

UK statement to the WTO Committee on Government Procurement

I would like to thank all Parties here in the World Trade Organization's Committee on Government Procurement for the adoption, today, of the Decision on the Accession of the United Kingdom to the Government Procurement Agreement in its Own Right. This marks yet another significant step regarding the United Kingdom's accession to the Agreement.

As a signatory to the original Agreement in Marrakech, in 1994, the UK has long supported this deal. That is why I submitted the UK's formal accession application in June 2018.

With coverage under the GPA being worth over £1.3 trillion, today's Decision means that businesses of all sizes, from across the UK, will continue to benefit from new opportunities in markets across the globe.

Importantly, the GPA ensures UK businesses can compete in covered foreign procurement markets on a level playing field with domestic businesses. The rules ensure transparency and fair treatment, as well as legal recourse, between the Parties.

The UK's commitment to this deal is demonstrated by the scale of its own market access offer, equating to coverage worth £68 billion. Indeed, Chair, when the UK joins as a Party in its own right, the coverage within our offer – based on our analysis of the 2018 data – will represent the second largest offer of any individual country that participates. So today's Decision represents a commitment by the UK to businesses in all GPA Parties and real, shared economic benefit.

Of course none of this would have been possible without strong cooperation from existing Parties. I want to pay tribute for their constructive approach throughout our accession, and for engaging with us in good faith. This has enriched our understanding of the Agreement, and prepared us well to make a full and positive contribution to the work of this Committee as the UK.

During the time it has taken to reach this point, we, and the Parties to the Agreement, have benefited from the wisdom of two Chairs and two Secretaries. I would like to extend the UK's sincere thanks to you, Chair. I would also like to express our appreciation to the GPA Secretariat staff – including Mr Reto Malacrida, Ms Anna Muller, and Mr Philippe Pelletier – for their consistent expertise throughout this process.

Today's Decision once again marks Parties' shared belief that the UK's continued participation within this deal is to the benefit of all. It paves the way for us deposit our Instrument of Accession 30 days before the end of the transition period between the United Kingdom and the European Union, to enable our independent membership to take effect on 1 January. When that happens, we will have delivered our longstanding joint objective of ensuring

continuity for businesses in the UK and all Parties.

Moving ahead, as a full Party, we will continue warm cooperation with all in this room, and deliver on our commitment to update our schedules under Article XIX early in the new year.

We look forward to becoming a constructive participant across all issues in this Committee, including on accessions, as well as regular agenda items including sustainable procurement, small businesses, and information sharing initiatives.

Thank you, Chair.