

For Immediate Release

SINGAPORE REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO WORK WITH LIKE-MINDED PARTNERS TO STRENGTHEN THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

1 Singapore supports an open, rules-based multilateral trading system embodied by the World Trade Organization (WTO). We remain committed to working with all Members to uphold and update the WTO and the multilateral trading system.

2 The WTO is an important institution which establishes enforceable rules governing international trade. Since its establishment in 1995, the WTO has underpinned a sustained period of global growth and helped lift millions out of poverty. This is a significant achievement.

3 In a rapidly changing global economy, the WTO must regularly update its rules to ensure it remains relevant. One such area under discussion is Special and Differential Treatment (SDT), which refers to flexibilities accorded to developing country Members at the WTO, such as longer transition periods in implementing WTO obligations. Although all developing country WTO Members are entitled to SDT, each Member can choose whether to avail itself of SDT or not.

4 As a small economy with no natural resources and a high reliance on global trade, Singapore is a developing country WTO Member. However, we currently do not avail ourselves of SDT at the WTO in negotiating agreements. This reflects our view that even as SDT remains important to help WTO Members fully integrate into the multilateral trading system and benefit from global trade, all Members should take on commitments commensurate with their abilities.

5 Minister for Trade and Industry Chan Chun Sing said, “Singapore believes in the benefits of an integrated global economic and trading system based on transparent and fair rules. As part of Singapore’s efforts to support, uphold and update WTO rules, Singapore commits to not seek special and differential treatment in ongoing and future negotiations at the WTO. This commitment builds on Singapore’s policy to-date of not availing ourselves of the flexibilities provided by special and differential treatment at the WTO in negotiating agreements. Singapore will continue to support efforts to refresh the WTO in meaningful ways, including through the WTO Joint Statement on E-Commerce initiative which aims to establish rules for the digital economy, and updating the WTO rule-book with like-minded partners.”

**Ministry of Trade and Industry
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