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29 November 2024

Dear Liam,

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) - Update

I am writing to provide an update regarding the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), including recent developments relating to future accessions.

Future Accessions

On 27-28 November 2024, I attended the eighth meeting of the Commission of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in Vancouver, Canada. On this occasion, a formal Commission Decision was taken to commence an accession process with Costa Rica via establishment of an Accession Working Group (AWG).

I regret that we could not inform the committee in advance of this announcement, but as I am sure you will understand this is a sensitive matter with implications for international partners beyond the UK, and so out of respect to our international partners any prior messaging had to be tightly controlled.

CPTPP Ministers have reaffirmed on several instances that CPTPP is open to Accession Requests by economies that can satisfy the 'Auckland Principles', namely; i) preparedness to meet the Agreement's high standards; ii) a demonstrated pattern of complying with trade commitments; and iii) recognition that decisions are dependent on the consensus of the CPTPP Parties.

Through extensive discussions and deliberations on all accession requests, the UK and other CPTPP Members have identified that Costa Rica can satisfy the three Auckland Principles. As such, in Vancouver, CPTPP Ministers formally decided to commence the accession process with Costa Rica and establish an Accession Working Group.

This move demonstrates that CPTPP remains a living agreement, and one which is designed to expand and bring in new high standards economies. Over time this expansion process will grow the global reach of the agreement, creating further opportunities for CPTPP Members.

It is expected that the first AWG meeting will take place in the first half of 2025, during Australia's year as CPTPP Chair. The UK will continue to work with CPTPP Members to consider and discuss the remaining Accession Requests in accordance with the Auckland Principles, and the establishment of an AWG for Costa Rica will not prevent this process.

To ensure that interested stakeholders are provided the opportunity to feed in views on the accession process of Costa Rica, today the Department for Business and Trade will launch a period of public engagement that will run across 8 weeks, closing on 24 January 2025. During this period, we will ask stakeholders what issues they would like us to consider when engaging in discussions on whether Costa Rica should join CPTPP and the terms on which they should join. The link to the public engagement questionnaire can be found [here](#).

CPTPP General Review

In addition to discussing future accessions, CPTPP Ministers also discussed progress on the CPTPP General Review during the meeting in Vancouver. The [Joint Ministerial Statement](#) (known as the "Vancouver Statement") published following the meeting summarises the progress made in 2024, during the first phase of the General Review, and sets out the forward workplan for 2025. In 2025 members will deepen their discussions on whether and how the agreement should be revised or updated to remain relevant to the trade and investment issues and challenges we all face today, including in a number of areas of particular interest to the UK.

The Department for Business and Trade has also today published a factual summary of responses received to the public engagement period on the General Review which was carried out from January to February 2024. These responses continue to inform our ongoing engagement in the General Review.

Entry into force

I would also like to take this opportunity to inform the committee that the UK will accede to CPTPP on 15 December 2024 and that the agreement will come into force on this date with Japan, Singapore, Chile, New Zealand, Vietnam, Peru, Malaysia and Brunei. Australia also recently ratified the UK's Accession Protocol, on 25 October 2024, which means the agreement will enter into force with Australia on 24 December 2024. The deal will come into force with the remaining Parties 60 days after they each ratify.

When the UK accedes, the CPTPP will become a truly global trade deal, bringing new opportunities for British businesses, supporting jobs across the entire UK, and shaping the future of international trading rules.

I thank the committee for its continued engagement on CPTPP.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Douglas Alexander', with a stylized, cursive script.

THE RT HON DOUGLAS ALEXANDER MP
Minister of State for Trade Policy and Economic Security
Department for Business and Trade