

Joint Statement Initiative on E-Commerce
Heads of Delegation Meeting
(25 June 2024)

Statement by Hong Kong, China

- Thank you James (Australia), Atsu (Japan) and Hung Seng (Singapore) for convening today's Heads of Delegation meeting to update all of us on the proposed changes to the text and asking the respective proponents to explain the reasons behind them. For prudence sake, we will take these back to our line agencies to examine, in particular, the legal implications of some of the technical changes.
- I would like to applaud all of you and your team for the tireless outreach to find a landing zone that is acceptable to all participants. As mentioned on previous occasions, delivering a commercially meaningful outcome is the aspiration of Hong Kong, China. In this connection, I think the statement issued by the Global Services Coalition yesterday at the 12th Annual Global Services Summit in Washington DC is very timely. It reminds us of what the business community expects of this JSI, and the very loud and clear message is that they look to this JSI for a lasting solution on customs duties on electronic transmission.
- So I will not hide my disappointment that the review period is shortened significantly by 50%. We can repeat the cliché about whether it is a glass half-full or a glass half-empty. Comparing to what the WTO is delivering, of course, it will be a significant improvement from a review every two years, or maybe no review at all after MC13. On the other hand, the certainty provided by this JSI is significantly reduced with the five-year review and I am disappointed at that. I would like to ask ourselves - are we hastily scaling back the certainty and hence the value of this agreement? But if that is the only way to have the emerging consensus from all participants in the room, then we will be giving serious thoughts to it.
- Thank you.

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Geneva
June 2024