

USTR takes out incorrect statement about Hong Kong from its report

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has been notified that in response to its clarifications and follow-ups, the United States Trade Representative (USTR) has taken out an incorrect statement about Hong Kong from the 2019 National Trade Estimate (NTE) Report which was published on March 29, a Government spokesman said today (April 8).

The original version of the NTE Report erroneously stated that Hong Kong had not submitted its Checklist of Issues replies to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Committee on Customs Valuation, despite its obligation under the relevant WTO agreement. The Government's Economic and Trade Offices in Washington and Geneva immediately followed up with the relevant US authorities on April 1 to convey the concerns and clarify that Hong Kong has, since 1996, fulfilled its notification obligations under the WTO Customs Valuation Agreement. The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau also wrote to the Consul General of the United States to Hong Kong and Macau to set the record straight and asked for urgent rectification by the USTR, the spokesman said.

As a matter of fact, Hong Kong is a free port and does not impose any customs duties on imported goods. Hong Kong therefore does not have any legislation or administrative procedures for valuing goods for customs duties purposes. In compliance with the relevant WTO agreement, Hong Kong duly made the relevant notifications to the WTO in 1996. As Hong Kong remains a free port to date, there is simply no need for Hong Kong to submit further notifications to the WTO or reply to the Checklist of Issues which concerns individual WTO Members' valuation systems for the collection of customs duties, he added.