad.

"Canada's leadership in strengthening responsible business conduct abroad reflects the values supported by Canada's progressive trade agenda where all parties should benefit from economic development, and contributes to Canada's reputation as an international business partner of choice," said **François-Philippe Champagne**, Minister of International Trade, who made the announcement.

"As supporters of Canada's progressive trade agenda, OWIT is pleased to see Canada taking this leadership role in promoting responsible business conduct abroad," says **Susan Baka**, VP-International, OWIT-Toronto. "We have been providing input through various government channels on making trade more inclusive for more people and welcome these initiatives that further broaden Canada's approach to inclusive trade and emphasize respect for human rights worldwide."

"The fact that this was worked on with different stakeholders including the Canadian Labour Congress is very positive, showing great support for this and demonstrating where the government is going on trade," adds **Tamaika Jumelle**, VP, OWIT-Ottawa, who represented OWIT at the announcement in Ottawa, along with VP **Ainsley Butler**. "By setting new standards, this positions Canada to lead on progressive trade issues and also benefits societies and countries where Canadians do business."

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About OWIT

OWIT-Toronto (The Organization of Women in International Trade-Toronto www.owit-toronto.ca) and OWIT-Ottawa (www.owit-ottawa.ca) are part of an international non-profit professional organization with chapters around the world (www.owit.org), dedicated to advancing global trade opportunities for women.