

**Formal Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) and
Informal Heads of Delegation (HoDs) Meeting
12 December 2023 (Tuesday)**

Agenda Item 3: Statements by Participants

Hong Kong, China's Statement

- Thank you, Chair and a warm welcome to DDG Hill
- Chair, to answer your question about how best we should utilize the narrow window before MC13 to deliver outcome, I'd cut to the chase and name the top three tasks in HKC's opinion.

E-Commerce Moratorium

- First, we should not leave the extension of the e-Commerce moratorium till MC13. Like the GC decision on LDC graduation, this should be a Geneva harvest.

Dispute Settlement (DS) Reform

- Then, restoring a binding and fully-functioning dispute settlement system in the WTO has been a top priority of Hong Kong, China. I trust many other Members in the room also share our sense of urgency in this pursuit.
- Indeed, the resolve to finalize a comprehensive text on the reform package ahead of MC13 is there, much work still has to be done.
- HKC is reassured by the sustained momentum of the informal process of the DS reform. The last cluster of plenary meetings in 2023 are taking place these few days, and three more clusters have been scheduled for the coming January right after the holidays.
- We should not miss this narrow window of opportunity. Members can count on HKC to redouble our efforts to engage in the coming weeks with a view to driving a deliverable in Abu Dhabi to bring back a two-tiered, binding and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all.

Fisheries Subsidies Negotiations

- On the fisheries subsidies negotiations, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for the efforts made by the NGR Chair, Ambassador Gunnarsson, in arranging the Final Fish Week in December and presenting the 2nd Chair's text for Members' deliberation. It is unfortunate that this "Final Fish Week" was not final, and Members were unable to reach a negotiation outcome by the original deadline of the December GC Meeting.
- The clock is ticking for all of us to fulfill the mandate given by our Ministers to make recommendations at MC13 for additional provisions that would achieve a comprehensive agreement on fisheries subsidies. With over a hundred textual suggestions and two Chair's texts now on the table, in the coming weeks we should continue to distill the range of ideas into feasible compromises, which we could further work on to iron out the remaining differences.
- In this critical juncture, Members should demonstrate greater flexibility in finding the landing zones, and communicate not only with like-minded Members but also with Members having different perspectives.
- Hong Kong, China remains committed to working constructively with other Members in the negotiations towards our shared goal of achieving a comprehensive agreement.
- Separately, to make the negotiated outcome in MC12 a reality, HKC already deposited our Instrument of Acceptance 4 months ago, and we encourage Members that have not been named by DG to expedite their actions. The entry into force of the Agreement depends on you.
- The swift entry into force of this historic agreement would not only reaffirm our collective commitment to environmental sustainability but also underscore the competence of the WTO to deliver concrete outcome.
- Thank you.

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Geneva
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