

**Formal Trade Negotiations Committee and  
Informal Heads of Delegations Meeting  
(3 May 2021)**

**Hong Kong, China's Statement**

- Thank you, DG.

***Draft GC Declaration on Trade and Health: COVID-19 and Beyond***

- The COVID-19 pandemic has affected us all in various ways. Hong Kong, China shares the view of many other Members that this unprecedented global crisis calls for urgent and coordinated global efforts, and that the WTO has a unique and indispensable role to play in fighting against the pandemic, especially in enhancing the resilience of our supply chains and ensuring access to essential medical goods. In this connection, Hong Kong, China is pleased to have joined as a co-sponsor of the draft General Council Declaration on Trade and Health: COVID-19 and Beyond. We would encourage other Members to give favourable consideration to this draft Declaration.

***Other Issues to be Addressed by MC12***

- On other issues to be addressed by MC12, Hong Kong, China fully recognises the importance of achieving meaningful outcomes in MC12 in preserving and strengthening the confidence of stakeholders worldwide in the WTO. We believe that MC12 should address, in addition to response measures to future pandemics, the following issues: fisheries subsidies, e-commerce moratorium, restoration of a fully functioning two-tier dispute settlement mechanism, and trade and environment. Successful outcomes in these issues are essential in demonstrating the WTO's continued relevance to the changing global trading environment.

***Fisheries Subsidies***

- Please allow me to elaborate: on fisheries subsidies, despite our intensified negotiations in recent months, there are still substantial divisions among Members on some core disciplines under negotiation. What is encouraging, however, is the flexibility demonstrated by many Members in the April cluster of meetings. The need for flexibility has never been more crucial as we enter the final phase of negotiation and prepare for our ministers to meet

in July. Hong Kong, China looks forward to the revised negotiating text being prepared by the Negotiating Group Chair Ambassador Wills and remains committed to delivering on our mandate contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal.

### ***E-commerce Moratorium***

- On the E-commerce moratorium, Hong Kong, China would just like to reiterate that the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions has provided a stable, predictable and conducive environment for international e-commerce activities during the past two decades and it should be continued.
- Hong Kong, China all along supports making this moratorium permanent, and we strongly believe that even if consensus on a permanent moratorium could not be reached by MC12, we should at least extend the moratorium until MC13. This will be critical to the post-pandemic global economic recovery and help avoid bringing unnecessary uncertainties and disruptions to global e-commerce.

### ***Restoration of Dispute Settlement Mechanism***

- On WTO's dispute settlement mechanism, the Appellate Body impasse has dragged on for too long. We believe most Members would agree that the current absence of a fully functioning two-tier dispute settlement mechanism is detrimental to the credibility of WTO in championing a rules-based multilateral trading system. Even if this impasse could not be completely resolved by MC12, Members must work together in good faith to develop a roadmap and timetable for resolving the impasse, including setting out the necessary reform to the Appellate Body and the dispute settlement mechanism in order to resolve the impasse.

### ***Trade and Environment***

- Finally, on trade and environment. Hong Kong, China supports the objectives of sustainable development and we are glad to note the growing interest and intensified discussions among Members. As a participant of the Environmental Goods Agreement negotiation in the past, Hong Kong, China remains committed to constructive engagement in such negotiation and looks forward to its early resumption.

- Chair, Hong Kong, China remains open-minded to other Members' preferences and initiatives and is committed to engaging constructively in their further discussions.
- Thank you very much.

**Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Geneva**  
**May 2021**