



Department for
International Trade



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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5th October 2020

Dear Anne,

Thank you for your contributions to the debate at the second sitting of Committee meeting on the Trade Bill on Thursday 1st October. I committed to follow up with you directly regarding the import of tea, cocoa, and bananas from developing countries.

The UK's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries and Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) will continue to support developing countries to export agricultural products, including tea, cocoa, and bananas, to the UK. Under both arrangements, independent certification schemes such as Fairtrade, which set standards on social, economic, and environmental issues for companies, will be permitted and continue to operate.

By way of background, UK EPAs replicate, as far as possible, the effects of our existing trade agreements with African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries. They are development-focused trade agreements, which secure immediate duty-free access to the EU for products from African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries.


In return, these countries liberalise their markets gradually by reducing duties on around 75-80% of EU imports over a period of up to 25 years. EPAs can have a positive effect on two-way trade flows, development, and production for both Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and non-LDCs. These range from creating new business, investment opportunities and jobs, with protections for local farmers and producers.

The UK has signed four EPAs with Eastern and Southern Africa States; Pacific States; CARIFORUM States; and Southern African Customs Union and Mozambique (SACUM) states. We continue to work with our partners on arrangements for the remaining countries covered by EU EPAs, including Kenya, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Madagascar, and Comoros. Transitioning the EPAs is not the limit of the Government's ambition. In the future, we will look to see how we can improve upon these trade arrangements through close discussion with our EPA partner countries.

Similarly, the UK's unilateral trade preference scheme, GSP, will provide the same level of access as the current EU trade preference scheme by granting duty-free, quota-free access to 48 Least Developed Countries and by granting tariff reductions to other developing countries.

I hope this information is sufficient but please do not hesitate to get in contact if you would like to discuss this further. I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grimstone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G' and a long, sweeping tail.

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel, Kt
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