



Department for
International Trade

The Rt Hon Liam Fox MP

Department for International Trade
King Charles Street
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AH

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000
E enquiries@trade.gov.uk
W www.gov.uk

Angus MacNeil MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

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Dear Angus,

My warm congratulations on your recent appointment as Chair of the International Trade Committee. I look forward to working closely with you and other Committee members over the months and years ahead.

Free trade has and will continue to transform our lives and enrich our societies. It delivers the freedom to do business, the freedom to escape from poverty, and the freedom to engage with and shape the world. The British people have presented us with a glorious opportunity to reset our global trading relationships, place ourselves back in the centre of an increasingly interconnected world, and build an economy that works for all.

As we begin to shape the UK's independent trade policy and define our negotiating priorities and strategies, the International Trade Committee and Parliament will have an important part to play in holding us to account on our promise to secure the best possible outcomes for the whole of the UK.

I am committed to ensuring we have a full and transparent debate on the issues whilst taking care to avoid undermining our negotiating position. The sharing of confidential information will need to be considered in detail in due course.

We must also have in mind the reality of negotiations. They will be fast-paced and it may be that we are negotiating several agreements concurrently. We will need to find ways to engage that enables negotiations to proceed expeditiously whilst giving Parliament the opportunity to scrutinise effectively.

This is not entirely new territory. We must use to best effect existing mechanisms that have allowed Parliament to scrutinise international treaties in the past.

I understand that in addition to assessing the capability of my Department to deliver against its objectives, you have also launched your first inquiry earlier this month on the 'UK's trade environment beyond 2019'. Officials in my Department stand ready to contribute to your inquiry in whatever ways they can and are keen to learn from the evidence that will be presented to you by other stakeholders.

I think we can all agree that the scale of the task ahead is unprecedented. The advice and expertise your Committee can bring will be crucial in helping us to navigate the challenges and make the best of the opportunities, ahead.

All best wishes,

*Yours,
Liam*

THE RT HON LIAM FOX MP
Secretary of State, Department for International Trade
& President of the Board of Trade