

# Press release: UK Trade Secretary visits WTO to push support for free trade

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox will travel to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva today (Thursday, 21 June) to call on the organisation to re-focus on its free trade agenda.

While there, Dr Fox will meet with a number of WTO Ambassadors. He will lead a panel discussion on global trade leadership alongside the head of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and an Executive Director at the International Trade Centre, which works to spread the benefits of free trade to developing economies.

In both of these forums Dr Fox will discuss recent global trade disputes and call for WTO members to work together more effectively in order to tackle these issues and support free trade and the multilateral trading system globally.

This follows a [speech he made earlier this week at the Centre for Policy Studies](#) where he called on China to open its markets and ensure compliance with global trade rules, as well as better global enforcement of intellectual property rules.

He will also reiterate the importance of reforming global trade rules for the modern age, focusing on e-commerce to make it easier to trade online, ensuring that the WTO is not left behind by businesses and consumers and that trade continues to grow.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

Organisations like the WTO and WIPO are at the heart of the global trade system that has helped lift millions out of abject poverty and supports countless jobs in the UK and around the world.

With free trade and multilateralism under threat, the UK will stand as a leading supporter of its benefits and as the head of Britain's international economic department I'll be in Geneva making that case to other countries today.

The visit comes after the WTO forecast global trade growth of 4.4% this year, and the UK itself saw exports increase 7.4% to £625.4 billion to the end of April 2018 compared to the same time last year.

The meetings also come as the UK prepares to take its independent seat at the

WTO, outside the EU, and so Dr Fox will use this opportunity to reassure WTO trade ambassador's that the UK is committed to maintain existing trade arrangements immediately after leaving the EU in order to avoid disruption.

But, long-term, once the UK leaves the EU we will be able to negotiate and sign new trade agreements, join existing agreements around the world, and more freely access fast-growing markets beyond the EU.

Dr Fox will look to explore the opportunities that this future could unlock, meeting with ambassadors from the US, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand.