

UK statement to the WTO Committee on Trade and Development – 48th Session on Aid for Trade

Thank you, Chair.

I am delighted to be giving the first statement in the Committee on Trade and Development by the United Kingdom since we left the European Union, because this is a subject very close to our hearts.

The UK has long been a strong supporter and advocate of the work of the International Trade Centre. The high esteem in which we hold ITC is reflected in our position as their second largest contributor, and in the growing portfolio of programmes they implement for us.

This growing and successful cooperation can in large part be attributed to the strong leadership and drive for results instilled by Arancha González during her time as Executive Director. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ms González on her new appointment and thank her for her excellent work at the International Trade Centre. We are confident that Dorothy Tembo will continue the tradition of excellent leadership as interim Executive Director.

Chair, let me say a few words on our wider approach to aid-for-trade.

The United Kingdom strongly believes that aid for trade is vital to the future of the global trading system. While the past half-century has changed the WTO, our commitment to development within it has not. The United Kingdom believes that targeted technical assistance, linked to stable and predictable rules, allow cross-border trade to transform economies, unlock growth, and reduce poverty. We believe that when developing countries have the resources to engage at the WTO, to understand what it means for their own economies, and that their governments and businesses have the capacity to trade more and better goods and services, we all benefit, and not only economically.

Since the signing of the Marrakesh Agreement twenty-five years ago a lot has indeed changed. The membership is larger and more diverse. Issues have come onto, and fallen off, the agenda. Delegates have come and gone. Most importantly, the WTO community's understanding of how trade works has changed, especially in a development context.

Every day, we have a little more evidence on how commitments on paper – negotiated in Geneva and signed at a Ministerial Conference – can create prosperity. From OECD research, we know that one dollar invested in aid for trade in developing countries is, on average, associated with an increase of nearly 8 USD in exports. This increases to 20 dollars for the poorest countries.

We also know these commitments create implementation challenges: that market access does not always mean market presence.

This is why the United Kingdom has developed a unique, cross-cutting approach to trade and development, focused on trade facilitation and capacity building. At its heart is our commitment to spend 0.7% of our national income on overseas aid, channelled through a joined-up way of working across government that ensures development and global prosperity are deeply embedded into UK trade and investment policy.

The United Kingdom is a major investor in the ecosystem of organisations right here in Geneva, dedicated to providing practical support to help developing countries access the WTO's global markets.

Through our Trade and Investment Advocacy Fund, and our support to the Commonwealth Small States Office, we help developing countries to engage in WTO discussions, especially smaller Missions thinly stretched across multiple organisations, committees and topics.

The United Kingdom is also the largest donor to the \$140 million Enhanced Integrated Framework, the world's only trade capacity building fund focused on the poorest countries, and the only fund mentioned in the SDGs, housed right here in the WTO.

Our programme to support the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement ensures that its five partners – the WTO's TFA Facility, the Standards and Trade Development Facility, UNCTAD, the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation and the World Bank – work together for the success of the WTO's only multilateral agreement to date.

Our work here in Geneva sits in the UK's global Aid for Trade programme – including our investment in TradeMark East Africa, which the UK's Department for International Development set up as a not-for-profit company in 2010 to promote faster and cheaper trade in East Africa.

Our commitment to the development pillar of the WTO is also reflected in the way we engage in events within and outside the United Kingdom.

The UK-Africa Investment Summit on 20 January 2020 laid the foundations for new partnerships between the UK and African nations based on trade, investment, shared values and mutual interest. Billions of pounds of new commercial deals were announced, highlighting the strength of the UK's offer and its existing relationship with Africa. The many new initiatives and funding announced at the Summit will help to realise the UK's ambition to become the investment partner of choice for Africa, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs and ensuring the mutual prosperity of all our nations in the process.

Looking ahead, we'll be working with all our development partners to help deliver a successful outcome in Nur-Sultan. Soon after, we will hand over the Commonwealth Chair-in-Office role to Rwanda at the Heads of Government Summit in Kigali, taking stock of our trade and prosperity deliverables since the

last Summit in London. Later in 2020, we will host COP26, five years on from the historic Paris Agreement. In 2021, we look forward to engaging right here in the next WTO Global Review of Aid for Trade.

As part of the European Union, the United Kingdom was the leading Member State behind the European Union's development Programmes and its support for Aid for Trade. Outside of the European Union, we plan to play an even greater role in our own right, working hand in hand with the European Union and other major donors to improve access to global markets for developing countries, and the benefits that brings us all.

Thank you, Chair.