

**WTO General Council Meeting
(18-19 February 2025)**

**Agenda Item 4: Incorporation of the Agreement on Electronic
Commerce into Annex 4 of the WTO Agreement – Draft Decision
(WT/GC/W/963)**

Statement by Hong Kong, China

- Thank you Chair. Since this is the first time I take the floor, I will take the opportunity to welcome new colleagues and bid farewell to outgoing permanent representatives.
- Back to this item. I would like to thank Ambassador Hikota for introducing this agenda item on behalf of all co-sponsors, including Hong Kong, China (HKC). My gratitude also goes to all three Co-Convenors for their steadfast efforts in shepherding this Agreement to where we are today.
- HKC has joined the Joint Statement Initiative on E-Commerce from Day One. We know how each and every participant has worked in good faith with high hopes in driving the outcome. At a time when multilateral services negotiations have ground to a halt for years, the Agreement on E-Commerce does not come by easily. It is a hard-earned, negotiated outcome. The conclusion of this Agreement is symbolic in a sense that it sends a positive signal to the world that a wide spectrum of WTO members have worked diligently in the past five years to respond to the rapidly evolving trade landscape and establish the first-ever baseline global digital trade rules.
- The Agreement is a commercially meaningful answer to the international business community. In particular, the commitment not to impose customs duties on electronic transmissions will provide the certainty that businesses desperately need to trade openly in the global digital era.
- As digital trade continues to grow by leaps and bounds, it is crucial for the WTO to demonstrate its relevance and adaptability in the 21st century in creating an open, predictable and facilitating environment,

and ultimately promoting global trade and economic growth. As you can see from the list of co-sponsors, we are a diverse group of members at different stages of economic development. This Agreement brings us together with dedicated articles to recognise and address the development needs and challenges faced by developing and LDC members, thereby enabling their integration and participation in this fast-changing digital world.

- Thank you.
