

## **WGIHR6 (7-8 DECEMBER 2023)**

### **DRAFT WTO SECRETARIAT STATEMENT**

1. The WTO Secretariat thanks the WGIHR for the opportunity to comment, and does so under its own responsibility and without prejudice to the positions of WTO Members.
2. The WTO has closely followed and supports the efforts of WHO Member States to amend the IHR to promote pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. We note that certain proposed amendments address topics with trade-related elements that place prominently on the WTO's agenda. Some promote open supply chains and address trade restrictions and "unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade". Others seek to further the transfer of technology and know-how and to develop and diversify manufacturing capacity. Each of these topics, among others, were the subject of the WTO's pandemic response adopted at the 12th Ministerial Conference in June 2022, and continue to be actively considered in multiple WTO bodies.
3. The WTO and WHO are both seeking to learn and apply lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. We have a shared interest in promoting synergies and coherence across our organizations and our legal instruments.
4. To this end, we would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the WHO on the development and implementation of an international pandemic response, as mandated by our ministers last year. We stand ready to share our technical expertise and experience on matters intersecting with trade, on request. Thank you.