SINGAPORE, MAY 31, 2018: The Asia Business Trade Association (ABTA) today announced that distinguished representatives from the public and private sector will converge in Singapore on June 6, 2018 to attend its inaugural conference focused on small-medium enterprises (SMEs). ASEAN SMEs, global business leaders, government officials and representatives from international organizations will meet to address the opportunities and critical issues facing SMEs in the region.

“SMEs are the backbone of most Asian economies and represent Asia’s key economic drive. Despite being the main employers of the labor force, SME’s contribution to GDP in Asia is still in the lower range, implying the potential is greater than what is currently being realized,” said Ho Meng Kit, Chairman, Asia Business Trade Association. “The ABTA aims to help those SMEs realize that potential.”

The summit, “Enabling SMEs in the Digital Age”, aims to provide SMEs with a better understanding of the digital landscape and the tools they can use to become more relevant in their respective markets and abroad. Among the issues to be addressed, digital trade will feature most prominent as a critical factor for SMEs to capitalize on their full potential, establish a competitive advantage and prepare for new commercial opportunities.

Dr Tan Wu Meng, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Trade & Industry and Foreign Affairs of Singapore, will provide the keynote address.

The Asia Business Trade Association (“ABTA”), launched earlier this year, serves as the premier business association dedicated to the promotion of regional trade issues in cooperation with companies and governments.

Corporate members range from global firms such as UPS and Visa as well as growing regional champions such as Grab. In addition, nearly 1,000 SMEs across 21 countries are members of the ABTA network.

In addition to the conference, the ABTA also announced today the appointment of Dustin Watson as Director of ABTA.

“We are thrilled to name Dustin Watson as Director of ABTA,” said Dr. Deborah Elms, Vice Chairman and Steven Okun, President. “His twenty-five years of experience in government relations, public affairs, and business management, most recently with the
American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore, will help us drive ABTA’s activities and enable us to provide value to our members.

"Now more than ever, it is not the time for businesses to sit idly by when it comes to trade," said Dustin Watson, ABTA’s Director. “As ABTA is at the table representing the interests of large and small businesses while serving as a bridge to governments in Asia, our member companies will be better positioned to increase their ability to gain access to some of the fastest-growing markets in the world."

# # #

Media Contact:

Ms. Minh Hue Nguyen, minhhue@asiabusiness.trade

About ABTA:

Headquartered in Singapore, the ABTA is open to any company doing business in Asia-Pacific. An independent, non-profit association, ABTA focuses on:

1. Next Generation Trade (including e-commerce, digital trade, financial technology and artificial intelligence)
2. Trade Agreements (including the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership)
3. Supporting Smaller Business Export Growth

The Asian Trade Centre serves as the Secretariat for ABTA.

For further information, visit http://asiabusiness.trade/