



Department for International Trade

The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP
Minister of State
Department for International Trade
King Charles Street
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AH

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000
E Hands.Correspondence@trade.gov.uk
W www.gov.uk

Angus Brendan MacNeil MP
International Trade Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
trade.com@parliament.uk

22 June 2020

Dear Angus,

As you are aware, the Public Bill Committee for the Trade Bill commenced this week, and we began line by line consideration of amendments relating to the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) this afternoon.

As part of the discussion, I announced Government's intention to engage the International Trade Committee on new accessions to the GPA, and have since discovered that you had not yet been made aware of this proposal. I would like to offer my sincere apologies for this miscommunication. It appears there was confusion amongst policy officials regarding who had been informed.

To provide some context, WTO members wishing to accede to the GPA must first put in a formal application to accede, demonstrate that their domestic procurement regime meets GPA standards, and agree a market access offer with all GPA parties. This process may take many years. The proposal would therefore be to make the ITC aware of new accessions at the start of the process, to provide an opportunity to enter into correspondence with the Government, should they wish to discuss any concerns or call a debate. I hope you will agree that this is a positive step in ensuring adequate scrutiny and transparency of the UK's independent participation in the GPA.

Once again, I apologise that this was not discussed with you in advance of today's session, and I look forward to serving under your Chairmanship of the ITC.

Best wishes,

Yours ever,

THE RT HON GREG HANDS MP
Minister of State
Department for International Trade