

# Public Accounts Committee

## Oral evidence: Progress with trade negotiations, HC 993

Wednesday 19 January 2022

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Public Accounts Committee Members present: Dame Meg Hillier (Chair); Dan Carden; Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown; Peter Grant; Anthony Higginbotham; Mr Richard Holden; Sarah Olney; James Wild.

International Trade Committee Members present: Mark Garnier; Anthony Mangnall.

Gareth Davies, Comptroller and Auditor General; Marius Gallaher, Alternate Treasury Officer of Accounts, HM Treasury; Adrian Jenner, Director of Parliamentary Relations, National Audit Office; and Leena Matthew, Director, NAO were in attendance.

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### Witnesses

**I:** James Bowler, Permanent Secretary, Department for International Trade; Crawford Falconer, Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser and Second Permanent Secretary, DIT; Amanda Brooks, Director General Trade Negotiations, DIT; Katrina Williams, Director General International and Borders, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Beatrice Kilroy-Nolan, Director General Trade and Brexit Opportunities, Cabinet Office.



## Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General

### Progress with trade negotiations, HC 862

#### Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: James Bowler, Crawford Falconer, Amanda Brooks, Katrina Williams and Beatrice Kilroy-Nolan.

**Chair:** Welcome to the Public Accounts Committee on Wednesday 19 January 2022. We are looking at the Government's progress with trade negotiations.

Since the UK's departure from the European Union, the Government is developing its first independent international trade policy for 50-plus years and has a goal—a bold target—of getting 80% of UK trade covered by free trade agreements by the end of this year. It is currently quite a long way from doing that, but has this challenge to meet that 80%.

We have a number of important witnesses today. I am delighted to welcome—in person, in the room—the permanent secretary at the Department for International Trade, in his first time in front of us in that role. Welcome to James Bowler. We have Crawford Falconer, the chief trade negotiation adviser and second permanent secretary at the Department for International Trade. I think he appeared before us many years ago, but not recently. And we have Amanda Brooks, the director general for trade negotiations at the Department.

Joining us online, we have Katrina Williams, the director general for international and borders at DEFRA. When we can sort out technical challenges, we will be joined by Beatrice Kilroy-Nolan, who is the director general for trade and Brexit opportunities at the Cabinet Office. We may have to take a little moment when we welcome her and check her sound—she is having technical problems at the moment.

A warm welcome to our witnesses. I just need to ask a couple of Members about their declarations of interests. Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown.

**Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** Good afternoon, everybody. I wish to declare my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests: I am a working farmer.

**Mark Garnier:** In addition to my entry in the register, I am also one of the Prime Minister's trade envoys, for Thailand, Myanmar and Brunei.

**Chair:** Thank you very much. I am also really pleased to welcome today, as guests on our Committee from the International Trade Committee, Anthony Mangnall MP and Mark Garnier MP. I am really pleased to have them on board.



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Before we go into the main session, Richard Holden has a quick question to ask of you, Mr Bowler.

- Q1 **Mr Holden:** On a recent visit to Mounter's, a sawmill and pallet maker in my constituency, I was informed of a real barrier to trade that has emerged for them. They now have to heat treat all wood that goes into their pallets before they can be used for export to the European Union, which has driven huge cost increases for them, especially in terms of fuel. This is one of many smaller changes we have had in terms of the trade relationship. Are you aware of this specific issue? Are you aware of other issues? What is the Department doing currently to try to iron out what we might call smaller problems, but which have real effects on businesses up and down the country?

**James Bowler:** I am not aware of the specific issue and I am happy to write to you with more information. In terms of what we are doing, while we have a zero-tariff, zero-quota agreement with the EU, we continue to work very closely, via the FCDO, Cabinet Office, DEFRA colleagues and ourselves, to continue to make the flow of goods and services as smooth as possible. That is a pragmatic set of discussions that we are having at EU level, but also at country-by-country level. We are signing agreements. We have done so with Belgium, Italy and are looking to do so with others, to try to iron out all of those things, as well as trying to take as much of the friction out of trade that we can.

Colleagues in DEFRA are working in particular on food and agriculture, and possibly timber, so I will link up with them in my response to you, if I may.

- Q2 **Chair:** I see Katrina Williams nodding. Is there anything you can add specifically about wooden pallets, Ms Williams?

**Katrina Williams:** There is nothing I can add specifically on the problem, but let me take it away. Of course, the trade and co-operation agreement with the European Union does include provisions that allow us to raise particular issues if those issues appear to be difficult or impeding trade. Let me work with my colleagues in DIT and we will come up with an answer for Mr Holden.

**Chair:** Thank you very much. Now I am going to turn to Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, deputy Chair of the Committee, to kick off.

- Q3 **Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** Good afternoon, again, to our witnesses, and thank you for coming to spend time with us. Let us start with an opening question to you, Mr Bowler, if I may—as the Chair has said, congratulations on your appointment. What is your overarching trade strategy for the UK?

**James Bowler:** Our vision is to have an open trade environment that promotes jobs and wages and reduces poverty. We feel we can do that through both proactive trade negotiations and the right protections against unfair practices, both at bilateral and multilateral level, while also promoting exports and investment.



**Q4 Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** I am sure you will have had a chance to study the NAO Report. In paragraph 21 and on page 2, in figure 17, it projects figures for the benefit of FTAs by an increase in GDP after 15 years in the Japan, Australia, New Zealand and, potentially, US agreement as just £7.2 billion. I wonder whether DIT is slightly over-concentrating on negotiating FTAs, rather than helping small and medium-sized businesses to export—particularly for the first time—and getting the benefits from the existing FTAs that you have.

**James Bowler:** There are three things there. First, I would take issue with “just” £7.2 billion.

**Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** That is 15 years.

**James Bowler:** Yes, but it is £7.2 billion every year in perpetuity. I would like to see other policies for the amount of money we spend—we spend about £50 million to £70 million a year doing these trade negotiations—that get that rate of return. After 25 years in the Treasury, I would not be able to point to many, so £7.2 billion in additional GDP a year, every year, is quite significant.

I am happy to go into further detail, but you are absolutely right: we cannot and should not just focus on trade negotiations, and we do not. We are supporting exports wherever they may go, in particular to the EU. Any suggestion that we are ignoring that is not the case, and we are very focused on the implementation and utilisation of these trade negotiation agreements, because as you say, those agreements are only as good as the businesses that utilise them. The Committee held sessions on a NAO Report on exports recently, and we followed that up. That helped to inform our exports strategy, which is all about helping SMEs in particular to export, either for the first time or more. I am happy to answer further questions on that.

**Q5 Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** I am sure there will be. On the overarching side, I accept that your Department has not been doing the negotiating with the EU, but do you have a view on what the Government’s overall strategy regarding the balance of UK trade with the EU is, versus the rest of the world, where you are concentrating very heavily on doing FTAs?

**James Bowler:** We are in a different period with both sections. We are in a mature world with the EU: we have a zero tariff, zero quota agreement with the EU, and it is about helping businesses to continue that and do more, and obviously address issues around the border. I think that is the right one.

With the rest of the world, we have the opportunity for the first time in just under 50 years to do new agreements that can enhance British businesses’ opportunities and reduce their costs, but the big thing on EU versus the rest of the world is simply global economics. We published a report in September that said global trade will double over the next 30 years, but it will not double evenly, and over half of that growth in trade will come from the Indo-Pacific area and less than 10% from the EU. That



is nothing to do with the politics of Europe; it is about the maturity of economies.

I think it is right that we continue to focus on helping people sell into the enormous market that is the EU, but we—and I think we are in a good place—like the rest of the world, know that the Indo-Pacific area, the Indo-Pacific tilt as it is often called, is precisely the right area to be focusing on because of the very large growth potential that is going to happen there. The question left is which countries are going to take advantage of that. The UK is incredibly well placed, with the high-spec exports and economy that it offers, to sate the billions of new middle-class consumers who are going to be increasing demand in that area. I am happy to go into more detail.

- Q6** **Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** You have a target in your Department that 80% of UK trade should be covered by free trade agreements by 2022. The Report makes it clear that you have got to about 64% at the moment. I understand that the agreement with the US would fill a huge bit of the balance. Where are you with that target and when do you expect to meet it?

**James Bowler:** I think we will get to 80%. I think the timing was and is challenging on the timescale of that. We have done an awful lot, as you say, with agreements for 70 countries. We have got an awful lot in our pipeline that I am sure we will come on to but, as you say, the US is our largest country trading partner—£200 billion.

Where are we with that? We started negotiations with the US and actually got a fair way down—we had five rounds of negotiations—but the Administration there is reviewing all of its trade negotiations, so it is not currently negotiating with anyone. We are in discussions with them about that, but in the meantime we are concentrating on market access to the US. In terms of answering your question directly, I think we will get to 80%, but the timing is challenging.

**Chair:** On the subject of the United States, I call Anthony Mangnall.

- Q7** **Anthony Mangnall:** Hello, I am one of the guests on the Committee. I am really grateful for what you are saying on this. I understand that a US-UK free trade agreement is less likely, certainly in the short term. I wonder if you might add the value of state-to-UK bilateral agreements, as I understand Minister Mordaunt was out in America exploring that option recently, and that there has been quite a lot of discussion from the Department for International Trade on that basis. Do you have an idea of how much of a percentage that could increase, in terms of the target to reach 80%?

**James Bowler:** You are absolutely right in everything you have just said. Firstly, you don't need a trade agreement to do more trade, and we are trying to do as much trade with people, with or without agreements. It is the same with China or wherever. What you can do is make progress through market access, and we have done that on ending the ban on beef and lamb with the US, which is really quite significant, and also, thanks to



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Amanda, the Boeing-Airbus dispute. So you get big market access gains that are for the entirety of the US.

But you are right, Penny Mordaunt is pursuing a state-by-state approach. There, you are looking at regulator-to-regulator links and qualification recognition, for example. That does two things. It allows us to trade more with the US at a state level and, as you know, a state like California is one of the largest economies in the world. It also, to be blunt, allows us to keep the onus on wanting the larger free trade agreement. I don't have a percentage of exactly what that means. I think that would be quite hard to calculate.

**Q8 Anthony Mangnall:** I am just trying to understand this. California is the perfect example. If we are going to find market access and find ways in which we can do that, surely there is a forecast of the value and an idea of whether it will help us reach that 80% target that the Department itself has set.

**James Bowler:** We haven't set that target. You are right—these things are very large. I think it is more about what you can achieve at a federal level than what you can achieve at a state level that will set those percentages. We are pursuing both with the market access work that we are doing. I am happy to continue to report to the Committee about how we are doing on a state-by-state level. To be clear, the goal is still to have a free trade agreement with the United States as a whole.

**Chair:** Thank you. We will come back to some of these points, I am sure.

**Q9 Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** Perhaps I can stay with you, Mr Bowler. In addition to all the work that you have to do in the Department that we have already been over, you are looking at existing agreements. Paragraph 1.20 on page 26 makes clear that it is possible to do post-ratification amendments. Are you preparing to do any post-ratification amendments on any of the FTAs you have already done?

**James Bowler:** Not that I am aware of.

**Amanda Brooks:** I will pick this up. We set up governance committees to take an overview of how those FTAs are being implemented in practice. That gives both countries the opportunity to discuss issues that are arising from that. To date, that has not yet led to any specific amendments from FTAs, but you will appreciate that those implementing and utilising processes are still at relatively early stages, and over time I would expect for those to begin to identify opportunities for amendments to be made.

**James Bowler:** It is worth saying that a large part of what the Department does is implement these trade agreements and then utilise them. The implementation phase does not require a post-ratification amendment but does need to ensure that the country you have done an agreement with does the things that it said it would do.

**Q10 Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** You would not expect me, as a farmer, to let you get away without talking about the agricultural and food issues in



the Australian free trade agreement. I gather that the Trade and Agriculture Commission has been asked to give a view by March this year, which will be interesting. From looking at some of the information in the NAO Report and the transition for UK beef and lamb, it does look as though those sectors, which are highly represented in my constituency, will be put under tremendous pressure by that trade agreement. What is your view, given those relatively small figures, on the disadvantage to British agriculture and food in the balance of doing that trade agreement? You must have thought very carefully about that when doing the agreement, which Mr Falconer was no doubt intimately involved in negotiating. How did you balance those interests?

**James Bowler:** Overall, the projected impact on UK GDP is £2.3 billion positive. We have done an impact assessment that sets out what we expect the impact to be on that and all the sectors. The ultimate impact depends on how much we export versus how much we import. We will work very hard to maximise the former.

A large part of the thinking on agriculture was about what safeguards we could put in place, and there are four in agriculture. There is the transitional period, which amounts to 15 years—10 plus five—in two forms. There is a particular safeguard on sheep meat if the quotas are consistently being used. There is a bilateral, and then a multilateral option to ensure that if any industry - but agriculture on this occasion - were due to be injured by things we could take action

We feel that it is unsurprising that with a highly competitive market, Australia is pushing on some of those areas. We feel that the safeguards included in this are proportionate and sensible. You might want to ask Crawford or Ms Williams what they feel.

Q11 **Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** Good afternoon, Mr Falconer. Would you like to say something? You were intimately involved in the negotiations.

**Crawford Falconer:** I think James has covered the generality. I might add just a couple of things. Agriculture becomes a very broad concept. In actual fact, we sell, in agricultural terms, something like £126 million to Australia, including food and beverages.

**Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** It is not about the selling, is it? It is about the number of imports.

**Crawford Falconer:** Sure, but there will be gains to the United Kingdom in agriculture, both from the agreement with Australia and from the other agreements we do. It was very important that we get that distinction very clear. They often get muddled.

Within the agricultural sector, it is true that beef and sheep meat in particular are the ones on which the UK feels it has a competitiveness challenge. That is why the negotiation was clear that it is a very long phase-out that we are talking about—15 years. That is an extraordinarily long phase-out for liberalisation to begin with. It was arrived at precisely



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to give time for adjustment. If you are going to liberalise, you need a process of adjustment; 15 years is quite a lengthy process.

As James has noted, these are almost terms for winks. Safeguards—well, okay; what are safeguards? What it means is that if, in actual fact, we find that there has been a miscalculation on the adaptability of the domestic industry over time, there will be measures in place throughout that 15-year period to enable what is called a bilateral safeguard to take care of any unexpected surges in imports. Indeed, even after the 15-year period, you have three other measures that are in place on the belt-and-braces principle, which is a general safeguards provision that exists anyway. It has been applied in the UK case already for steel, so it something that is workable and live, in order to protect from something that is unexpected. That will also apply in the case of beef and sheep meat.

It is true that Australia—and eventually New Zealand, when we get that deal over the line—is competitive in beef and, to a degree, in sheep meat. But they also have to service a huge market globally, which they have no intention of moving away from. The idea that they will suddenly divert themselves to the UK is extraordinarily unlikely, because they are making a lot of profit in east Asia.

Here's the rub: the United Kingdom does not need to have an overly negative view of its future—certainly not for agriculture, and certainly not even for beef and sheep meat. Look at how scared the United States is of our sheep meat competitiveness. They have been keeping us out for years. A forward-leading agreement with Australia should be seen as a down payment—that is what it is—to get us into CPTPP, which is a 13 trillion market. You know what? Once we have coped with Australia and New Zealand, we can deal with the world. We will have access in the CPTPP agreement to the markets for beef, and developing markets even for sheep meat, in the likes of those east Asian economies. I would argue that there are undoubtedly issues there that need to be managed, but this is part of an outward-looking approach for the United Kingdom, which sees a future for its agriculture, including its livestock industries, at the global level. That is a perspective that you rarely hear, but it was very much on the minds of our negotiators and our Ministers.

**Q12 Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** Ms Williams, you have heard that very optimistic answer from Mr Falconer, but I think he has forgotten that 40 years ago, before we joined the EU, we had quotas for beef and sheep coming into the UK. What is your Department's assessment of what the effect on British agriculture will be from the Australian FTA?

**Katrina Williams:** As you say, 40 years ago we did have import quotas—more than 40 years ago, actually, because it was before we joined the European Union. In terms of the impact on the UK sectors, James and Crawford have summed it up very well, in the sense that they have identified that we identified very early that there were going to be competitive challenges for some sectors. They include beef and sheep, but the agreement also recognises the need to phase in trade liberalisation for some other sectors. I am confident that the phasing in of the liberalisation

and the safeguards that have been described this afternoon provide a period of adjustment for the UK agricultural sector, particularly as it is going through the major domestic changes that we face, having left the European Union.

The point that Mr Falconer made about looking in the round at the opportunities for UK agriculture gives me cause for optimism. For example, a deal with the Gulf Co-operation Council, which is in prospect, could have very big benefits for the UK sheep sector. We have spoken already about freeing up the US market to UK lamb exports. That was a great success at the end of last year.

In addition, to go back to your earlier question, we are doing a lot to help the sector to reorient itself towards exports. The setting up of the food and drink export council, which we and DIT are working on very closely together, will enable us to spot opportunities. Having had excellent support from the trade attaché network across the world, we have found that if we put in some deep specialism, as we have done in countries such as China and in the Gulf, it can actually help a great deal with opening up markets, so we in DEFRA are looking to ramp up our network of agri-councillors. We are thinking about Latin America. We are thinking about Africa, the US—individual countries like India, Canada, the US and Mexico. Overall, I feel confident about the future of the agricultural sector, while recognising everything that many stakeholders have said to me about their concerns and anxieties.

**Q13 Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** I echo your optimism, as one of the largest exporters of daffodil bulbs to the Dutch, no less, at one point 30 years ago. If you are so optimistic, why is the NFU so pessimistic about this?

**Crawford Falconer:** I can't speak for the NFU. I am not surprised that a body which is there to have the interests of farmers at its heart has a duty and a responsibility to worry about the downside. I am not denying the risks and the downside. I think it is a legitimate concern. What I think is that, on balance, that downside is very unlikely, but we have a means in place to take care of it. It is their job to test that judgment and to make sure that this is not a bunch of bureaucrats making this up and that it is well and truly robust. We are confident that it is and, if you look at what is at stake, that it will be.

The NFU doesn't only say that. I think there is, within the NFU and elsewhere within the agricultural sector in the UK, an optimistic reading, which I think is probably even more enthusiastic than what I conveyed to you on this. There are very many people we could mention, like yourself, who do not deny that that is where the future is. That is something that needs to be taken into account.

**Chair:** I am going to bring in Mr Garnier on this point.

**Q14 Mark Garnier:** Crawford Falconer, you and I used to work together, of course. I can remember one conversation we had many years ago. Something which you said has stuck with me for a very long time. It was



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that you only ever know you have done a good trade deal when both sides are equally annoyed about the outcome of it. I think your point was absolutely right. A trade deal is all about compromise on both sides, ultimately. You obviously try to get your negotiating objectives and achieve those, but you do have to compromise.

You correctly identify the NFU as a very good champion for the farming community. Inevitably, when you are doing a trade deal, you are having to do it for the whole UK economy. I think the NFU is going at some point to come round and say that they feel that they have maybe been thrown under the bus in order to get financial services access into the Australian market. How can you ultimately be able to defend all of these positions to the whole of the UK economy, when inevitably you are going to have to make some compromises in certain places, in order to achieve wins elsewhere?

**James Bowler:** I think by having the conversation we are having as we speak, to be honest, and communicating that. We have been very keen to go well above the bare requirements of how we do a trade deal and the CRAG requirements of a treaty, in terms of public consultation, setting our impact and setting out an agreement in principle to show at each stage where we are. The one thing that I would stress is that while there is much focus on an individual country's agreement, you also need to look at what we are trying to achieve in the round. If you take something like agriculture, we have talked about the US, but we have just finished a consultation on the Gulf and there are very large opportunities for agriculture. We won't always be negotiating with highly competitive states like Australia. I think it is a combination of those. To Crawford's point, it is our job to explain, engage and communicate.

Q15 **Mark Garnier:** So you are essentially saying that a trade deal shouldn't be looked at in isolation; what we should be doing is looking at the overall trade policy. Certain parts of it are going to be big winners and other parts may appear to someone like the NFU as being losers.

**James Bowler:** Yes. I mentioned some of the stats about Indo-Pacific tilt, and I have more up my sleeve, because it is what we do. To Crawford's point, Australia and New Zealand are part of the CPTPP—that Indo-Pacific thing. We obviously just started last week; we just launched with India, and we are trying to improve agreements with Canada and Mexico. If you look at what, together, we are trying to achieve in that area, the Indo-Pacific rim, you can see that economy of many trillions that is due to grow faster than anywhere in the world. We are talking about quite a short period of time for the world to look very different. I think it is the right place for the Department to put its focus.

**Chair:** Thank you. We will come back to Mr Garnier in a moment. We are going to Mr Peter Grant MP on this point.

Q16 **Peter Grant:** Permanent secretary, no one has yet answered the Deputy Chair's question about the impact on farming and agriculture of the Australia deal. We can wait and see what happens with all these other deals, if and when they happen, but what assessment have the



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Government made of the impact on UK farming and agriculture of this deal that has now—

**James Bowler:** We have put an assessment out there with the final deal for Australia. This sets out the overall impacts and the sector-by-sector impact, so we have characterised those. We have also pointed out that that is at the cautious end of how we do overall impacts and it will end up being determined by how individual firms, farmers and agents react to the new opportunities available. We have set that out. We don't have to, but we have gone over and above the CRAG treaty requirements to set out a very full impact assessment that does include all of those assessments.

Q17 **Peter Grant:** You say you don't have to, but, presumably, if a parliamentary Select Committee asks you for that information—

**James Bowler:** Yes, absolutely. Sorry; it is the right thing to do. I was trying to point that out.

Q18 **Peter Grant:** There has been quite a lot of talk as well about the transition period. What is it that we think we are asking the farming industry in all four UK countries to transition to? I ask because if they don't know where you think they are going to be in 15 years, they can't possibly know how to get there.

**James Bowler:** It would probably be sensible to ask Katrina Williams to set out what the overall view of DEFRA is for the future of the industry, but I think the conversation we have been having, which is about protecting, and transitioning the impacts on, the farming industry while the industry itself exits from the common agricultural policy—

Q19 **Peter Grant:** Sorry, I maybe didn't word my question clearly enough; I apologise for that. I am talking about the period of transition specifically for the Australia deal. Is that there because you think the Australia deal is going to damage farming and we need to give the farming industry time to get ready for a negative impact?

**James Bowler:** It is to safeguard any impacts—to avoid any excess of damage, yes.

Q20 **Chair:** On that point, if you look at figure 11 in the Report, there is a very big jump in the quota for beef in year 1—well, year 1 to 2. It seems to fly in the face of some of what you are saying. Is it that farmers are being thrown to the wolves for the bigger, macro benefits of a trade deal with Australia? Figure 11 is on page 48, in part 3 of the Report.

**Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** Paragraph 3.25—

**Chair:** And paragraph 3.25 explains it in words.

**Crawford Falconer:** No, I don't—with respect to the phasing period, we can go through the details, but in actual fact, at the moment, the size of the total domestic market for beef and for consumption of beef is so huge in relation to that amount that it's not a vastly significant amount in the first year at all—relative to consumption. We have something like 150,000 tonnes coming in at the moment from European sources anyway. So, even



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if it was all to come in, which we think is very unlikely, the impact of that, in terms of the gross size of the market—

Q21 **Chair:** Are you saying that it would displace European beef?

**Crawford Falconer:** It is just as likely and possibly more likely to displace European beef. This is something that we have privileged other European members to have access to, duty free. To the extent that there are going to be imports from other countries—in this case, Australia—we shouldn't assume it's all going to come and affect UK producers entirely; it could just as readily affect the European 27 as well. In principle, it diminishes the effect—

Q22 **Chair:** Ms Williams, have you modelled at DEFRA whether this will displace European imports or displace UK-produced beef?

**Katrina Williams:** Yes, we have modelled that. Both modelling and our lived experience show that new imports mainly, but not entirely, displace existing imports. We have seen that in particular with the experience on New Zealand lamb, the imports of which have gone down over time in practical terms. Our modelling would back up what Mr Falconer said about the fact that this is complicated. It is not necessarily the case that imports from Australia would displace or damage UK production.

Q23 **Chair:** Have you done an analysis of carbon emissions for imports from Australia versus, say, the EU? Is that something that DEFRA is looking at?

**Katrina Williams:** We look very carefully at the question of carbon leakage. We have not so far seen significant evidence of carbon leakage. I think it is something that we will want to continue to look at. It was a big theme, as you will have picked up, of COP26. I think there is a vigorous global debate about the best ways of tackling that. We know some things already. We know, for example, that the carbon contribution of transport is not significant in most cases.

Q24 **Chair:** So you are saying that carbon emissions from shipping from Australia to the UK are not significant?

**Katrina Williams:** It is not the most significant factor when looking at the carbon footprint of different sorts of production, but you are right to highlight it as an issue. It is one that we will want to look at, and one that Governments right across Europe and the world are looking at at present.

**Chair:** The Committee has certainly been looking at how net zero works and at the interactions across Governments. We will continue to look at that.

**James Bowler:** Can I add one thing on that, Chair?

**Chair:** Very quickly.

**James Bowler:** We have modelled the environmental impact of Australia, and we do not think greenhouse gas emissions of UK production will change much. I think transport has to be looked at as a whole.



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**Chair:** Just to be clear, emissions from UK production are not the issue; it is about the travel and imports.

**James Bowler:** We talk about some increased association between transport and increased trade flows, but the point I was going to make is that in a world where trade is going to double in quite short order, the question is, “Who is doing that trade and what is their approach to net zero and the environment as a whole?” We think the UK is incredibly well placed to be at the forefront of making sure that trade is as environmentally friendly as possible. Indeed, we are doing lots of things in our trade agreements to push that. I just wanted to make those wider points, Chair.

**Chair:** Sir Geoffrey, you have one last follow-up question.

Q25 **Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** Ms Williams, recently one of the producers in my constituency ploughed up a field of dwarf beans, because they could not get enough pickers, and flew the whole lot in from Kenya. I do think you sound quite complacent about extra carbon emissions. Surely there is a distinct increase in carbon emissions from the extra food miles in that case?

**Katrina Williams:** It is always possible to find individual cases. One of the things that we are doing as a Department is looking, as part of thinking about how we can develop a food strategy White Paper, at those issues and at the trade-offs that come with that. Certainly, my Secretary of State—you will have heard him say it—is very focused on how we develop an agricultural sector that is sustainable, resilient and able to take the opportunities that the world presents.

Q26 **Anthony Mangnall:** I should say that I have just written a report on CPTPP with the Centre for Policy Studies. Whether or not it cuts any weight with you, I will wait to hear from you. Very quickly on the food mileage point, are we measuring the distance outside territorial waters? I used to be in shipping, and I found that one of the most interesting things when talking about oil tankers moving across the world was that their emissions related to a country only while they were in its territorial waters, but when they went outside territorial waters, they were a sort of unclaimed problem that nobody wanted to address. I will direct that to Katrina, if that is all right. You may not know, in which case we can move on.

**Katrina Williams:** I do not know the specific answer to your question. I do know that, actually, the quantitative assessment of environmental impacts is a very live topic right across the world at the moment. I will not say any more about that, but you raise a very good point.

Q27 **Anthony Mangnall:** Thank you very much. I would be really interested to know more on that point.

May I start with Mr Bowler? We spend a great deal of time talking about the forecasts of the trade deals that we are signing and the value that they have. Just as an example, we have heard about the value of the



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Australia free trade agreement, that this is in perpetuity over a number of years, and where we are going on that. I want to move beyond the value of the trade deals in GDP terms. What other values do you think we will get in the free trade agreements that we are signing, and how do you think that ties in with the Government's agenda?

**James Bowler:** Well, GDP, but also wages, and therefore inequality too, because the mechanism by which exporting firms work is that they are more productive than non-exporting firms. They pay more, and they are more innovative and more productive. There are countless surveys that can point to that; it is not surprising. There is a real benefit to wages and inequality.

The second area is so-called geopolitical benefits, which are not in our impact assessment. They come from the fact that this is a chance to make sure that the UK's environmental, human rights, animal welfare and wider agendas, on which we stand proudly at the very forefront of the world, can be pushed through. On the agreements we have been talking about, one of the reasons why these are world-leading agreements and break new ground is that we have chapters and references to all these things. We are really pushing green goods, not least because there is an economic case as well as, obviously, an environmental case. We are pushing issues around supply chain and forced labour, gender and other things. There are two buckets there, if you like.

Q28 **Anthony Mangnall:** I am going to come to a question about how we measure and present this. We on the International Trade Committee are in the process of going through the documents on the free trade agreement with Australia. Lengthy as it is, it is very interesting. Do you think that defence plays a role in that as well as development? We talk about global Britain in terms of defence, development, trade and diplomacy. Are these trade deals adding to that?

**James Bowler:** Categorically yes. National security should have been on my list, so I will add it—thanks for the opportunity. Broader and deeper links with these countries allow us to discuss both security and the wider geopolitical issues that I raised. The Gulf would be a good example of somewhere where we have strong economic and defence ties, which would only be furthered by free trade. On defence, there is also the opportunity for the economic benefits of selling defence products.

Q29 **Anthony Mangnall:** At the same time that AUKUS came about, we were doing the negotiations with Australia. Was there a benefit for us from doing AUKUS at the same time as our trade deal? Was there a compromise in our trade deal to get that across the line?

**James Bowler:** I wouldn't say—no is the straight answer to that. Clearly, that is a good example of the fact that an even better and cheaper way of trading with Australia is to the benefit of UK companies, but no, it was not part of the trade negotiations.

Q30 **Anthony Mangnall:** On the metrics of how we measure this stuff, there is something striking about the history of most free trade agreements



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signed around the world. The forecast of NAFTA, for example, to the value of the United States was woefully undervalued. What is the Department doing and what can we do—I would like to hear what you intend to do on this—to ensure that there is more regular reporting about the actual value, not just in GDP terms? You have talked about jobs, wages, poverty and environmental. How is there going to be a move in that direction?

**James Bowler:** I would start by being very proud of the impact assessments we do publish, off some pretty impressive CGE modelling. For an ex-Treasury hand, that is no small matter. I do think we do world-leading impact assessments. For a couple of reasons, not least so that we are not seen to overclaim, they do not include second-round effects, which those models do not tend to, the biggest of which is productivity from innovation. They also do not include the geopolitical benefits I have just said.

However, in terms of the very good point you make, which is that, as ever and not unreasonably, the only thing you know about forecasts is that they are wrong, we are committed to monitoring and evaluating, and we will publish that monitoring within two years. More to the point, we will be closely seeing the difference, and you will be able to see in the official statistics, even if we did not want people to, the impact in trade and other things from these agreements. I think we will set that up.

We are permanently keeping our modelling under review and permanently looking to improve it. We use the good offices of the Regulatory Policy Committee, which tests whether our modelling is up to speed and grades us—indeed, we got a green on that. We are iterating that, and we have a modelling review under way as we speak.

Q31 **Anthony Mangnall:** Ms Brooks, I am acutely aware that the Department has had a pretty difficult time over covid in terms of being able to do negotiations face to face. The Department has been quite flexible, and this Report talks a lot about the flexibility and the speed with which you have been able to continue negotiations at pace. That is all incredibly welcome, though the tempo is obviously now ramping up in terms of new deals from scratch. How is the Department handling that? How are the teams working together? Have you got the resources to be able to cope with this?

**Amanda Brooks:** Thanks for the question, not least because it enables me to pay tribute to the amazing work that the team has done over the last few years, particularly during the covid period. Switching to completely virtual negotiations almost overnight was unheard of and unprecedented, and the team have done remarkably well in those circumstances. It has enabled them to operate on a level that is quite incredible, but also sometimes we do need to recognise that that has been quite costly for individuals. Some of the negotiations that we have been doing—CPTPP is no different—have been based on deeply unfavourable time zones, both for us and for our negotiating partners. Indeed, the CPTPP team were negotiating last week between midnight and 3 am. I am



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sure you would all appreciate how challenging that can be from when you sit through the night and—

**Chair:** As a Committee we put on the record our thanks to many civil servants in different Departments who put a lot of work in, so perhaps you could get to the answer to Mr Mangnall's question.

**Amanda Brooks:** Sure. Just in terms of, "Do we have the resourcing?" yes I think we do. We have grown substantially since 2016. If you go back to when the Department was first set up, there were about 120 people covering all the trade policy functions at that time. Today, around 600 FTE are directly supporting the trade negotiations. That number is considerably larger than many of my counterparts from other countries would say that they have. Of course, that reflects the scale of the programme that we are delivering, which is important. But also it does mean that we spend some time thinking really carefully about the prioritisation and sequencing of negotiations to ensure that it is not just about my team and their capacity, but the capacity that exists in other Departments, which is good and really important in terms of the contribution that they make to our negotiations.

Q32 **Anthony Mangnall:** I am going to hand back to the Chair after one small question. Have you got the resources you need to be able to keep going at the speed you are going at?

**Amanda Brooks:** I would say that the resources are in place to deliver quality negotiations at pace, as we are doing.

Q33 **Chair:** There is a chance there for you, Mr Bowler, to make a bid to your former Department.

**James Bowler:** I had wondered whether I was hired on that basis. The Report has in it that we spent £58.8 million in 2020-21. In the coming year, we will be spending £77 million, so that is quite an increase on trade negotiations between years, which reflects the fact that Australia and New Zealand and the CPTPP last year has been joined by India, Canada, Mexico and CPTPP ongoing and New Zealand, so we are increasing the resources a fair bit, but I would add my recognition and thanks to the work of the Department.

Q34 **Chair:** And are you measuring what you're getting for those resources? I am sure, as a former Treasury man, that you are doing some measurements.

**James Bowler:** We have the extensive impact assessments that we have set out. Now the challenge for Amanda's part of the Department, but also in terms of utilisation, is to make sure that we are delivering on that, and we absolutely do have whole sets of metrics around that.

Q35 **Chair:** Moving to the Cabinet Office—Ms Kilroy-Nolan, if you can hear us, this is the first test of your sound—are you keeping an overarching view to ensure that what is going in is actually delivering the results that you are expecting?

**Beatrice Kilroy-Nolan:** I am hoping that you can hear me.



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**Chair:** We can hear you loud and clear.

**Beatrice Kilroy-Nolan:** Excellent. I am terribly sorry for the technical problems.

**Chair:** No problem. It is fine.

**Beatrice Kilroy-Nolan:** On your question, the Cabinet Office absolutely works closely with the Department for International Trade and other Departments around Whitehall to ensure that, first of all, as Amanda pointed out, we are sequencing negotiations effectively, delivering successful agreements and ensuring that they are utilised. We also keep an eye on resources and managing a high-pressure environment. I also really do want to echo—sorry to add to this—the thanks to the teams, not just in DIT but in Departments around Whitehall, that have supported the negotiations.

**Chair:** Okay, thank you.

Q36 **Mark Garnier:** Amanda, perhaps I could carry on with the resources element. You have eloquently articulated how you are capable of managing to tackle all these various trade deals, but there are a lot of them coming up. I think one of the frustrations that we have, certainly on the International Trade Committee, is not necessarily knowing what the negotiating objectives are as an entire package. I think the last thing we had that was published was in 2017, if I remember rightly, where we were given an overall structure.

Trade deals lean against each other. There are an awful lot of interesting dynamics going on with them. How do you manage so many trade deals? We have an awful lot going on. How do you manage all of those at the same time?

**Amanda Brooks:** We have learned quite a lot from running the continuity agreement programme, which you will recall only too well, under which we were running multiple negotiations at the same time. We spent quite a lot of time reflecting on this point about sequencing, both in terms of the decisions and the tactics that we deploy at certain points in the negotiations. I am of course very reliant on my chief negotiators and the communication that happens among us as a team. We meet together regularly, often two to three times a week, to compare notes on what is happening in the different negotiations at different stages, so that we can ensure that we are abreast of potential opportunities and risks across the negotiation programme.

Of course, that is replicated throughout the negotiating teams. Individual chapter leads will be talking about what is happening in their chapters with their colleagues, so that we can ensure that we are maximising the opportunity and minimising the impact in terms of our resources, so that we are able to spread ourselves out accordingly.

I should say that, obviously, these are cross-Government teams. They are not only DIT teams. Those conversations are happening inside the chief



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negotiators' teams and across the negotiations, but we are also having that conversation on a regular basis across Whitehall. It is a conversation that I have with Katrina, with my counterparts in BEIS, the Treasury and DCMS—often co-ordinated very helpfully by Bea's team in the Cabinet Office. It is a conversation that is happening at multiple tiers every week.

**Q37 Mark Garnier:** Here is a challenge for you. You are negotiating with Australia and New Zealand at the same time, and both of them are big agricultural economies and want to sell—New Zealand in particular obviously has lamb but Australia has lamb as well. You announced a trade deal with Australia, and suddenly the New Zealanders come along and say, "Hang on a second. We thought we were getting a good deal, but there is a much better deal with Australia, so we need to start again on lamb exports." How are things going to bump into each other when you announce one trade deal that has a direct effect on your ability to negotiate another trade deal elsewhere?

**Amanda Brooks:** First, we take that into account from the very beginning, because it is evident to us that that is a potential issue, but with markets that are very similar, such as Australia and New Zealand, there is an opportunity for us because the reverse is true. We can equally be saying to our negotiating partners, "We have been able to achieve this with Australia, and we are looking to achieve something similar with New Zealand." We factor it in from the beginning and we talk to one another. Obviously, Katrina and I have talked a lot about beef and sheep meat—and other things, too—and we will continue to do so. We are factoring that into the conversation from the very beginning.

**Q38 Mark Garnier:** You are not worried that you will suddenly find yourself in a difficult position with a subsequent trade deal as a result of something that you have conceded in a just-announced trade deal.

**Amanda Brooks:** We consider that really carefully before we make those decisions.

**Q39 Mark Garnier:** I will ask a final question, if I may. You mentioned the continuity deals. As I remember it, this was not about doing a new trade deal, but essentially, exactly as you put it, continuity to ensure that there was no disruption to trade. Those continuity deals were originally done with the European Union and included a whole lot of other stuff. The EU might have made concessions to try to achieve Greek olive oil exports or Bruges lace exports. Those are, of course, irrelevant to the UK, because we do not make olive oil. To what extent are you being told by the countries—I think there are 36—with which we have done continuity deals, "Okay, we'll do this continuity deal, but we really want something that is more tailor made to us"? I think Korea is a good example of a country that wanted to push back.

**Amanda Brooks:** I think the picture is mixed. With some of the continuity agreements that we reached, we made a clear commitment that we would come back to the overall deal and consider what further opportunities were available to us. Canada and Mexico—as you know, we have already run the consultation on them—are two cases in point. We are in the final



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stages of preparing to launch negotiations with those countries to see what the additional opportunities are. You are absolutely right that the agreements with South Korea, Turkey and Switzerland are examples of where we felt that there would be opportunities to do something further in the relatively short term. Obviously, as part of our existing implementation mechanism with those countries, we are in conversations about those opportunities.

I want to be clear that we do not have the situation that every single country with which we have previously negotiated is knocking at our door and saying that it is desperate to renegotiate. That is not the case.

**Q40 Mark Garnier:** The important point is that when we look at the big headline picture—we talk about India and all the rest with New Zealand—your workload is more than that obvious headline.

**Amanda Brooks:** You are absolutely right. As James referred to earlier, we have a very full programme for the year ahead. That is a mix of new negotiations when we do not have existing FTAs, and renewing and reviewing existing FTAs, such as those with Canada and Mexico.

**James Bowler:** Can I bring the resources and the work programme together? It is worth saying that we start with the analysis of where people are willing to do trade deals that can make the most for the UK, hence the Indo-Pacific side of things, but we get Cabinet collective agreement on our future work programme. We use the Global Britain (Strategy) Committee—Bea in the Cabinet Office provides the secretariat—to set out our pipeline of programmes. From a departmental point of view, there is a resource limitation within that: we say what we feel we can achieve in the coming period, and resource accordingly. There was agreement for the coming year in summer last year so that we and other Government Departments could plan appropriately.

**Q41 Mark Garnier:** Crawford?

**Crawford Falconer:** If I can strain your tolerance for just a moment, perhaps I could take a step back and answer your question in a slightly different way. This might come as a surprise, and you might think, “He would say that anyway,” but we have rather carefully planned the sequencing of this—although not everything, because the world is pretty good at messing up the best laid plans. Let me take the example of Australia and New Zealand in particular. We decided, because the Government wanted to do this, that it was a good idea to join the CPTPP agreement, but the sequencing for doing so was very important, precisely due to the points you raise.

I come back to a point we were making earlier. Australia and New Zealand should not be seen, as I would put it, transactionally. They were calculated as being tactically, and I would say strategically, important, because if we wanted to get into CPTPP, what we would not want to do is negotiate de novo with the totality at one time. Australia and New Zealand are good friends and good allies; there is the right kind of relationship. The important thing was to negotiate with them first, strike a satisfactory deal



where we could maximise our leverage as the United Kingdom—we couldn't maximise our leverage when they could hide behind everybody else in the CPTPP—and get the best deal we could with them.

We did the same with Japan. The importance of doing the Japan agreement, which was a TAC-plus agreement, was to get the key strategic member of CPTPP, which in many ways shares the United Kingdom's defence, security and human rights view of the world on the role of markets and decent behaviour towards people. Getting Japan sorted, and getting Australia and New Zealand sorted, means that the rest of CPTPP becomes much more manageable. So that is the sequencing, precisely to respond to the thing you were talking about.

**Q42 Mark Garnier:** Can I turn to a slightly wider conversation and policy about what goes into trade deals? I am thinking in particular about outcomes-based trade negotiations.

Obviously, our objectives are to get market access and break down barriers, but also to try to promote our green agenda, for example, and that type of thing. There are some who would say you could go further than that—you can start putting into trade deals things like human rights activities and so on. Where do you stand on this idea of outcomes-based trade deals, where you have outcomes that are not necessarily obviously related to trade, but none the less trade deals are being used to try to achieve them?

**Crawford Falconer:** You may find it hard to believe, given that I have an interest in international trade that goes back for 30-plus years, but I am not a person who believes in trade policy *über alles*. Trade policy and trade have a role—there are specific things that trade does—and there are plenty of other things that get done by other means. You would not presume that trade can carry the water for a whole range of policy issues, any more than you would expect that you could achieve magically through trade agreements what you may have difficulty achieving through other means. Of course, you must proceed ahead with your agenda in areas like human rights and the environment, with the tools that are principally aimed at doing that, but you cannot be ignorant, in the trade environment, of the context in which you operate. With what you are doing in trade, when you are dealing in trade agreements, the first rule of thumb is to do no harm, as I would put it. Make sure that you don't end up being incoherent with your strategy for human rights or the environment, and so on.

That is very important, and we try our best to do that. Also, where you can make concrete steps that are pragmatic and are also capable of making your trade agenda work, you can do some things. If you look at the Australian agreement, that is precisely what we have done. In actual fact, we got the Australians to agree for the first time in that agreement that they would support the Paris agreement. People got very excitable about the magic or not of the 1.5°, and who would I be to criticise anybody for worrying about a soundbite? In actual fact, however, the 1.5° reference is in the Paris agreement, so you were effectively covering that.



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We have got provisions in that agreement on areas of co-operation in the areas of sustainable fisheries. We have provisions in that agreement that work to these things. That doesn't mean to say that you can carry all the water for those things.

**Chair:** Okay, I think we have got that message.

Q43 **Mark Garnier:** Thank you, Crawford. James Bowler, can I just ask some very specific questions on target measurements? How many trade deals are you expecting to get done, over what period?

**James Bowler:** We have got agreements with 70 countries. I shall count them: we have done Australia—it is yet to be ratified. This year, in play, are New Zealand, India, CPTPP accession—that is multilateral—Canada and Mexico. Some of those will go into next year. Then there is the Gulf Co-operation Council. Those are the immediate ones.

**Mark Garnier:** So if we had you back in 18 months—

**James Bowler:** In 18 months' time, the list I have just given you will have been the bulk of our work. Have I missed any out?

**Amanda Brooks:** A Singapore digital economy agreement would be the other one that is important. I would otherwise concur.

**James Bowler:** Obviously, India's was launched last week, and you can imagine the sheer size of that, so that is going to take us a while.

Q44 **Mark Garnier:** And you are now lining up the next set and getting your work programme for that done? When we have a conversation in 18 months' time and we are congratulating you on these fantastic trade deals that all your brilliant staff have done, will you be able to turn around and say, "Here is the next list for the end of 2024"?

**James Bowler:** Yes, absolutely.

Q45 **Mark Garnier:** What is going to go wrong? What keeps you up at night?

**James Bowler:** I will misquote Crawford, which is always a dangerous thing. Five rounds into a US agreement, the Administration changes and they have a moratorium on trade agreements. What sort of thing do we do then?

Q46 **Mark Garnier:** That is outside your control. Within your control, if things start going wrong, what is going to happen? You can't control the outcome of the US election or indeed any election.

**James Bowler:** I should go to our risk register. We continue to need to make the case for trade. You have hopefully heard us and myself do so passionately and from the front foot, and I truly believe it. As you say, it can be a compromise. Those areas that don't do so well will be concerned, so I think we need to continue to make the overall case for trade and win that debate. I think quite a lot of things fall from that.



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There is a whole set of things in my wider portfolio that keep me up at night, including some of your old portfolio. That is around unfair practices and trade defence, which are particularly difficult issues. If country A does something, what does country B do? It is questions like that. I think those areas and our strategy toward them keep me up at night a little bit.

**Q47 Mark Garnier:** Do you think the population knows much about trade? You talk about the awareness of trade.

**James Bowler:** I think they do.

**Mark Garnier:** You and I didn't cross swords, perhaps, in the Treasury Committee, but we spoke way back when, when the most important thing at the time was banking and what was going on with regulation. Everybody understood that, and everybody focused on it. I was getting asked to go on "Newsnight" or "Channel 4 News" most weeks. Trade is possibly the biggest thing now. This is global Britain at its best. Your Department does a brilliant job, by the way. I am a huge advocate for it. But nobody seems to know anything about trade. Nobody talks about it. There is the occasional bit of chlorinated chicken action going on, but apart from that it does not seem to be really being promoted.

**Chair:** What is your question?

**Mark Garnier:** The question is: what are you doing to promote it? How are you going to get it to people out there?

**James Bowler:** I will be brief, Chair. We survey the public and they are highly supportive of the trade agenda. We publish those statistics. Of course, the entire history of our country is steeped in trade. I think people do understand that.

**Q48 Mark Garnier:** We are the second worst performing trading nation in the EU, in terms of exports as a percentage of GDP—at least, we were when I was in the Department.

**James Bowler:** I take your point. There is a big challenge for the Department in wanting to deliver more on that. We have got an exciting new export strategy to do that. To rise to your challenge, there is a big communications issue there for the Department at an official and ministerial level to set out what it is we do and why we do it. We are very keen to do that and we take every opportunity we can to do it. The Government are doing that. I will be first in line to make sure they continue to do it and do it even more loudly. I think the communication is there.

However, I think that the public really understand what this is about—they understand the economic history of the United Kingdom—and will work in jobs that export things. Obviously, the whole supply chain issue is a reminder of the importance of trade. I think awareness is quite high.

**Q49 Peter Grant:** In answer to Mr Garnier, you referred, I think, to 70 trade deals to date. How many of them were effectively just replicating deals that were already in place through our EU membership?



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**James Bowler:** Sixty-plus continuity agreements. I guess that the key prize there was that we got the same terms that the European Union had. I think there have been 10 since we left the EU. Obviously, you are seeing Australia near completion, but there have been deals with EEA countries, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, some Caribbean countries and some African countries.

Q50 **Peter Grant:** In terms of numbers, that is about 85% continuity and about 15% new. What are the equivalent percentages by value of the agreement? Do you have those figures, or can you provide them for us?

**James Bowler:** I think they are available. The large part of it will continue to be the continuity side of it, not dissimilar to the percentages you have suggested—

Q51 **Peter Grant:** A cynic might suggest that you have all been working very hard and very successfully, and the vast majority of what you have done has been to put us back to where we were and chose to move away from. Is that a fair comment as to what has happened so far?

**James Bowler:** Well, it was absolutely our objective to do that, because of the very nature of EU exit. I think that even this Committee and others questioned whether we could indeed do it to the timescale. We did that and we are really proud we did it, and the Report recognises that. But now, for the first time in 48 years, we can go our own course and we have chosen the course we are going for the reasons we have discussed.

It is not all trade agreements; that is not the only arrow in our quiver, as it were. Market access remains hugely important and potentially more valuable than free trade agreements, as does just promoting exports and investment generally. The nature of where we are and where we have come from determines what you have just said.

Q52 **Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** Mr Bowler, I know it is not strictly in the terms of this afternoon's hearing, but you did mention your export strategy. That is a critical part of your Department's work. Could you just very briefly outline what your new strategy is, other than attending a few more trade shows, as it seems to be? What exactly is it?

**James Bowler:** It is informed by the report of this Committee. It is, at its headline, a "Made in the UK, Sold to the World" strategy, which has a 12-point plan to pull together existing companies to export more and to encourage companies that have not exported before to do so.

It sets up an export academy to help people export for the first time. It will lead to cross-Whitehall agreement on all of that. I guess that as the centrepiece we have a new service that did not exist before, called the export support service, which is a one-stop shop aimed at small businesses, to help them to trade. The Government are now providing this service, which they didn't provide before. In particular, it will focus on the EU, but we intend to spread it to the rest of the world.

The argument has been that our support for exports has been slightly disparate, but we think that we are now pulling that together into one



strategy. We have had a really good reaction to it, particularly from the business community—FSB and others.

- Q53 **Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** What I had hoped you would have in that list was some sort of benchmarking of trade promotion activities of central countries, such as Singapore and Hong Kong.

**James Bowler:** I think the Committee, in its previous report, talked about the desire for us to make sure we closely monitored the benefits of what we were doing—point taken. We did publish an analytical paper alongside the export strategy, which looked to precisely set out exactly the benefits of what we were doing. We supported £12 billion-worth of exports—up 5% on the year. That analytical paper sets out how we will measure success; I hope that goes some way to help.

- Q54 **Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** Your reference to small businesses brings me neatly on to my next question. A lot of your new agreements have small and medium-sized business chapters within them. You talked about your very sophisticated projections, analysis and impact assessments. What work are you doing on the actual benefits we are getting from each of those trade agreements, particularly in the small and medium-sized business sector?

**James Bowler:** We are highly alive to the desire to support small businesses, particularly because large businesses have access to a whole set of advice on how to do just that. The big change that we have made is to do a new bit of Government, called the export support service, to help small businesses. On FTAs, I might ask my colleagues to give you a better answer. We are alive to trying to smooth the path and reduce the cost, particularly to small businesses, where the decision to export or not is more binary than that of a very large business. Do colleagues want to add anything on small businesses?

**Crawford Falconer:** If I may, I have just a couple of things. Obviously, as has been observed in another context by some of the questions, at the moment we have a new agreement with Japan, which is somewhat of an improvement on the original that we rolled over. We have just concluded agreements with Australia and New Zealand—the New Zealand agreement has concluded in principle and the Australian one has finally been signed. It is not as if we are in the midst of the new agreements yet. With that caveat, the reality is that a considerable amount of the resources of the Department are about maintaining and creating terms and conditions of access in economies, as James has described.

Something that is often not so clear is that it is meant to be an end-to-end process. What will happen as we gradually move into these trade agreements, and they improve the terms and conditions of access, is those resources that are applied to that general purpose are and will be applied to a differential that will occur as an advantage of the agreement, when it is in place.

To give an example with Japan, we have already set up a virtual trade mission—it had to be virtual in those days. That is an example of the way



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in which you take the lead to explain to people what the new circumstances are. That will be the first step in what we are going to do to improve the perception of Japan. Something like 250 companies were involved in that; 3,000-odd visitors went to the website that we used for that. It is a model for how we will start to do this—

**Q55 Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** Forgive me for interrupting, but did that actually lead to any particular export deals being signed?

**Crawford Falconer:** I don't know for sure. I know that the satisfaction registered among the companies concerned was very positive. Whether that aligns with business is what will be evaluated. We are going to do roughly the same thing with Australia, but it has not happened yet. That is where we will go.

**Q56 Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** In addition to all your sophisticated impact measuring, Mr Bowler, surely you should be monitoring what the actual results are of the initiatives that your Department take?

**James Bowler:** I take your point—we do, and we are. Ultimately, we model the macro impacts of what we are doing, but we also model—

**Q57 Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** You don't need to model it.

**James Bowler:** No; we model and follow the points made earlier, which is the impact of our particular work. We are moving away from saying, "Very large company X does a deal with whatever". Often, DIT cannot claim much credit for that. However, we are particularly focused on SMEs. I should say, thanks to the report of the Committee, we are also working much closer with UKEF, which provides the finance for a number of these deals. We signed a memorandum of understanding that this Committee suggested we make, and UKEF has a number of new small and medium-sized enterprise focuses in the work that it does. I think it has done a really excellent job over the last year.

**Q58 Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** Time is moving on very quickly, but I just have three final questions. Sticking with you, Mr Bowler, I tend to agree with my colleague Mr Garnier: I do not think the public has a great knowledge of trade deals, or even interest in them, at the moment, and I wonder whether you could improve that knowledge. As Which? has said in its evidence to us—I do not know whether you have had a chance to read its evidence—is there a case for having a consumer chapter in every trade deal?

**James Bowler:** Point taken, and it is a good challenge. Which? is on our strategic advisory group, so we talk to it regularly, and a very large advantage of cheaper trade goes to consumers in the form of lower prices, so point taken. As has been referred to a number of times, I come from a Treasury background. I know that it is the case with, for example, tax reform that the large number of winners tend to be quite quiet, and the small number of losers tend to be quite loud, so point taken.

**Amanda Brooks:** Could I add to that? Obviously, we have achieved the first ever chapter on consumers in the New Zealand agreement, which is



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very exciting and encouraging, and I know Which? is very pleased by that. Of course, what we will now need to do is test with our other negotiating partners their appetite for engagement in this area. As I have explained to Which?—we will continue to talk to it on a regular basis—we will explore those conversations with our new negotiating partners as we move forward, and where they are equally keen and ambitious, that is what we will do.

**Q59 Chair:** Just drawing attention to the fact that Which? has given evidence to us, can you just explain in a couple of sentences what is in that consumer agreement with New Zealand, and why it is so groundbreaking, in your view?

**Amanda Brooks:** The fact that it exists at all is groundbreaking.

**Q60 Chair:** Practically, what does it mean to an average consumer?

**Amanda Brooks:** It is about how we improve the co-operation that we have to ensure that consumer benefits are more clearly explained, but I will come back to the Committee on that. I do not have the full detail in front of me.

**Q61 Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** If you could get Which? writing regular articles saying, “You’ve got a new range of products, or the existing lightbulbs or whatever it is are cheaper as a result of the Japanese trade agreement”, that would get many more consumers interested in what you are doing on the trade side, would it not?

**Chair:** To be fair, I am not sure that the Department can get Which? to do things, but I know what Sir Geoffrey means.

**James Bowler:** The comms challenge is accepted. Obviously, in our response to the communication of each of these trade deals, we are trying to set out what this might mean for everyday products and for consumers, and point that out. I am sure we can do more of it.

**Q62 Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** Two quick questions. One for you, Mr Falconer. As one of the world’s most knowledgeable and leading trade negotiators, is there a difference in negotiating multilateral deals—CPTPP or GCC—as opposed to dealing with an individual sovereign country?

**Crawford Falconer:** Yes, is the easy answer.

**Q63 Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** More difficult?

**Crawford Falconer:** There is quite a difference. You have to have the same skills and the same techniques and so on, but the obvious difference is being able to manage the simultaneity of interests, as opposed to having single interests to deal with.

“Plurilateral” is a horrible term, but I am kind of a high priest of multilateralism. Multilateralism is kind of stand-alone, although it is not going anywhere very fast; with plurilateral and bilateral, there is a distinction. With plurilateral, it depends. You have a core agreement with CPTPP: a core agreement is there, so therefore it is kind of, “Can you live



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up to the core agreement or not?” However, market access is country-specific, even though you have a plurilateral agreement, so if you are wanting to become a member of that kind of agreement and you are outside it, you have to be very careful in how you go about the sequencing of managing the market access negotiations, because you’ve got everybody—

**Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** You have already said that to Mr Garnier.

**Crawford Falconer:** Obviously, if you are dealing bilaterally, it is—in a certain sense—straightforward. Once you are in a plurilateral agreement, you are in a very strong position, because then the person who is outside has got the problem of having to satisfy everybody. So as a result, you can maximise your leverage and end up getting a better result when you are inside. That is why for us, in terms of free trade agreements, once we are into something like that, we are in a much better position, and that is why we have had a strategy to go for economies of scale of that kind. It is also more long-term and strategic. CPTPP is an example—it is convergent. Once you have a plurilateral agreement, it gets bigger.

Q64 **Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** You have made a very powerful point about this sequencing. Is it necessary to get a free trade agreement with India before you get into GCC?

**Crawford Falconer:** I would not say it is necessary in this particular case. I think it is desirable to move ahead with India as fast as possible—not because of what we want to do with GCC, except for the more general point that, once you have the credibility of this kind of negotiation, it excites others’ FOMO. It is the fear of missing out syndrome that generally helps you. It is not specific, issue by issue, and there are some things you will have to be very careful about. There are some things that we might hold back in some negotiations—I am not going to be specific—because the value will come a little bit later to somebody else. So there are judgments that you have to make, even bilaterally, on these things. But in this case, India is so big—so potentially huge—that, generally speaking, it can be dealt with on its own terms.

Q65 **Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** Thank you very much for that very interesting answer. The final question from me is for Ms Brooks. Skills are always very important to any Department. As the report makes clear in paragraph 2.18 on page 34, you have set up the academy for training people in trade skills. You have 3,200 in the academy at the moment, which is a good tribute to the Department, but are you having trouble or any difficulty in retaining people with those skills within your Department? I would imagine that these people who have been trained through this very particular route would be very valuable to the private sector if they were poached.

**Amanda Brooks:** Currently, our retention rate is lower inside the trade negotiations group than in the rest of the Department. In fact, it is lower than what is usually judged to be the average for the UK industry as a whole. At the moment, my attrition rate is down to 10%, which is



extremely encouraging. But that is also complemented by people's survey scores, which show that our engagement index has improved in the last year. Furthermore, when I look at what people are declaring as their intention—whether it is to stay in the Department or leave—they are intending to stay for longer than has previously been the case. I am really encouraged by that, but I am not complacent about it. We need to continue to invest in people's skills and capabilities, but we also need to ensure that we are providing them with different opportunities that provide for stretch and challenge that will help keep them in the trade family. I would say that it is not just about keeping people in DIT. As I said at other points—

**Q66 Chair:** You work with other Departments—

**Amanda Brooks:** Exactly. It is really important that people who are working in the trade profession, which Crawford actually heads, are also moving through that experience in other Departments.

**Chair:** As this Committee has repeated with many of the other skills. Over the decade or so that I have been on this Committee, we have seen specific skills in the civil service, Mr Bowler, so let's hope we continue that.

**Q67 Sarah Olney:** On the UK-Australia agreement, a scoping assessment was published in June 2020. It gave a couple of different scenarios, but it estimated that there would be up to £900 million of UK exports to Australia. From the resulting FTA, we seem most in line with scenario 2, which is the top end of the estimate—that £900 million. But the December 2021 impact assessment has an estimate for exports to Australia of £6.2 billion. That is a £5.3 billion increase on what you were estimating in June 2020. Imports look about the same: the estimates of £4.2 billion have not changed between June 2020 and December 2021. I am really curious to know what the extra export value is—the 600% increase in export value that you found between June 2020 and December 2021. Mr Bowler?

**James Bowler:** Thank you for that. The thing driving much of this is changes in how the impact assessment has been modelled. As I said earlier, the impact assessment is continuously improving. The modelling evolved between the scoping assessment, which is before we even do any of the trade agreement, and the final agreement. I think that is driving much of the changes you are talking about. Is this rather handy for the Department, and have we changed things to make it look better? No, that is not the case. Our validation against that is by the Regulatory Policy Committee, which is clear that it has cleared us and given us a green rating for how we are modelling those changes.

**Q68 Sarah Olney:** Sorry, I will interrupt. So you do not know specifically what is driving that change? Your imports have not changed. Your export model has evolved but your import model has not, is that right?

**James Bowler:** I think there are two things going on. There is the reality of the actual agreement versus the scoping agreement. That will make a change. However, I think that the majority of the changes are from



differences in modelling, which I think we have set out. I am being open with you there.

- Q69 **Sarah Olney:** It is a shame not only that you cannot tell me what the difference is but also that we do not know. I feel that is a bit of a failing of some of your documentation and your communication to parliamentarians. That is a significant change. For people making assumptions about what the UK-Australia free trade agreement means for the United Kingdom, the change from June 2020 to December 2021 is significant, and we do not know what the difference is. You do not know what the difference is. Could we not communicate that more effectively?

**James Bowler:** I am obviously not doing as good a job as I should be here. We set out what has changed between those two things in the impact assessment that we published, finally. That sets out what the modelling changes are. They have been validated by the Regulatory Policy Committee, which says these are reasonable and sensible modelling things and has given us a green rating. That is in the publicly available information. I am obviously just not communicating it as well as I should.

**Chair:** That leads us neatly to Mr Anthony Mangnall's points.

**Anthony Mangnall:** On scrutiny?

**Chair:** Yes.

- Q70 **Anthony Mangnall:** I know you have questions on this as well, Chair. I am conscious that we have done a significant amount of work on the International Trade Committee on scrutiny of trade deals and understanding how we can have privileged access. I thank the Chair, who informed me that this Committee had had a precedent where it had been given privileged information. Through the course of the trade deals that we have seen, or the negotiating objectives, I do not think—I am speaking on behalf of the whole of the International Trade Committee—that proper information has been given to us in a timely order for us to be able to assess both the negotiating objectives and the outcomes when something is produced, such as the Australia free trade agreement. I am particularly interested, in line with the NAO Report we have here, in understanding how you think we can improve that process. That ties into what Sir Geoffrey and Mr Garnier have said about making sure that people understand trade deals and also that we can justify them to our constituents.

**James Bowler:** I will ask Amanda Brooks to come in on the details of what I am about to say. It is worth saying first that we are happy to work with the Committee to improve. We think that we have gone and will go well beyond the requirements for what we do. We are very pleased that we have laid the final texts—the ITC quite rightly saw them in advance of publication—three months before we trigger the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act mechanism, which we think is a good achievement and goes against any suggestion that we are rushing things. We think it gives time for your Committee to rightly set out what it thinks about that agreement and—



**Chair:** I think that is the point Mr Mangnall was making.

Q71 **Anthony Mangnall:** Can I jump in on that? That is fine. You have given us the finalised text of a trade agreement. By the way, we have to produce a report that goes alongside it for when it is debated under CRAG, so forgive me, but I do not find that to be particularly generous. What I am really keen on is that process that means that Parliament is given privileged information, perhaps on that Committee or perhaps on a joint basis. To ask a very specific question, will you give us privileged access to negotiating documents as we go along, as this Committee has had in other circumstances?

**Amanda Brooks:** I will jump in here. We are very aware of the role that Select Committees play in scrutinising the work that we are doing, and we welcome it, as James has said. We have met, as you know, both with the ITC and the International Agreements Committee in the House of Lords on a regular basis to provide updates throughout the negotiations. That has been on a private basis, to enable us to share more information with you than we would have been able to do without compromising the negotiating strategy in a public session. We have done that seven times so far on the Australia agreements.

We are learning between each negotiation, and James just referred to this a little bit. For example, on Japan we gave the ITC advance access to the final treaty text on 12 October, but we did not start the CRAG process until 2 November. Obviously, we heard that you felt that that was not sufficient time, and indeed we have committed to a much longer time between providing you with the text on a confidential basis, it being provided to Parliament as a whole, and triggering CRAG—that will now be three months.

**Anthony Mangnall:** What you presented to us was late. Again, this is the problem that we are finding; we are being pushed back, and even in trying to get out the report on the Australia trade agreement, we are under the cosh. A plan will have to be devised here, along with this Committee and other Committees, to outline what we would like to see and what we expect from the Department and, indeed, from Ministers, in order that they can give timely information and responses. Quite simply, we are not getting them at the moment.

Q72 **Chair:** Can I underline this, and press Mr Bowler to consider it? This Committee routinely sees documents that are not in the public domain. We have never leaked a document, as you would expect. The Intelligence and Security Committee sees documents on a reading room basis as well, and that does not leak. There is precedent in Parliament. There are Privy Council terms. I think it is inadequate that the Committee that is doing the heavy lifting on behalf of Parliament and the voting public has very short-notice access to something that it then has to report on to Parliament, with hardly time to digest it.

I do think that scrutiny usually leads to better decisions. Obviously, the Committee cannot micromanage your negotiations—that is not its role—but I do think that Mr Mangnall's points hit home for us. I hope that they



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are hitting home for you, Mr Bowler.

**James Bowler:** Point absolutely taken, and we will continue to discuss that. I think we were trying to say—I take the point about improvement—that we are already improving on this. It is not the case that we are refusing to share text with the Committee; we do, but I think the Committee would like more of that sharing. It is not the case that we are not giving more and more time to scrutinise, but I take your point. The point we were trying to make was that three months for Australia was a quantum leap improvement from the situation in Japan.

**Chair:** We take that point. I think Mr Garnier is going to push this a bit further.

Q73 **Mark Garnier:** Absolutely. With the Japan thing, it was delayed in terms of the online reading room for three days, so we did not get the full time we were expecting. It was 67 chapters, so there was an awful lot of it.

**Chair:** It makes speed reading a whole different thing, doesn't it?

**Mark Garnier:** There is an important point with this, and it comes back to how much people can understand. I have got the Australian trade deal sitting on my desk, and it is in a pile this high, with 2,000 pages. It weighs quite a lot—I carried it back. It would be a lot easier for us if we knew what the negotiating objectives were before we started out. I completely understand the secrecy point; you do not necessarily want it to come out, and that is where it comes back potentially to Privy Council terms or reading room terms, or whatever. But then we will be in a position to know how the trade deal has been achieved against those negotiating objectives. Ultimately, we have to expect the NFU to come back and say, "This is what we think about this part of it." If we have got something we can compare it with, we know how well it has been done. This is the problem. No negotiating objectives means we have no real understanding of how well the trade deal has been done against the original targets.

**James Bowler:** Amanda might want to add to this, but I think we are improving. Not only with yourselves and ahead of time, but also publicly, we publish a mandate. We publish a scoping assessment of what we are trying to get out of the deal. Of course, we do the whole agreement in principle, which we have done for Australia and New Zealand, which sets out where we have got to before we enter the final stages of a negotiation. I think the Committee has privileged access to that, and then we are public with it. All that is over and above the minimum that we are required to do under CRAG, and rightly so—I do not expect plaudits for it. But I would point out that at each stage of the agreements we are doing, we are doing more of that, and doing it better and in a timelier way. So challenge accepted to set that out in further detail—potentially confidentially—with time for the Committee.

Q74 **Mark Garnier:** I have a very quick question because I am conscious of time. To come back to Sir Geoffrey's question about support for businesses, we want to get people exporting more stuff, which is very



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important, so why have we cut the tradeshow access programme, and why have we cut the funding to British chambers of commerce overseas?

**James Bowler:** I am not sure about the details of that—I do not know whether any of my colleagues are—so I will probably have to take that away, I am afraid. I am not aware of that.

What might be part of that answer is that, as part of our export strategy, we are pulling the way we support exports all into one place in the Department, so that people are not hearing from lots of different people on things. That includes the in-housing of international trade advisers, and I think that is probably at the heart of the—

**Mark Garnier:** Well, that is not the same as the tradeshow access programme.

Q75 **Chair:** It sounds like you need to write to the Committee. If you do, we will make sure to share it with our sister Committee, or you can write to us both.

I have a couple of quick questions. On support for businesses, the theme that seems to be coming through is that you are proud—rightly so, in some ways—of what you have achieved so far, but we want to see what the actual practical impact is for businesses and the economy. Mr Bowler, you mentioned quite proudly that the ban on British beef sold in the United States has been lifted, for example. You thought that was a great achievement, but it is an achievement only if it actually has an impact on British beef and lamb exports to the US. Do you have a target for that, and how are you doing on it?

**James Bowler:** Ms Williams might be able to tell you about beef into the US in more detail. I do not know.

Q76 **Chair:** Ms Williams, have we seen any impact from the lifting of that ban?

**Katrina Williams:** If I may, I probably can help on this question. The ban on lamb was lifted right at the back end of last year, so we have not seen any impacts yet. However, we have an estimate that, over five years, that will be worth in excess of £30 million to the sector. We are working very closely with the sector and the Food and Drink Sector Council on that, and indeed we work with our colleagues in the devolved Administrations on how we can best ensure that those benefits are realised.

Q77 **Chair:** So you have a forecast, and you will measure against it?

**Katrina Williams:** We will measure against that forecast and—

Q78 **Chair:** And report regularly to Parliament on that.

**Katrina Williams:** If Parliament would like to know, we will report to Parliament on that.

Q79 **Chair:** I think Parliament wants to know all of this, particularly at the moment.

That brings me to the issue of who is reporting what and when. We



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talked a lot about what the International Trade Committee, which is the lead in this area, needs to see. We talked a lot about modelling and methodology in answer to Ms Olney's question, and it seems that changes in methodology have caused confusion about numbers. That makes it very hard for the people who are intent on scrutinising—as we, our sister Committee and Parliament are—to follow these things. I do not think that it is deliberate obfuscation, Mr Bowler—I would not suggest that for a moment—but what are you doing to improve that so that you have some consistency in modelling and reporting, so that we, and anyone else who is interested, are able to follow it much more clearly?

**James Bowler:** I think I have done a disservice to our modellers. We have 100 analysts working on trade negotiations. They have a world-leading CGE model that does this.

**Chair:** It is great that we have a world-leading model, but we need world-leading information, then.

**James Bowler:** We publish, as we did for India last week, a scoping assessment, by sector, of all the impacts. We do a very full final model, which is in the public domain each time. As with modelling, there is continuous improvement, which is the right thing to do. As you said, that is not an attempt to obfuscate. We do have independent validation of it. I think the key thing to say is that we are due to publish a modelling review setting out in more detail exactly how we go about that.

Q80 **Chair:** You can see that from our point of view, the danger is that you are talking about process and all this internal stuff, which is important and you have got to have that as Permanent Secretary, but it is about how you communicate that to the businesses and the individuals and to Parliament, so that we can check that. We recognise that a plan may not go according to plan; geopolitical issues may arise, or domestic economy issues may hit. We know that there are a lot of challenges, but I think it is really important that Parliament and our Committees are clear about where things have gone well and where they have not. There may be some positive surprises along the way as well, which will help us learn and help you learn. Do you understand what we are trying to say about clarity of reporting?

**James Bowler:** Absolutely.

Q81 **Chair:** Would you agree to work with the National Audit Office to see what would be a good way of reporting to Parliament on some of these issues, so that we have common metrics that we can follow over time?

**James Bowler:** Yes, I am very happy to do so. We have a set of metrics that we publicly follow in our outcome and delivery plan, and we publish a lot for each trade agreement that we do, so I would hope that that would be a very good start.

Q82 **Chair:** Okay. It would be helpful if we can make sure we hone that to get it to a really useful model.

My final question is on something that was raised by Mr Falconer but



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perhaps falls to you, Mr Bowler. Mr Falconer talked about how it is important to have coherence across policy objectives in trade agreements. Can you set out what that means in practice and how you would explain that to someone?

**James Bowler:** Sorry, could you repeat that?

**Chair:** Mr Falconer talked about the importance of having coherence across policy objectives in different trade agreements, in response to questions about human rights and other issues that you might want to wrap into wider objectives. Do you want to set out what the Government's view is of coherence—I suppose your main pillars of coherence in this area?

**James Bowler:** In general?

**Chair:** Yes.

**James Bowler:** The way I would describe it is that we have set out in our outcome delivery plan what we are trying to achieve viz. trade, but that builds from two elements of what the Government are trying to achieve more generally, and that might be in the human rights environment and on economic growth. Domestically, the plan for growth published last March talks about a twin track of what we are trying to achieve on trade, which is both economic advantage for our businesses and protecting against unfair practices, including, when you talk about human rights, for example, forced labour.

Internationally, through the integrated review, we talk about wanting the UK to be at the very lead of the global agenda on what we are trying to achieve to have a free and open fair-trading world, which includes addressing issues around human rights and the environment. I would give an example, at the end, of the excellent work our Department did in the inaugural G7 trade talks to make sure that we signed up to stress-testing the global supply chains against forced labour.

**Chair:** Well, we could get into a whole debate on all those issues as well, but it is useful to have them laid out. I am sure our sister Committee will pick them up if we do not. Thank you for your time. The transcript will be up on the website, uncorrected, in the next couple of days, and our report will be out in due course.

**James Bowler:** A minor point: could we offer one very small correction?

**Chair:** Yes—I think we need the correction on the record.

**Amanda Brooks:** My apologies. This is in answer to Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown's question much earlier on post-ratification amendments. There is indeed an example, which I had forgotten. My apologies. There was a particular negotiation between the UK and Switzerland through the Joint Committee process that I referred to over some issues that emerged on rules of origin. Those are available on the Government website, and I



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understand that that will now go through the CRAG process as well. My apologies for not pinpointing that example.

**Chair:** It is very helpful to have that corrected in the moment. Thank you.