

**Dispute Settlement Reform Process**  
**Heads of Delegation Meeting**  
(11 October 2024)

**Statement by Hong Kong, China**

- Madam Facilitator, I thank you and the Co-convenors for your hard work and tireless efforts – I can see from the report the way you and the team of co-convenors had guided the discussion at the technical level. I am very thankful for your convening this meeting to tell us the state of play, as well as for providing suggestions for the next steps in terms of the process.
- From the very beginning when you took the helm, I already said that I had no worries about the process not being inclusive or transparent. Hong Kong, China (HKC) is also a small mission, our only subject officer working on the DS reform is also tasked to cover a host of horizontal issues. So I understand what it means by capacity constraints, but the DS Reform is far too important a subject that we just have to prioritize.
- Prior to this meeting, I was really worried about the deep-seated divergence in some of the very important issues. From HKC's perspective, for example, the progress with the restoration of the appeal and review mechanism is worrying. And I can see that this is also the concern of many Members here.
- I feel more assured on hearing from you the repeat mentioning that we are only ten weeks away from of the deadline. The mentality is to work backward from the deadline to deliver the mandate. This mandate is a mandate to rescue this organization from deterioration. If we fail this time, it is not just another unfulfilled mandate of the WTO, it is a matter of survival for this organization. The key and core issue is the restoration of a fully and well-functioning mechanism.
- If I have to draw an analogy – the DS system is like a house, the roof of which has been blown away. It is uninhabitable now. In the next ten weeks, we need to put a

roof back on top of it. It is only until then that we can talk about whether the house should also have wall-to-wall carpet, electronic access card, or even face recognition access. I agree with the colleagues from the European Union who just said that we do need to be pragmatic. We have to look at what is essential to put that roof back. I am not saying that other features are not important. However, if we do not even have a house that is truly functional, what does it mean by having 24 hours access to it?

- I think we need to focus on what is essential to make this a fully functional dispute settlement system. You can count on HKC to continue to be pragmatic, constructive. Thank you.

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