

Joint Statement Initiative on E-Commerce
Heads of Delegation Meeting
(21 May 2024)

Statement by Hong Kong, China

- Thank you James (Australia) and the other two Co-Conveners (Japan and Singapore) for your steadfast efforts in shepherding this agreement.
- Hong Kong, China is committed to the ambition to have a comprehensive set of trade rules to guide and facilitate further development of digital trade, which will be the main driving force of the economy going forward. We recognise the rationale and the value of emphasising the need to keep up the momentum. We are pleased to note that the Co-Convenors have recognised that there are a number of key areas which need further discussion, and that technical negotiation has yet to conclude for those areas.
- I would like to take this opportunity to raise our concerns about the different ambition levels of Articles 27.1 and 27.2. We welcome the explanation given to us in a bilateral setting and look forward to joining any small group discussion, in particular on this aspect.
- The second point I would like to make is something Hong Kong, China has already made a couple of times. This, I believe, is shared by many in the room. The permanent prohibition of customs duties on electronic transmission is the crown jewel of this agreement. While we note the need to ensure the widest possible membership in the agreement, we need to be very mindful of the implication of shortening the period of review on the certainty provided to the commercial world, i.e. the value created by this agreement. The shorter the period of the review, the lesser the value will be for the commercial world.
- So these are the two areas which Hong Kong, China would like to flag up for further discussion. At the end of the day, we have worked very hard for five years and we recognise that there is a need to balance the interests of everyone, but the outcome must be commercially meaningful.

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Geneva
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