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Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

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**THEMATIC SESSION ON NATIONAL APPROACHES TO RTA PROVISIONS
IN THE FIELD OF TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE**

TENTH TRIENNIAL REVIEW

Proposal from the Russian Federation

The following submission, dated 24 April 2024, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of the Russian Federation.

1 BACKGROUND

1.1. According to WTO regional trade agreements (RTAs) database, currently there are 300 RTAs in force with TBT provisions.

1.2. RTAs allow groups of willing Members to agree on rules and commitments that go beyond what was possible multilaterally advancing trade facilitating goals. Some of these ideas have later been brought back for discussion at the WTO, and the experience gained through RTAs provided a valuable basis for further discussions at the WTO.¹

1.3. During the June 2023 meeting of the TBT Committee, cross-cutting and joint meetings were indicated as a potential area of improvement for the TBT Committee.² To ensure TBT issues are discussed from all relevant angles, a meeting, possibly in cooperation with the Committee on Regional Trade Agreements, can be held to explore approaches that WTO Members take to advance trade facilitation goals in TBT area in their regional trade agreements and how these approaches have evolved over time.

1.4. The topic was partly addressed during discussions of Good Regulatory Practices in November 2022. The discussions were "very rich" and left Members "with a lot to reflect on for further work".³

2 PROPOSAL

2.1. The Russian Federation proposes that the TBT Committee organize a thematic session, possibly in cooperation with the Committee on Regional Trade Agreements, to explore national approaches to TBT provisions in Regional Trade Agreements with a view to:

- a. enhance Members' knowledge and understanding of the current approach to TBT provisions in RTAs of WTO Members;
- b. increase awareness in what way these approaches have evolved over time.

¹ WTO/OECD paper "Facilitating trade through regulatory cooperation. The case of the WTO's TBT/SPS Agreements and Committees", p. 28 https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/publications_e/tbtsp19_e.htm

² [JOB/TBT/510](#)

³ [G/TBT/GEN/338](#) Moderator's Report on Thematic session on good regulatory practices

2.2. Possible speakers may represent WTO Secretariat (both the Trade and Environment Division and the Trade Policies Review Division) and WTO Members.
