



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office



Department  
for International  
Development

Viscount Trenchard  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

7 July 2020

Viscount Trenchard,

Thank you for attending the House of Lords orals session on 17 June, and for your question on the UK's accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). I said that I would respond to the points which you raised during the session

As you have said, accession to CPTPP would help us work more closely with our close allies in the Asia-Pacific region, including Australia, Japan, New Zealand and Singapore, as well as in Latin America and with Canada. CPTPP is one of the world's largest free trade areas, representing 13% of global GDP; increasing to more than 16% if the UK were to join. Australia, New Zealand and Japan have all publicly welcomed UK interest. For example the Japanese PM has previously said Japan would welcome the UK into CPTPP 'with open arms'. Evidently, CPTPP will consolidate growing relationships with partners and help us play a more meaningful role in strengthening and shaping the rules-based international system.

We want to pursue accession to CPTPP for three main reasons:

1. The first is securing increased trade and investment opportunities that will help the UK economy overcome the unprecedented challenge posed by Covid-19. Joining CPTPP would open up new opportunities for our exporters in strategically important sectors, helping to support an industrial revival in the UK.
2. Second, to help us diversify our trading links and supply chains, and in so doing increase our economic security at a time of heightened uncertainty and disruption in the world.
3. The third is to help us secure our future place in the world and advance our longer-term interests. CPTPP membership is an important part of our strategy

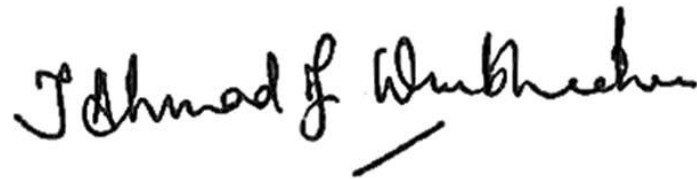
to place the UK at the centre of a modern, progressive network of Free Trade Agreements.

There is no set time for when the application to accede will be sent. Any final application decision we make will consider both the progress of bilateral negotiations with CPTPP members and our confidence that we will be able to negotiate accession on terms compatible with the UK's broader interests and domestic priorities. If the UK Government decides to formally apply for accession, we will publish an Outline Approach and a Scoping Assessment setting out our negotiating objectives and the economic impact and benefits of accession. At that stage, we will also provide a formal response to the Government's public consultation on *the UK potentially seeking accession to CPTPP*, outlining how our decisions and (potential) approach to accession have been informed by the submissions received from members of the public, businesses, and civil society organisations.

I am happy to keep open channels of communication with you and provide further information on this matter.

A copy of this letter will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a short horizontal line.

**LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON**  
Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth  
Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict