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COMPTEL Identifies Barriers in International Communications Market

***Annual Filing to USTR Cites Competitive Concerns in
Argentina, China, Egypt, Germany, India and South Africa***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – COMPTEL, the leading trade association for the competitive telecommunications industry, today filed comments with the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) identifying six countries in which COMPTEL members are encountering significant market barriers. The countries – Argentina, China, Egypt, Germany, India and South Africa – are not complying with World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations or U.S. telecommunications trade agreements.

Specifically, anti-competitive activities in these countries include:

- Argentina – Discriminatory application of universal service funding obligations.
- China – Issues relating to burdensome capitalization requirements and failure to implement GATS commitments in a timely fashion remain unresolved.
- Egypt – Failure to provide full market access and national treatment for fixed line voice and data service providers, including international services, pursuant to its commitments under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).
- Germany – Continued failure to fully implement its GATS commitments, lack of transparency and objectivity; and failure to implement access and interconnection obligations.
- India – Discriminatory universal service and regulatory fees, excessive pricing of leased lines, burdensome and unnecessary regulation relating to encryption and network monitoring, and excessive annual regulatory fees.
- South Africa – Lack of access to submarine cable landing stations and potential foreign ownership limits on value-added service providers.

In this year's comments, COMPTEL did not go into detail about problems with access to leased lines or high-speed fiber networks, or high-priced fixed-to-mobile termination rates in countries mentioned in previous years. However, it is important to note that their absence from this year's filing does not mean that these issues have been resolved satisfactorily.

To see COMPTEL's USTR filing, please visit

http://comptel.org/Files/filings/2009/COMPTEL_1377_Filing_12-14-09.pdf

About COMPTEL

Based in Washington, D.C., COMPTEL is the leading industry association representing competitive communications service providers and their supplier partners. COMPTEL members are entrepreneurial companies driving technological innovation and creating economic growth through competitive voice, video, and data offerings and the development and deployment of next-generation, IP-based networks and services. COMPTEL advances its members' interests through trade shows, networking, education, and policy advocacy before Congress, the Federal Communications Commission and the courts. COMPTEL works to ensure that competitive communications providers can continue to offer lower prices, better service, and greater innovation to consumers. For more information, visit www.comptel.org.