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REPORT (2024) OF THE COMMITTEE ON RULES OF ORIGIN TO THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS

1. This document reports on the work conducted by the Committee on Rules of Origin (CRO) in 2024 as required by Article 6.1 of the Agreement on Rules of Origin:

"The Committee shall review annually the implementation and operation of Parts II and III of this Agreement having regard to its objectives" and "inform the Council for Trade in Goods of developments during the period covered by such reviews."

2. The CRO held two formal meetings in 2024: 29 April ([WTO/AIR/RO/19](#) and [JOB/RO/13](#)) and 21-22 November ([WTO/AIR/RO/20](#) and [JOB/RO/14](#)). The minutes of these meetings are contained in documents [G/RO/M/82](#) and [G/RO/M/83](#)¹, respectively.

3. Both meetings were chaired by Mr Guna SEELAN BALAKRISHNAN (Malaysia), who was elected interim Chairperson and then regular Chairperson of the CRO in June 2024. Several bilateral and small-group consultations and one informal meeting were also held during the year. In addition, Members also attended an "information session" on the "*Work of the World Customs Organization related to rules of origin and the work of the Technical Committee on Rules of Origin*" held in October 2024.

4. The work of the Committee continued to be structured around two broad themes: (1) non-preferential rules of origin; and (2) preferential rules of origin for LDCs.

5. On non-preferential rules of origin, the Committee did not hold specific discussions related to the Harmonization Work Programme (HWP) (Article 9.2(a) of the Agreement on Rules of Origin). Members have expressed diverging views regarding the implications of harmonizing non-preferential rules of origin, so this area of work has not seen much development since 2007 (see the Committee's 2013 Annual Report, [G/L/1047](#), for further details).

6. Since then, Members have been focusing on improving their understanding and knowledge about national practices related to non-preferential rules of origin. The Secretariat reported that, at present, the information available concerning non-preferential rules of origin was outdated and inconsistent. It also noted that the number of Members applying non-preferential rules of origin had gone from 15 (in 1995) to 57 (in 2024).

7. In this regard, the Committee had discussed a proposal on "Enhancing the transparency in non-preferential rules of origin" ([G/RO/W/182/Rev.4](#)). After consultations held by the Chairperson, Members subsequently considered different versions of a Chairperson's text containing the draft decision ([JOB/RO/8](#); [JOB/RO/8/Rev.1](#) and [JOB/RO/8/Rev.2](#)). Following an informal meeting and a series of bilateral consultations on these texts ([ICN/RO/6](#); [ICN/RO/6/Add.1](#)), the Chairperson reported that the proposal was unlikely to garner consensus to be formally adopted by the CRO ([JOB/RO/8/Rev.3](#)). Instead, the Chairperson encouraged Members to keep their notifications up to date and, in so doing, use the notification template in Annexes 1 and 2 of his report on an entirely voluntary basis. Both Members and economic operators would benefit from having access to up-to-date and standardized information concerning non-preferential rules of origin. Members took note of the Chair's report.

¹ To be issued.

8. On other matters, Members took note of the implementation of the measures adopted to improve the functioning of the Committee ([G/RO/W/217](#) and [G/RO/W/224](#)) and the operation of the following newly introduced tools:

- a) [e-Delegate \(e-Registration\)](#) allowing delegates to subscribe for communications in relation to the work of the CRO;
- b) [e-Agenda](#) allowing delegates to edit the agenda of the Committee's formal meetings and upload and download statements delivered;
- c) new guide on the work and functioning of the CRO: "[Introduction to the Committee on Rules of Origin](#)" with background on the functioning and work of the Committee; and
- d) new features of the [Rules of Origin Gateway \(WTO Rules of Origin webpage\)](#); including access to previous events of the Committee and a page with academic or reference papers on the impact of rules of origin on the utilization of trade preferences.

9. The Committee also completed the mandated annual review of the implementation and operation of the Agreement ([G/RO/101](#)).

10. With respect to preferential rules of origin, the Committee continued to oversee the implementation of the Bali and the Nairobi Ministerial Decisions on preferential rules of origin for least developed countries (LDCs) ([WT/L/917](#) and [WT/L/917/Add.1](#)) as well as the April 2022 "Decision on Preferential Rules of Origin and the Implementation of the Nairobi Ministerial Decision" ([G/RO/95](#)). A separate report ([G/RO/W/231/Rev.3](#)) contains a detailed account of the work of the CRO in this respect.

11. A draft of this report was considered by the CRO on 21-22 November 2024. The draft was subsequently completed and amended by the Secretariat and circulated for consideration and adoption. In the absence of comments, the report was adopted through written procedures on 13 December.
