

The UK as a leading advocate of Free Trade worldwide

The Minister of State for Trade has told us that the UK has now taken her place as a full WTO member and is making an important contribution to the world trade discussions. Secretary of State Truss made the first UK Ministerial speech there since 1972 earlier this year.

The Department for International Trade is now planning trade talks with the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. These will be in parallel with the PM's negotiations through Mr Frost with the EU. The US Trade Representative has made a recent visit to London, and the US is keen to make rapid progress. Since 2008 our trade with the rest of the world has been bigger than our trade with the EU and growing faster, despite the absence of Free Trade Agreements with most of it.

Trade talks with the US were scheduled to take place face to face in April, but these are having to be transferred to audio visual conferences owing to anti virus controls. I want the UK to respond positively to the US wish to press on with them quickly.

In discussions with the EU State aid issues can be best handled by the UK having a strong competition policy of its own whilst accepting that the EU regime is sufficient on the continent, so each party can trust the other's system.

The UK should aim for lower tariffs than the EU common external tariff. We should encourage cheaper food where we cannot grow the products for ourselves. We should set our own high standards for food quality, animal welfare and hygiene, and aim for mutual recognition of each other's standards with counter parties in Free Trade Agreements. There is no need to charge any tariff on imported components needed for UK manufacture.

The US/UK Agreement could become a template for other deals worldwide by both the USA and the UK.