

Formal Request to Commence UK Accession Negotiations to CPTPP

Dear Minister O'Connor,

As the Minister of Trade in New Zealand, the depositary nation of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, and with reference to Article 5: 'Accession' of the CPTPP treaty text, I am writing to you on behalf of the United Kingdom to formally request the commencement of negotiations on UK accession to CPTPP.

Accession to CPTPP is a priority for the UK government and a key part of our trade negotiations programme as a newly independent trading nation. CPTPP is one of the most important free trade areas in the world and UK accession could see CPTPP's proportion of global GDP rise to 16%. UK membership would also be the first step in expanding this influential and modern trade network of 11 dynamic economies beyond the Indo-Pacific region and Americas.

The UK shares the CPTPP's commitment to free trade and welcomes the high standards of this ambitious agreement. The UK will comply fully with the process set out in the commission decision of January 2019 on the Accession Process of the CPTPP. I believe UK membership would send a powerful signal about the importance placed on free trade by this dynamic group of countries at this critical time in our history.

In line with the accession process you have set out for aspirant economies, over the last two years, the UK has actively engaged with all 11 Signatories at both ministerial and official level to discuss UK accession to CPTPP. I am delighted that all CPTPP members have welcomed our interest in accession.

CPTPP membership will complement and reinforce new and enhanced bilateral trade agreements we have already signed or are negotiating now – with Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. We believe our strong bilateral trade relationships with CPTPP members, including with Brunei and Malaysia, provide an effective springboard to our CPTPP accession.

We would now like to formalise our request to commence accession negotiations. I hope you will consider our request favourably and we stand ready to engage with you in order to establish a Working Group and to agree a timetable to negotiate the UK's accession. The UK will publish its outline approach, scoping analysis, and response to our public consultation before we begin negotiations. I look forward to working with you and the CPTPP members.

Best wishes,

THE RT HON ELIZABETH TRUSS MP

Secretary of State for International Trade
& President of the Board of Trade