

**Informal Trade Negotiations Committee
and Informal Heads of Delegation Meetings on 14 December 2020**

Statement of Hong Kong, China

- Thank you, Chair.
- First of all, I would like to thank you and the Negotiating Group Chairs for the reports, and the Secretariat for its continued efforts in facilitating Members' work notwithstanding the challenges posed by the pandemic.
- On fisheries subsidies, I would like to thank in particular the Chair of the Negotiating Group on Rules, Ambassador Wills, for his enormous efforts in keeping the text-based negotiations going with a hectic schedule of meetings. Our thanks also go to Ambassador Chambovey, as Friend-of-Chair, for his leading role in facilitating the discussions on special and differential treatment and his efforts in trying to identify landing zones.
- The core disciplines in the fisheries subsidies negotiations, including IUU (*illegal, unreported and unregulated*) fishing, overcapacity and overfishing, and overfished stocks, are indeed complex. Hong Kong, China sees merits in having more intensive discussions, especially at technical level, to untangle the legal and technical complexities of the issues.
- While the deadline is going to expire and much remains to be done, all the work that has been done will not be wasted. We encourage Members to continue working in good faith to resolve the deadlocks and obstacles in front of us. Hong Kong, China remains committed to concluding the negotiations early with a meaningful outcome.
- On the work of the Joint Statement Initiative on MSMEs, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations on the official endorsement of the package of recommendations at the meeting of the Informal Working Group on MSMEs last Friday (11 December) under the leadership and coordination of Ambassador Cancela.

- The endorsement of the package is a major milestone of the work on MSMEs. As the Coordinator pointed out, this is the first concrete outcome among all the joint statement initiatives. I would like to thank Ambassador Cancela for his hard work and relentless efforts in liaising with Members and other stakeholders during the past three years.
- Hong Kong, China is pleased to have taken part in the process and contributed to this initiative dedicated to MSMEs, which, as we all know, are vulnerable and hardest hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. The endorsement of the package is but the first step. Hong Kong, China will continue to support the implementation of the package in 2021 and beyond under the Coordinator's continued leadership.
- Chair, the year 2020 is a difficult one both inside and outside the WTO. As the year is drawing to a close, it is high time that Members consider what would stand us in good stead in the coming year, so that we can make up for the lost time to achieve progress and positive changes.
- In this connection, it is important that Members reach early consensus on two issues. First, consensus on the arrangement for MC 12. Making an early decision on the timing and arrangements of MC 12 would help focus our attention and energies on the deliverables, and keep the momentum going. Second, we also need an early consensus on the way forward of the appointment of the new Director-General so that she could provide enhanced support to Members in tackling the substantive and systematic issues at hand.
- Thank you very much.

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Geneva
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