

International Trade Secretary's MC12 Plenary Session Speech

It is a privilege to join the WTO's twelfth Ministerial Conference.

Many thanks must go to the Director General, Dr Ngozi, the General Council Chair, Ambassador Chambovey and the WTO Secretariat, for all their efforts to support this event.

This, the largest gathering of ministers in five years, comes at a pivotal time for the WTO and indeed, the global community.

Putin's brutal war has unleashed devastation and disruption on a world already burdened with Covid-19 and facing the omnipresent threat of climate change.

At such a critical and fragile time, we must defend the values that bind us together.

Values that mean we embrace trade's transformative power, uphold the Rules Based International System and turn our backs on division.

Now, as we begin the UK's first WTO ministerial conference as an independent trading nation, I want to set out the three principles that will guide our trade policy today and shape our vision for tomorrow:

First, we will always adhere to the concepts on which the World Trade Organisation was founded – trade that is open and free and brings prosperity to the world.

For the past 27 years, these concepts have allowed us to find solutions to the biggest questions facing us all.

Today, we must stay committed to these fundamental ideas and use them to address some of the world's most significant challenges.

Right now, food security is among the pressing.

Putin's insatiable appetite for power, threatens to leave the world's poorest famished.

I am glad that the UK-led Joint Statement on Open and Predictable Trade in Agriculture and Food Products, has been endorsed by over 50 other members – each committing to keep markets open and ensuring food is available to all.

At this Ministerial, I want us to work together to develop a more sustainable, efficient and resilient global food system for the long-term.

Climate change is another global challenge. The UK believes trade can help combat this threat, while simultaneously boosting economic growth.

As a green trade pioneer, the UK recently set out plans to go further and faster in this area.

Now, I want to work with my fellow trade ministers to put the WTO at the epicentre of finding solutions to the environmental issues that will define our future.

A significant step forward, would be a positive outcome to our negotiations on fisheries subsidies.

Success here would mean we achieve the first WTO multilateral agreement focused on sustainability.

The second principle that will guide the UK's actions; is the need to fight for fairness.

The UK wholeheartedly believes in the power of trade to allow countries to expand their economies.

So, we will support countries to increase exports, build stronger supply chains and tackle market distorting practices.

Every nation should shoulder its responsibility because fairness cuts both ways.

We must also support each other in times of need. Ukraine's struggle must be our shared struggle.

With our allies, the UK will continue do everything in our power to support Ukraine's right to exist as a democratic nation, including helping it rebuild in peace.

The day will surely come when ruined buildings are turned into construction sites and weapons are exchanged for laptops as Ukraine's services sector recovers and flourishes.

The UK therefore welcomes those delegates who want to join us in supporting Ukraine's trading present and future.

Our third principle is the need to make sure global trade rules truly address people's and businesses' modern-day issues.

All of us agree for the need for WTO modernisation. We must use this ministerial to recommit to progress in this area.

In addition, trade rules created in the pre internet age need to move with the times.

One of our key goals will be keep down the costs for online trade by calling for a renewal of the e-Commerce moratorium at this Ministerial. Businesses will never forgive us if we fail at this task.

We must also go further both by accelerating progress on the joint initiative

on e-commerce and by taking a reinvigorated approach to services and digital trade through the WTO, just as the UK has done through its Free Trade Agreements.

The pandemic has also demonstrated why we need a substantive trade and health package. Again, this is something, the UK will press for at this Ministerial.

My team and I look forward to many constructive discussions with our fellow delegates over the next days.

There may be some difficult conversations ahead but we should focus on all we share, rather than what sets us apart.

Our agreements reached here, on Lake Geneva's shores, will ensure that trade better serves our citizens and the world. Let us seize this opportunity with both hands.

WTO Ministerial Conference: Joint Statement in Solidarity with Ukraine

Statement from Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Germany, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, The Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu, United Kingdom, Ukraine, United States and Uruguay.

"We, the trade ministers/heads of delegation of the undersigned WTO Members, have met in Geneva today on the occasion of the 12th Ministerial Conference of the WTO, to reiterate our full support for, and solidarity with, the people of Ukraine. We express our deep sadness at the devastating human losses and profound suffering caused by the aggression against Ukraine. In so doing, we reiterate our support for the UN General Assembly Resolutions of 2 March 2022 (A/RES/ES-11/1) and 24 March 2022 (A/RES/ES-11/2).

The war is also having a devastating impact, including on Ukraine's economy and ability to trade. The destruction of a significant part of Ukraine's transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, ports and railroads, is substantially impeding Ukraine's ability to produce, export, and import. We are gravely concerned about the consequences of this destruction for Ukraine and for global trade, in particular as regards the supply to international markets of a number of key commodities produced by Ukraine, including agricultural and food products, fertilisers, sunflower oil, and

critical minerals. We are also deeply concerned by numerous reports of grain being plundered from Ukraine. These actions are at odds with the principles and values of the WTO.

We underline the importance of maintaining open and predictable markets, and Ukraine's ability to trade. Given this, we strongly condemn any actions targeting the means of supply, production, and transportation necessary for Ukraine to produce and export to the world, including agri-food products. We stress the need to ensure that the trade routes, especially sea routes and ports, are not blocked by the threat of the use of force.

The food security impacts are dramatic for those directly affected in Ukraine but are not just restricted to Ukraine and its citizens. Ukraine is one of the world's top exporters of key agricultural products like wheat, maize, barley, and sunflower oil. It is a major supplier to the World Food Programme. The impact of the war, including of the blockage of Ukraine's access to the Black Sea, is seriously jeopardizing food supply to some of the most vulnerable parts of the world, in developing countries. This risks pushing millions of people into food insecurity, adding to the already severe situation caused by COVID-19.

In this context, we will seek to support Ukraine and to facilitate its exports. We encourage WTO Members to do likewise in a manner commensurate with their capacity, including by facilitating the use of infrastructure or facilitating and simplifying customs procedures.

Within our capacity, we will look for ways to help Ukrainian farmers to continue planting and growing cereals and oilseeds, much needed for themselves and for the world. Within the capacity of each WTO Member, we will continue to provide humanitarian aid to alleviate the suffering of Ukrainian civilians, including to help secure their access to basic goods and services, including food. We will also look for ways to help Ukraine in its reconstruction as soon as circumstances permit."

Bangladesh National Earth Olympiad 2022 Award Ceremony

On Saturday 11 June, Acting British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Javed Patel, hosted a reception to recognise the finalists of the Bangladesh National Earth Olympiad 2022. Of the 35 participants selected for special awards, five will be going on to represent Bangladesh at the International Earth Science Olympiad which takes place from 24-30 August.

The National Earth Olympiad is an education and knowledge movement that aims to increase environmental science education across Bangladesh, and has been organised by Bangladesh Youth Environment Initiative every year since 2012.

This year, the Olympiad was supported by the British High Commission in Dhaka, through the UK Government's roles as Commonwealth Chair-in-Office and host of COP26.

Between March and April the Olympiad reached thousands of young people across Bangladesh, and provided in-depth training to 250 young leaders on biodiversity, planetary boundaries, climate justice and environmental conservation. Bangladeshi young people aged between 14 and 18 were eligible to participate.

Congratulating the students on their success, Acting British High Commissioner Javed Patel said

"Climate action is a priority for the UK and I am glad that we supported this year's National Earth Olympiad, helping to establish the next generation of climate stewards in Bangladesh. It's vitally important that young people are empowered to be key stakeholders in driving local, national, regional, and global change. I am inspired by the young people here today, and confident that their drive and commitment to combatting the climate crisis will help them to do just that."

Professor Dr Kazi Matin Uddin Ahmed, Convener of the National Earth Olympiad in Bangladesh and one of the faculty members of the Department of Geology in the University of Dhaka, said

"The National Earth Olympiad has taken place since 2012, and was one of the first Olympiads that focused on the Geological and Environmental sciences. The competition has played a critical role in engaging students in understanding the urgency of the climate and environmental crisis. Since 2012, over 10,000 students have participated in this competition and over the last few years Bangladeshi Olympiad winners have also won high accolades and medals in the International Earth Olympiad. I strongly believe that the collective action that we need to solve this climate crisis will require scientists, scholars and practitioners who can guide policy action and technological innovation. The National Earth Olympiad is an important catalyser in this process."

Founder of the Bangladesh Youth Environment Initiative, and winner of the Queen's Young Leaders Award for 2015, Mr Shamir Shehab, said

"Against a backdrop of looming environmental, ecological and climate crises for Bangladesh and the world at large today, Bangladesh Youth Environment Initiative is striving to develop the next generation of stewards to tackle this planetary crisis. With more than 10 years of environmental action, the organisation has empowered young people from all over Bangladesh to strive toward a more sustainable, equitable and resilient planet Earth.

Bangladesh Youth Environment Initiative will continue its journey to educate and empower more young people to take climate actions with a focus on the grassroots level in the coming years to ensure equity and justice for the most marginalized and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change."

Further information

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Freedom and fairness more important than ever, Trade Secretary tells WTO

Freedom and fairness should be front and centre of the global trade agenda to ensure communities at home and around the world benefit from the power of free trade, the International Trade Secretary says today.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan issued the clarion call as she prepares to lead a UK delegation attending the 12th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference (MC12).

While there, she will urge united global action to show solidarity with Ukraine, demonstrate Russia's illegal assault will not undermine or weaken the rules-based international system, and push for reforms that will reduce our economic dependency on aggressors.

UK will use the high-level WTO meeting to secure meaningful progress on long-standing global issues, including food security, over-fishing and tariff-free electronic trade, and drive forward international efforts to cope with the fallout from Russia's actions and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ahead of the summit, International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

Putin's brutal war unleashed devastation and disruption on a world already burdened with Covid-19 and facing the omnipresent threat of climate change.

The UK will continue to show leadership at this critical and fragile time, when we must defend the values that bind us

together. Freedom and fairness are now more important than ever if we wish to use global trade to grow our economies, deliver better living standards for communities at home and abroad, and to address some of the world's most significant challenges.

While in Geneva, the Trade Secretary is expected to meet with her counterparts from Ukraine, United States, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the EU and Japan among others.

She will use the Conference – the first in-person high level meeting for five years – to push for global trade rules that truly address the modern economy and the conclusion of WTO negotiations on harmful fisheries subsidies.

She will be joined by Trade Minister Ranil Jayawardena and Her Majesty's Ambassador to the WTO, Simon Manley, at the conference – the first for the UK since it became an independent trading nation.

Minister Jayawardena will take part in an event on Sunday to highlight the UK's continued support for Ukraine and condemnation of Russia alongside international allies.

International Trade Minister Ranil Jayawardena will say:

Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion is a threat to democracy and the rules-based order – the foundation of our free, fair and open trading system. The UK will always uphold those values and with our allies, we will protect Ukraine's democratic right to exist.

We believe that free, fair and open trade can prevent yet more lives being destroyed through the looming hunger crisis, exacerbated by Putin's acts and develop a more sustainable, efficient and resilient food system for the future.

Together we must redouble our efforts, put our divisions aside and harness the power of free, open and fair trade to tackle our modern-day challenges.

[Fuel prices](#)

The Business and Energy Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng wrote to fuel retailers on the 17 May calling on them to do everything possible to ensure that drivers are getting a fair deal.

On 11 June he wrote to Dr Andrea Coscelli CBE, the Chief Executive of the

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), instructing an urgent review of the fuel market, following concerns drivers aren't getting a fair deal for fuel across the country.