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MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO**

SEPARATE CUSTOMS TERRITORY OF TAIWAN, PENGHU, KINMEN AND MATSU

At the outset, we would like to express that under such a challenging and uncertain political and economic environment, we hope the Fourteenth WTO Ministerial Conference may contribute to the future direction of the WTO multilateral trading system.

As with all WTO Members, we are confronted with growing geopolitical complexity, climate change, and rapid digital transformation. In adopting trade-related measures, we have consistently adhered to the principles of safeguarding food security, protecting public health, enhancing the security and resilience of industrial supply chains, and ensuring that these measures are science-based and aligned with relevant international standards. In so doing, we reaffirm our commitment to the core foundations of the multilateral trading system.

During our fifth Trade Policy Review in November 2023, Members commended our ongoing efforts to enhance the transparency of our trade policies, laws and regulations. Even during the pandemic, we continued to maintain policies aimed at promoting innovation, productivity, and investment, while supporting SMEs and environmental protection. Members particularly praised the progress we have made in advancing the digital economy, implementing policies geared toward digital transformation and innovation, strengthening industrial competitiveness, promoting the participation of SMEs, Indigenous peoples, and women in economic activities, addressing climate change, and fostering inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

1 OUR ROLE IN GLOBAL TRADE AND SUPPLY CHAINS

Our economy is trade-oriented, and our trade policies are guided by the principle of "Rooted locally, expanding globally, marketing to the world". Despite external headwinds, our economy has shown steady and robust growth in recent years. In 2025, for example – driven largely by high-tech industries such as semiconductors and AI related products – economic growth reached 8.63%, the highest in 15 years, with annual exports exceeding USD 640 billion. This has enabled us to become a critical and indispensable partner in global supply chains, and allowed us to collaborate with other Members on a complementary and cooperative basis.

At the same time, we have never neglected our traditional industries, the vast majority of which consist of SMEs in the textile, machinery, machine tools, and food processing sectors. In fact, these SMEs account for more than 98% of our enterprises, and form the backbone of our domestic employment. We are also leveraging our strengths in information and communications technology to facilitate their digital transformation, including by helping them adopt artificial intelligence, strengthen workforce training and skills, and enhance added value and competitiveness across traditional sectors.

As SMEs engage in digital trade and green transformation, issues such as cybersecurity, the free flow of data across borders, privacy and the protection of personal data, and the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions are of critical importance. We are therefore actively pursuing digital trade cooperation with like-minded partners, with a view to jointly building secure and trusted supply chains and a reliable digital economic environment.

In order to expand cooperation and deepen institutional alignment, we are actively seeking to join high-standard regional economic integration frameworks such as the CPTPP. Our legal and regulatory framework is fully aligned with the high standards of the CPTPP, and we have a strong track record of fulfilling international commitments. We are also well positioned to offer CPTPP members new market opportunities, and our key competitive industries would allow us serve as an ideal partner in global supply chains, enhancing the region's economic resilience and growth.

2 REGARDING DELIBERATIONS ON THE MC14 AGENDA

Established 31 years ago, the WTO has struggled to keep up with the times, and today it is seen by the businesses as largely irrelevant to the outside world on emerging issues such as technology and the environment. The WTO's core principles, including its measures against unfair trade practices, its most-favored-nation model, and special and differential treatment for developing and least-developed country Members, are also facing challenges. Comprehensive and forward-looking reforms are therefore necessary. But while now is the time to make these changes, reform cannot be achieved overnight, and we believe that MC14 provides a right chance for Ministers to establish guidelines on the direction of this reform, which Members can later follow.

We would also like to underscore the importance of transparency in ensuring a stable and predictable business environment. This means that Members should faithfully fulfill their notification obligations under WTO Agreements, particularly with respect to regulatory changes and industrial policies on subsidies and other issues. Such enhanced transparency will strengthen mutual trust and systemic stability.

The other issue is unfair trade practices. Members should operate on a level playing field to ensure fair competition. We are willing to face competition, but we cannot stand unfairness. We stand ready to engage constructively with other Members, both at the practical and regulatory levels, to address these concerns.

Because the global economic order is shaped by negotiated rules, the WTO should also advance rule making through Joint Statement Initiatives and incorporate the outcomes of negotiations into the WTO framework as formal plurilateral agreements. Only in this way can the Organization respond effectively to the evolving needs of businesses and societies.

3 CONCLUSION

Finally, we urge Members to demonstrate solidarity at MC14 while focusing on reciprocity and shared interests. During this time of heightened global uncertainty, candid dialogue and pragmatic cooperation are more important than ever in order to deliberate on the future direction of the WTO multilateral trading system. The Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu remains committed to working with all Members to advance WTO reform, strengthen global supply chain resilience, and foster sustainable and inclusive global economic development.
