

Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference

**Plenary Session, 16 December 2015
Hong Kong, China**

Madam Chair, Vice-Chairs, Chairman of the General Council,
Deputy Director-Generals, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that my delegation takes part in the first WTO Ministerial Conference in Africa, where we also celebrate the 20th anniversary. We thank Kenya for hosting this remarkable event, and for her warm hospitality.

2. As a founding Member, Hong Kong, China (HKC) is proud to see the WTO playing a prominent role in global trade governance and driving economic growth, especially through its work in dispute settlement, trade monitoring, and the continuous support to developing and least-developed economies.

3. Over the past 20 years, we have seen 34 accessions to the WTO. We will be welcoming two more at this Conference. The new comers are casting their vote of confidence for this Organisation, and trying their best to contribute to our cause. We, incumbent Members, should be doing no less.

4. I am fully aware of the challenges that we are facing. How to ensure that WTO negotiations deliver is a real concern. Unless this is satisfactorily addressed, more people will be convinced that trade deals elsewhere may be a better way to go.

5. For HKC, agreements negotiated outside the WTO cannot replace multilateral ones. The Agreement on Trade Facilitation, for instance, is expected to reduce average trade costs by more than 14%, an impact possibly greater than the elimination of all remaining global tariffs. Surely, the WTO is the way to go. We do appreciate that plurilateral and preferential agreements also have their value in liberalising trade and promoting economic integration; and some of their benefits are extended to all WTO Members. Harnessing the potentials of these agreements to strengthen the multilateral trading system is our long term goal.

6. But right now, the more pressing issue must be the future of the Doha Development Agenda. HKC wants, first and foremost, to continue addressing the outstanding issues. This does not prevent us from exploring different approaches that can help reinvigorate the negotiations. Nor should it prevent us from

addressing other trade issues, so that the WTO will remain responsive and relevant to changing circumstances.

7. In the next few days, we, collectively, will have to make important decisions about what we can do now and what we should do in future. Knowing that the buck stops here, we must act responsibly, as one organization, to find solutions solutions that will not only allow us to celebrate success in Nairobi, but also allow the WTO to move forward, from strength to strength, in the many years to come.

8. HKC is flexible and ready to engage. I hope we all are.
Thank you.
