

## **General Council Meeting on 22-23 July 2020**

### **Statement by Hong Kong, China (HKC)**

#### **Item 1: Report by the Chairman of the Trade Negotiations Committee and Report by the Director-General**

- Thank you, Chair.
- I would like to express HKC's sincere appreciation to the outgoing Director-General for his calm leadership even at challenging times, his contributions to the work of the WTO and especially his commitment to the multilateral trading system.
- Director-General, among your many talents and strengths, your exceptional ability to build trust and forge consensus across the diverse membership has been most impressive to us, and I would join others in wishing you all the best in whatever you are going to do next. Thank you.

#### **Item 9: Procedural Guidelines for WTO Councils and Committees Addressing Trade Concerns – Statement by Co-sponsors of WT/GC/W/777/Rev.5**

- Thank you, Chair.
- As this is the first time that I am taking the floor at this General Council meeting, I would like to join others in extending a warm welcome to other heads of delegation who have just joined, and bidding farewell to those who are leaving Geneva. I would, in particular, wish to express our appreciation to Ambassador Frances LISSON of Australia for her leadership in the Joint Statement Initiatives on e-commerce and services domestic regulation.
- Turning back to this agenda item, as a co-sponsor, HKC would like to thank the European Union for leading this proposal on procedural guidelines and the updates that it has just given.

- Without doubt, the pandemic has caused substantial disruptions to our operations. As we navigate the uncertainties of the pandemic, it is perhaps worthwhile to ask ourselves: when the day-to-day operations of the WTO bodies eventually resume normal at some point in the future, do we really want to go about our discussions and deliberations in precisely the way we used to? Or do we wish to see improvements in how we handle such matters in terms of efficiency so that we would be better prepared for future storms and challenges?
- The proposal on the table contributes to the broader reform efforts and sets out in concrete terms how Members can work to make the WTO's day-to-day operation more efficient. We would like to reiterate our support for this proposal and encourage other Members to engage actively in its development.
- Thank you very much.

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