



## Department for International Trade

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23 September 2022

Dear Dianne,

### **Trade Negotiations Update: United Kingdom-Israel Free Trade Agreement & United Kingdom-Canada Free Trade Agreement**

The first round of United Kingdom-Israel Free Trade Agreement negotiations took place between 12 and 20 September.

Additionally, the third round of negotiations on the United Kingdom-Canada Free Trade Agreement has also now concluded, with officials participating in a virtual round from 12 to 16 September.

Following the death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, appropriate adjustments were made to ensure these rounds could proceed during our period of national mourning.

The round of negotiations with Israel was conducted in a hybrid fashion; a small group of United Kingdom officials travelled to Jerusalem for in-person discussions, with further officials attending virtually from the United Kingdom. During this initial round, talks focused on gathering insights on key interests and priorities across policy areas as well as building a shared understanding of each other's initial positions. Technical discussions focused on 29 policy areas in over 50 sessions.

This first round follows on from 20 July when my predecessor, accompanied by the Israeli Ambassador, launched negotiations between the United Kingdom and Israel for an upgraded, services and innovation-focused Free Trade Agreement (FTA) building on the existing Trade and Partnership Agreement (TPA) between our two countries.

Israel continues to be an important trading partner for the United Kingdom. In 2021, our bilateral trade relationship was worth £5 billion, of which United Kingdom exports totalled £2.5 billion. With Israel's services sector expanding by 45% over the last decade, the United Kingdom is well placed to capitalise on this growth by securing an upgraded Free Trade Agreement with Israel that puts innovation and services at its heart.

The negotiations with Canada were conducted in a fully virtual format. Technical discussions were held across 26 policy areas across over 50 separate sessions.

Talks focused on reaffirming the United Kingdom's positions, having tabled and presented text across the majority of chapters in the previous round. The negotiating team made progress and agreed text where possible ensuring that the United Kingdom's interests were maintained at all times.

The Government is determined that any agreement must work for consumers, producers, investors, and businesses alike. We further remain committed to upholding our high environmental, labour, public health, food safety and animal welfare standards, alongside protecting the National Health Service (NHS). We will only recommend a final agreement to Parliament that is in the United Kingdom's interest and upholds these high standards.

I appreciate the crucial role that your Committee, and the International Trade Committee in the House of Commons, plays in the scrutiny of the Government's ambitious trade agenda. I would like to reiterate the commitment previously made by my Department to make the Chief Negotiator and relevant Senior Civil Service experts available to brief the committee, in private, after substantive negotiation rounds.

I look forward to discussing these agreements with you further in due course.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kemi Badenoch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**THE RT HON KEMI BADENOCH MP**

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