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General Council

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WORK PROGRAMME ON ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

COMMUNICATION FROM AUSTRALIA; CANADA; CHILE; COLOMBIA; COSTA RICA; GEORGIA; GUATEMALA; HONG KONG, CHINA; ICELAND; KOREA, REPUBLIC OF; NEW ZEALAND; NORWAY; SINGAPORE; SWITZERLAND; SEPARATE CUSTOMS TERRITORY OF TAIWAN, PENGHU, KINMEN AND MATSU; UKRAINE; UNITED KINGDOM AND URUGUAY.

The following communication, dated 26 October 2021, is being circulated at the request of the delegations of Australia; Canada; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Georgia; Guatemala; Hong Kong, China; Iceland; Korea, Republic of; New Zealand; Norway; Singapore; Switzerland; Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu; Ukraine; United Kingdom and Uruguay.

Since 1998, WTO Members have periodically taken decisions at Ministerial Conferences to continue their practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions. Recognizing the importance of maintaining certainty and predictability for business and consumers, particularly in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic and for supporting the economic recovery, we propose that the Ministerial Conference adopts the following decision:

DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECISION

The Ministerial Conference decides as follows:

We agree to continue the work under the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce, based on the existing mandate as set out in WT/L/274. We instruct the General Council to hold periodic reviews in its session of July [and December] 2022 [and July 2023] based on the reports that may be submitted by the relevant WTO bodies and report to the next session of the Ministerial Conference.

We agree to maintain the current practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions until the 13th Ministerial Conference.
