



Department for International Trade

The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP
Secretary of State for International Trade
Department for International Trade
Old Admiralty Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2DY

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000
E truss.correspondence@trade.gov.uk
W www.gov.uk/dit

Angus Brendan MacNeil MP
International Trade Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

30 July 2021

Dear Angus,

New Trade and Agriculture Commission (TAC)

You will be aware of the role that the new, evolved Trade and Agriculture Commission will play in independent scrutiny of new Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). I fully recognise the importance of selecting the right membership and Chair in securing the credibility of this new body, which will be supported by a Civil Service Secretariat within my Department.

The new body will be composed of independent experts, who together have the technical knowledge and understanding required to fully understand the legal text of an FTA and its implications for the landscape of statutory protections in relation to animal or plant life or health, animal welfare and the environment across the UK. The work will be complex and time consuming. We are currently considering if it may be appropriate to amend the provisions contained within the Trade Act 2021 setting up the Trade and Agriculture Commission, to compensate members for their time, as opposed to paying expenses only.

For this reason, the Government has not yet commenced sections 8 to 11 nor Schedule 6 of the Trade Act 2021, until the policy position on compensation for time is settled. Instead, due to the urgent need to support Parliament in their considerations and to meet the substance of my commitments to the House, an interim non-statutory body will be established in the short term to replicate the functions of the Trade and Agriculture Commission. This will allow us to offer payment to its members whilst we consider if the legislative change is required regarding the remuneration arrangements for the statutory Commission.

I would like to reassure you that the establishment of the interim body on a non-statutory basis will not undermine or change the role of the body.

The Trade and Agriculture Commission's role will remain as set out in the Trade Act 2021. Its advice will inform the Government's own report as set out in section 42 of the Agriculture Act 2020, as amended by the Trade Act 2021.

The expressions of interest process for membership of the non-statutory Commission opened on Monday 7 June and closed on Sunday 4 July. I expect to make an announcement on the Chair and the membership in the coming weeks.

I have copied this letter to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the Chairs of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee and the International Agreements Committee.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Truss', is centered on the page.

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