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Page: 1/2

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**CHINA'S POSITION PAPER REGARDING
SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT IN THE WTO**

COMMUNICATION FROM CHINA

The following communication, dated 24 September 2025, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of China.

1. The Premier of China Li Qiang, when attending a United Nations General Assembly related meeting on 23 September 2025, announced that as a responsible major developing country, China will not seek new special and differential treatment in the current and future WTO negotiations.

2. Against the backdrop of unprecedented challenges facing the multilateral trading system, China made this solemn commitment to safeguard and strengthen this system. This document provides a detailed elaboration on China's position regarding special and differential treatment in the WTO.

I. AS A DEVELOPING COUNTRY AND A MEMBER OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH, CHINA IS ENTITLED TO THE INHERENT INSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT IN THE WTO

3. In the preamble of the *Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization*, Members have recognized that "there is need for positive efforts designed to ensure that developing countries, and especially the least developed among them, secure a share in the growth in international trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development". To this end, Members reached consensus through negotiations that special and differential treatment is a cornerstone principle of the WTO, an integral part of the WTO agreements and an institutional right of developing members. Should any member attempt to deprive developing members of special and differential treatment, the rules-based multilateral trading system would be eroded.

4. China is the largest developing country in the world. China acceded to the WTO as a developing member and is entitled to the institutional right to special and differential treatment. Regarding the issue of special and differential treatment, China always stands with other developing members in the WTO to firmly safeguard the justice and inclusiveness of the multilateral trading system.

II. CHINA HAS CONSISTENTLY EXERCISED ITS RIGHT TO SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT IN AN INDEPENDENT AND PRAGMATIC MANNER

5. When acceding to the WTO in accordance with Article 12 of the *Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization*, China enjoyed less special and differential treatment than many other developing members. Since its accession, with a view to safeguarding the multilateral trading system and the interests of all members, China has been actively undertaking obligations commensurate with its own development stage and economic level, and taking the initiative to make positive contributions within its capacity to advance WTO negotiations and promote global trade and investment liberalization and facilitation.

6. In WTO negotiations, China is committed to approaching its special and differential treatment in an independent and pragmatic manner:

- (1) In the negotiations and implementation of the *Agreement on Trade Facilitation*, China did not request any provisions under Category C, and its provisions committed under Category A account for 94% of total provisions, with only four provisions under Category B, which were implemented well ahead of schedule.
- (2) In the negotiations on *Services Domestic Regulation* and waiver of intellectual property rights of COVID-19 vaccines, China did not claim special and differential treatment and made significant contributions to the conclusion of those negotiations.
- (3) China announced that it would not seek to use the special and differential treatment requested by G90 in their proposal and would continue to support the negotiations on the basis of that proposal.
- (4) In the second phase of fisheries subsidies negotiations, China has declared that it will not seek special and differential treatment in the final package of disciplines if its core concerns are properly addressed.

III. BY NOT SEEKING NEW SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT, CHINA HAS FURTHER DEMONSTRATED ITS STEADFAST COMMITMENT TO THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM

7. The recent surge in protectionism and unilateralism, in particular the arbitrary imposition of tariffs by a certain member, has posed unprecedented challenges to the rules-based multilateral trading system. The authority and efficacy of WTO rules are severely tested, and the interests of the vast number of developing members are seriously undermined. As a responsible major developing country and a staunch supporter of the multilateral trading system, China's decision represents a solemn commitment as well as concrete action by China to safeguard the rules-based multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core. This decision will help deliver development-oriented outcomes for the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in Cameroon in March 2026 and contribute to substantial progress in WTO reform. It will also contribute to the better implementation of the Global Development Initiative and the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

8. This decision does not affect China's status as a developing member in the WTO, nor its rights to special and differential treatment provisions in existing WTO agreements, including agreed solutions with other members in current negotiations. This decision is applicable solely within the framework of the WTO and does not constitute any precedent or have any impact on the status and treatment of China as a developing country in any other international organization or international treaty to which China is a member or signatory.

9. China has always been a member of the Global South and will always be a part of the developing world. China will, as always, practice true multilateralism, support the rules-based multilateral trading system, actively participate in the WTO reform process, and firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of developing members, with a view to better bridging the North-South development gap, improving global economic governance and building an open world economy.
