



International Trade Committee

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Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP
Secretary of State for International Trade
Department for International Trade
Old Admiralty Building
Admiralty Place
London
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8 November 2021

Dear Anne-Marie,

Thank you for appearing before my Committee recently to discuss COP26 and international trade; it was good to meet with and hear from you.

As you know, following the publication of the Agreement in Principle, we launched an inquiry into the New Zealand negotiations.¹ This is part of a wider approach we will be taking, considering each set of negotiations separately and focusing our UK trade negotiations inquiry on cross-cutting strategic issues.² We also intend to launch inquiries when your Department publishes its objectives for each new negotiation.

To better inform our scrutiny, I am requesting more detailed information about your objectives for each of the trade negotiations it undertakes – now and in the future – beyond what is already publicly available. The Committee is mindful of the policy papers your department has published for negotiations with Australia, New Zealand and US³, and those it is preparing for the negotiations with Canada, India, Mexico and the Gulf Cooperation Council. While the published documents include your department's broad approach for each negotiation, more information – for example on the UK's offensive and defensive interests, and the trade-offs it would be willing to accept to achieve a final agreement – is essential to my Committee's scrutiny role.

More widely, as the Committee recently discussed with you,⁴ the Government does not appear to have a single, overarching trade negotiations strategy, but instead uses a series of policy documents and papers. I remain concerned that, without such a strategy, the Government's approach to trade negotiations will be too focused on the outcomes of each agreement, without a wider view of the interplay between trade and other issues such as the environment and food standards.

We heard from Minister Mordaunt, as from your predecessor, that negotiations are entirely separate from one another, so that what appears in one agreement has no

¹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/1576/uk-trade-negotiations-agreement-with-new-zealand/>

² <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/186/uk-trade-negotiations/>

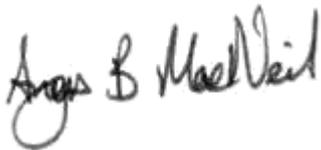
³ DIT, [UK-Australia free trade agreement: the UK's strategic approach](#), 17 July 2020; DIT, [UK-New Zealand free trade agreement: the UK's strategic approach](#), 17 July 2020; DIT, [UK-US Free Trade Agreement](#), 2 March 2020

⁴ [Qq57-61](#)

impact on another.⁵ However, I am firmly of the view that there are interdependencies between agreements, and granting a concession in one agreement must inevitably limit the UK's ability to maintain a different position on that issue in subsequent negotiations with other countries. I am therefore also asking you to detail the Government's overall strategic objectives for its trade negotiations as a whole, including details of the trade-offs and balances of gains and losses it predicts or considers acceptable at the individual FTA level to achieve its wider goals.

In accordance with our usual practice, this letter, along with any replies, will be published on the Committee's webpage. However, I appreciate that there are sensitivities about revealing this level of insight into the Government's positions for current or future negotiations. If necessary, I would be happy to receive information in confidence, with time-linked embargoes, so the Committee can consider it now but not publish until a later date (e.g. once negotiations have concluded).

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angus B MacNeil". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Angus Brendan MacNeil
Chair of the International Trade Committee

⁵ [Qq269, 273](#)