

**General Council
Meeting on 16-17 December 2024**

Statement by Hong Kong, China

Item 7. Practical Steps to Enhance the Process for the Appointment of Officers to WTO Bodies (WT/GC/W/950/Rev. 4)

- Thank you, Chair.
- First, I would like to start by expressing our appreciation for the proposal tabled by the co-sponsors with a view to improving the process for appointing chairpersons to the WTO bodies.
- From the annotated agenda and the introduction by Singapore, we note the emphasis that the proposal is not an attempt to change the existing guidelines. On this point, I have a factual question to raise. The proposal is put to the GC for a decision, so what is the nature of the decision if adopted. I do see that some of the proposals actually has the effect of modifying the guidelines despite the aforesaid emphasis.
- Today, we have heard some of the reservations about the proposal. We think that those need to be discussed further, in particular, the appointment of interim chairs.
- For the time being, the reappointment of chairs to the subsidiary bodies under CTS and CTG does happen (and is explicitly allowed for under the existing guidelines). We also have interim chair appointed on a case-by-case basis, but if we are to inscribe rules in a GC decision to give specificity to the appointment of interim chairs, then I think it is to the benefit of this organisation to set out more clearly what would be considered to be the exceptional circumstances for such appointments and the tenure of those interim chairs.
- Hong Kong, China appreciates the efforts made, but sees the need to have enhanced clarity. We stand ready to take part in the consultations in the way forward.

**Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Geneva
December 2024**