



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
SW1A 2BL

14 December 2021

Dear Anne-Marie,

Thank you for your letter of 10 December, in response to mine of [18 November](#).

I am grateful for such further information as you have supplied but frustrated at having to write yet again to ask for more satisfactory answers on the following points:

1. I am disappointed that, some three months after your department's trade modelling review was due to conclude,¹ you can tell us only that you will meet the Chair of the review panel "in due course" and that its report and your response will be published "as soon as practicable afterwards". Given the importance of impact assessments in scrutinising trade agreements, I must ask for reassurance from you that this review is not now being kicked into the long grass; and for some indication of how the timetable for the review relates to your schedule for future trade agreements.
2. You state that "The impact assessments for agreements with Australia and New Zealand will describe any changes from approaches used in previous scoping assessments and the rationale for those changes." Can you give an undertaking that this will apply to *all* future trade agreements? If not, please set out clearly why you do not consider that to be necessary.
3. You state that the impact assessment for the Japan agreement was "based on external modelling" (presumably referring to work by Professor Joe Francois)² and that, consequently, it will not be possible to compare that assessment with those for the Australia and New Zealand agreements, which "will be based on HMG modelling". You further state that "It will not be possible to provide a dataset which will allow a direct like-for-like comparison of impact assessments for all new FTAs." I would appreciate clarification regarding whether your point is that there is some technical, statistical reason that makes it impossible to present all past and future impact assessments in a comparable form – and details of that reason – or whether you are simply not prepared to commission the production of such a dataset.

These issues feed into not only the crucial scrutiny my Committee will undertake of individual new free trade agreements but also the work it is undertaking around the

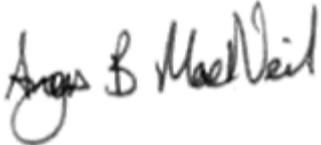
¹ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-02/147716/>

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/965154/UK-Japan-impact-assessment-comprehensive-economic-partnership.pdf

Government's approach to trade negotiations and the wider work of your department, so the details are important. I appreciate that it may be not be possible to provide a response before recess, but I would be grateful for one as soon as possible in January.

In accordance with our usual practice, this letter, along with any replies, will be published on the Committee's webpage.

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' and 'M'.

Angus Brendan MacNeil
Chair of the International Trade Committee