

WTO Thailand Trade Policy Review: UK statement

On behalf of Her Majesty's Government, I am pleased to add my welcome to the delegation of Thailand, led by the Honourable Mr Rachavitch Piyapramote. The UK is encouraged by the improvements made during the previous review period, such as the consideration of ways to strengthen protection of intellectual property rights. We likewise appreciate Thailand's responses to our written questions.

We would like to thank Her Excellency Sunanta Kangvalkulkij (the Permanent Representative of Thailand to the WTO and WIPO) for her leadership, and Her Excellency Silvia Alfaro Espinosa (Peru) for her insightful and illuminating remarks as discussant.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created difficult circumstances for us all. We note that Thailand has taken recent steps to stimulate its economy and has implemented a number of measures to facilitate the movement of goods during the pandemic. We welcome this commitment to keeping global value chains open.

2020 marks the 165th year of diplomatic relations between the UK and Thailand. Our two countries have had a long and historic relationship, with shared values and, particularly, an interest in mutual prosperity and maintaining the rules based international system. Thailand is one of the UK's most valued trading partners. Our total bilateral trade in goods and services was £6.2bn in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2020, an increase of £20m from the previous year.

The UK is pleased to be conducting a bilateral Joint Trade Review with Thailand, due to conclude this year. Through this, both sides are identifying opportunities to enhance bilateral trade relations and set the groundwork for future cooperation, supporting the UK's ambition to use our voice as a new independent trading nation to champion free trade, strengthen the rules-based international system, fight protectionism and reduce trade barriers, including by working specifically with our closest trading partners.

We enjoy extensive trade and diplomatic collaboration, particularly within the WTO where we are both founding members. An example of a service sector where we have close collaboration is education. The British Council has worked in Thailand for over 60 years and has six offices in the country providing English courses, teacher training and collaboration in the arts and creative industries. The UK now has an Education cooperation MOU with Thailand which was signed in 2016 and around 6,500 students take part in educational programmes in the UK each year. We are also keen to collaborate with Thailand on tech, through the UK's new Digital Trade Network in the Asia Pacific region, an investment of £8m with one of our key resources based in Thailand.

The United Kingdom looks forward to continuing to collaborate with Thailand

as our bilateral Joint Trade Review process nears conclusion. In closing, allow me to extend our warmest wishes for a successful WTO trade policy review and to thank you for your engagement with this process and the World Trade Organization.