



## THEMATIC SESSION ON MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS

### TENTH TRIENNIAL REVIEW

#### *Proposal from the United Kingdom*

The following submission, dated 22 February 2024, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of the United Kingdom.

## 1 BACKGROUND

1.1. Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) can be concluded as part of Free Trade Agreements or as standalone agreements. For example, certain type of MRAs commit a country to accept results of conformity assessment procedures performed against its own regulations by a designated Conformity Assessment Body in a partner country, and vice versa. This allows manufacturers to work with Conformity Assessment Bodies located conveniently, reduces the burden of certification, and makes exports more competitive.

1.2. There is evidence suggesting that MRAs can encourage businesses to become exporters and increase trade<sup>1</sup>. MRAs promote trade in goods by reducing non-tariff barriers associated with conformity assessment while maintaining regulatory autonomy.

1.3. Article 6.3 of the TBT Agreement recognises the importance of MRAs in the acceptance of conformity assessment procedure results. The article encourages Members to consider negotiating agreements for the mutual recognition of each other's conformity assessment procedure results, if another Member asks.

## 2 PROPOSAL

2.1. In light of the importance of MRAs, the United Kingdom proposes a thematic session to explore the importance and benefits of using MRAs with a view to enhance Members' awareness of these tools and their role in reducing barriers to trade.

2.2. Topics and areas of focus could include:

- a. The various types of MRAs and their benefits.
- b. Members' experiences in developing and agreeing MRAs across different sectors.
- c. The challenges of concluding and implementing MRA agreements.
- d. Sharing experiences of how Members have improved business awareness of MRA provisions and the impact they have had on businesses e.g. on MSMEs.

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<sup>1</sup> See Vancauteran, M. (2009). Trade effects of approaches intended to facilitate acceptance of results of conformity assessment: What is the evidence?

- e. Potential sectors of interest for MRAs and how these may contribute to addressing future global challenges.

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