

## HKSAR Government welcomes WTO rulings that US' global tariffs on steel and aluminium imports violate WTO rules

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (December 10) welcomed the rulings made yesterday (December 9) by the panels established under the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) that the United States' (US) imposition of global tariffs on steel and aluminium imports is inconsistent with WTO rules.

A Government spokesman said, "We welcome the rulings made by the panels of the WTO DSB. As a staunch supporter of the rules-based multilateral trading system, we strongly urge the US to fulfil its obligations as a WTO Member and withdraw the erroneous measures earliest possible. The panels' rulings clearly show that the US has abused the concept of national security with the sole aim to politicise economic and trade issues."

Since March 23, 2018, the US, allegedly for national security reasons, has imposed tariffs of 25 per cent and 10 per cent on steel and aluminium imports respectively on a global scale, including Hong Kong, and only certain economies are excluded. As a matter of fact, there is only a minimal amount of aluminium products exported from Hong Kong to the US, and there are no local steel products exported to the US. These minimal exports cannot be threatening or damaging the US' national security.

The HKSAR Government has been following up the issue through various channels, opposing the unreasonable and unjust measures by the US. On the bilateral level, apart from filing formal representations to the US administration to express opposition, the HKSAR Government has also urged the US administration to exclude Hong Kong from the subject tariff measures. On the multilateral level, in response to the requests made by China, India, Norway, Russia, Switzerland and Türkiye, the WTO DSB established panels in 2019 to examine the subject disputes, with Hong Kong participating as a third party. The HKSAR Government stated strong opposition to the US' implementation of the subject tariff measures.

The spokesman said, "The HKSAR Government will continue to monitor the developments closely and follow up. We will maintain our communication with the industry through various channels, review the situation, consider and take corresponding policies and actions to safeguard Hong Kong's trade interests and rights."