

**Informal Trade Negotiations Committee  
and Informal Heads of Delegation Meetings on 12 Oct 2020**

**Statement of Hong Kong, China**

- Thank you, Chair.
- I would like to thank you and the Negotiating Group Chairs for their reports, and the Secretariat for its continued efforts in facilitating Members' work in the face of the logistical challenges brought by Covid-19.
- As the pandemic situations remain serious in many parts of the world and as trade officials in the capitals of many Members are working hard to respond to the pandemic and its economic impacts, here in Geneva we should also do our best to prepare for and contribute to the long and challenging road to global economic recovery after the pandemic. Despite the uncertainties, we cannot afford to stand still.
- The very first thing we should do is perhaps to adjust to the new normal and ensure that the WTO continues to carry out its functions fully in spite of the various pandemic-related limitations. We need to find ways to organise effective meetings and to facilitate the operation of the rules-based multilateral trading system. We need to find ways not only to recover, but also to explore and harness new opportunities arising from the new normal.
- WTO bodies have an important role to play in enhancing the transparency of Covid-19 trade-related measures and in ensuring that the implementation of these measures is consistent with WTO rules. The effective monitoring of restrictive measures and promotion of facilitative measures are equally crucial to the smooth flow of international trade. Both can make a big difference and push us forward on the road to economic recovery.
- At the same time, we will need to redouble our efforts to deliver in the area of negotiations, which brings me to the subject of fisheries subsidies. I would like to thank in particular the Chair of the Negotiating Group on Rules, Ambassador Wills, for his tremendous efforts in keeping the momentum of the negotiations. As we now enter text-based negotiations, Members should focus on finding landing zones and bridging gaps.

- More intensive discussions on the core disciplines of overcapacity and overfishing as well as overfished stocks will be most welcome, especially regarding the controversial issues such as stock assessment and non-harmful subsidies. The more thorough our discussions are, the more likely we will be able to come up with a clearer draft text.
- Chair, much of the year 2020 has unfortunately been characterised by different sorts of delays and cancellations and it would be easy for people to lose heart. But, let us not forget that there is still some way to go before the year draws to a close. Let us keep our eyes on the goal while learning to cope with the new normal and work together to make the best of 2020.
- Thank you.

**Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Geneva**  
**October 2020**