



Department for International Trade

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10 June 2021

Dear Angus,

Thank you for your letter of 12 May regarding the UK-Cameroon Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

This EPA is a continuity agreement which replicates the previous trading arrangements as far as possible between the UK and Cameroon which were in place via the EU-Central Africa (Cameroon) Economic Partnership Agreement. As you will note from the Parliamentary Report published alongside the text of the UK-Cameroon EPA, the duty-free quota-free market access provided to Cameroon under the agreement is vital for Cameroonian businesses and livelihoods. For example, the UK market represents 12% of Cameroon's banana exports. Having the UK-Cameroon EPA in place and by encouraging trade, we are continuing to support some of the most vulnerable people in Cameroon, providing valuable employment and helping to lift them out of poverty.

You are, however, right to raise concerns regarding the current situation in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon. In March, the Minister for Africa travelled to Cameroon and met President Biya, Prime Minister Ngute and Foreign Minister Mbella Mbella to push for a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

The UK Government is deeply concerned about the situation and we continue to raise our concerns directly with the Cameroonian government. We have a strong history of protecting human rights and promoting our values globally and we will continue to encourage all states to uphold international human rights obligations. As such, we have been calling for inclusive dialogue, an end to violence and for unhindered humanitarian access to affected populations and will continue to do so. Reports of human rights violations by both security forces and armed separatists are disturbing, and at the UN Human Rights Council in February, our Permanent Representative pressed for impartial investigations to hold the perpetrators to account.

The Government's approach is clear that using trade to support development and prosperity is not mutually exclusive from protecting human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law. We can and will continue to pursue both strongly.

Thank you for highlighting the provisions contained in the agreement that set out the shared essential and fundamental elements of the agreement. All the UK's development focused trade agreements contain essential and fundamental elements provisions which must be considered individually, balancing against the economic and developmental impact to that partner and its people.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Truss', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'E'.

THE RT HON ELIZABETH TRUSS MP
Secretary of State for International Trade
& President of the Board of Trade