

# The UK welcomes the Ottawa Group's Trade and Health Initiative

News story

A statement from the International Trade Secretary Liz Truss welcoming the Ottawa Group's Trade and Health Initiative.



International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

Coronavirus has shown us the importance of keeping trade flowing and building diverse supply chains that are robust in a crisis.

As we take every step to combat this virus, I am delighted to announce the UK's support for the Ottawa Group's Trade and Health Initiative at the WTO.

My department has worked tirelessly to reduce barriers to trade and support businesses in the UK and overseas to navigate the crisis as well as help source over 30 billion items of PPE and medical equipment, including thousands of ventilators from across the globe to be shipped and delivered to the front line.

The UK is committed to removing tariffs and avoiding the use of export restrictions on Covid-critical products and will use the G7 presidency next year to create a global approach to health security.

Additional information:

- Coronavirus is the biggest threat this country has faced in decades. All over the world we see its devastating impact.
- The Department for International Trade is engaging with countries bilaterally, and through multilateral institutions, will aim to strengthen global supply chains and remove barriers to trade.
- We support the Ottawa Group's Trade and Health Initiative at the World Trade Organisation General Council and stand ready to work with all international partners to continue the flow of essential goods in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes measures already implemented by the UK, such as:
  1. Tariff suspensions: From 1 January 2021, almost all pharmaceuticals and most medical devices (including ventilators) will enter the UK tariff free. That includes gloves, protective equipment, thermometers and other COVID-critical products. Vaccines will also be able to enter the UK tariff free.
  2. Limiting the use of export restrictions: avoiding the use of any export restrictions that address shortages of supply, unless necessary and if so, applying them in a transparent, proportional and time-limited way. More information can be found [here](#).
- These measures build on the statement of the G20 Trade and Investment Ministers in May and come after the speech made by the Prime Minister at the United Nations General Assembly, where he announced the UK will cancel tariffs and avoid the use of export restrictions on many essential medical products such as gloves, protective equipment, thermometers and other COVID-critical products.

Published 16 December 2020