

Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference
Thematic Session on Work Programme on Electronic Commerce and
Moratorium
(15 June 2022)

Hong Kong, China's Statement

- Hong Kong, China (HKC) is a co-sponsor of the draft Ministerial Decision proposing continuation with both the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce and the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions until MC13.
- HKC fully recognises the importance of creating and maintaining an enabling environment for international e-commerce to flourish. The Work Programme on Electronic Commerce is the foundation of the WTO's work in this regard.
- Meanwhile, the moratorium on customs duties on e-transmissions has contributed to providing the necessary certainty and predictability for the global digital economy to thrive for more than two decades.
- We also note that the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally transformed the way people live, work and do business, and accelerated the growth of e-commerce. During the pandemic, e-commerce has helped sustain economic resilience in many economies, and we believe it will continue to drive global economic growth during the post-pandemic recovery.
- As highlighted in the statement issued by some 90 global trade associations last month, the moratorium is particularly beneficial to MSMEs and has allowed them to stay in business through leveraging digital tools during lockdowns.
- Furthermore, as numerous credible studies have shown, the benefits associated with the moratorium, including significant increase in consumer welfare and reduction in trade costs, far outweigh any potential revenue loss to government.
- While HKC considers that the moratorium should be made permanent, we also note that some Members may have different views and are not ready to make it permanent. In the circumstances, we believe the most pragmatic and least-disruptive way forward at this point is to extend the moratorium until the next Ministerial Conference, and to continue with the ongoing work of

the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce so as to address issues of concern to Members.

- Chair, it will be a serious setback for the prospering global e-commerce environment and will send a wrong signal to the world, if we allow the moratorium to lapse at this Ministerial Conference.
- We believe the WTO should continue to play a leading role in preserving and promoting a facilitating and predictable e-commerce environment for economies across the globe. HKC stands ready to work constructively with other Members to advance the work on e-commerce under the WTO.
