Preferential tariffs continue for eligible developing countries

- The trade preference scheme will cover any eligible countries that do not have their existing trade agreements transitioned into a new agreement with the UK.
- The UK imported approximately £8 billion-worth of textiles and apparel products from eligible countries last year. The Government is planning on improving the scheme to better support developing countries – more details will be announced in 2021.
- The import rates and customs procedure are now on gov.uk.

British importers will continue to pay zero or reduced tariffs on everyday goods such as clothing and vegetables from the world's poorest countries now the UK has left the EU, Liz Truss will announce today (Tuesday 10 November).

The UK's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) will cover all the same countries that are currently eligible for trade preferences under the EU's GSP, allowing businesses to trade as they do now without disruption.

Imports from 47 of the world's least developed countries, including Bangladesh and Malawi, will not face any tariffs – supporting their economic development through business and trade. Low-income and lower-middle income countries will benefit from lower tariffs compared to the UK Global Tariff.

In 2019, the UK imported approximately £8 billion-worth of textiles and apparel products from countries which are part of the EU GSP. This accounted for 30% of all textile and apparel imports into the UK. We also imported approximately £1billion-worth of vegetables from eligible countries, accounting for around 8% of all vegetable imports.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

> Free trade helps businesses to grow, boosts the economy and creates new jobs. We are making sure that the world's poorest countries can continue to take advantage of the opportunities that free trade offers them by allowing them to export their products to the UK at preferential rates.
>
> This will help developing economies to establish strong industries, creating jobs and helping them to reduce their reliance on overseas aid in the long term.
>
> The scheme will also help British businesses to continue trading seamlessly after we leave the EU, as well as giving British consumers continued access to some of their favourite products at affordable prices.

The UK's GSP will also help to make products from developing countries more attractive to UK importers, enabling businesses in developing countries to grow and prosper and supporting jobs in those economies.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

> Global Britain is a partner of choice for developing countries. As today's announcement demonstrates, we take a liberal approach to trade, recognising that many developing countries want to trade their way to greater prosperity.
>
> We back that up with the integrity of the investments UK businesses make, and our commitment to be a force for good in their communities through our support for green jobs, climate change mitigation and programs to deliver girls education.

Businesses that trade on these terms can now visit gov.uk and find the information they need in order to continue doing so. This includes:

- Import rates under the UK GSP.
- Customs requirements for businesses to claim the GSP tariffs.
- List of eligible countries including those that will receive GSP market access if they do not implement a trade agreement with the UK before 1 January 2021.

The full list of countries set to benefit from this scheme is available on the [trading with developing nations from 1 January 2021 page].

The UK's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (like the EU's) has three Frameworks:

1. The Least Developed Countries Framework will give duty-free quota-free access for all 47 countries classified by the UN as Least Developed Countries. This commitment is enshrined in law, in line with the UK's commitment to the Global Goals.
2. The General Framework will reduce tariffs on certain product lines to Low-Income and Lower-Middle Income countries.
3. The Enhanced Framework will remove tariffs on certain product lines for eight economically-vulnerable Low-Income and Lower-Middle Income Countries which meet conditions related to sustainable development.

Welsh Secretary addresses business leaders at CBI Wales event

Press release

The virtual event focussed on the COVID-19 pandemic and the UK Transition period.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart has joined senior business figures to discuss business preparations for the end of the UK’s transition from the EU and the coronavirus pandemic.

The event, which took place virtually, was attended by representatives from across all sectors and regions of Wales including Openreach, Pembrokeshire College and UPM.

The Secretary of State told the event that following the UK’s departure from the European Union earlier this year, the end of the transition period at the end of December 2020 will mean new rules which will affect people, businesses and travel to and from the EU.

Regardless of whether a trade agreement with the EU is reached, from 1 January there will be changes to the way businesses import and export goods, to the processes for hiring people from the EU and in the way services are provided in EU markets. Mr Hart urged businesses across Wales to prepare for the changes immediately.

Welsh Secretary Simon Hart said:

> Businesses are currently operating in extremely challenging circumstances because of the pandemic and UK Government has a number of schemes available including loans, grants and tax deferrals – as well as furlough – to support them and their workers through this difficult period.
>
> But I also urge businesses to look ahead to the changes required to prepare for the end of the transition period which we know is approaching fast. If we are prepared for all scenarios, then together we can seize new opportunities and recover from the pandemic.

Businesses can find out what they need to do by visiting gov.uk/transition and using the checker tool.

ENDS

Published 10 November 2020

[Alister Jack responds to November 2020 Labour Market Figures]

Press release

Scottish Secretary responds to November 2020 Labour Market Statistics for Scotland

Responding to today’s [10 November 2020] Labour Market Statistics, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

> Despite the apparent stability in today’s figures for Scotland, we know there will be further challenges to come over the winter months.
>
> The UK Government continues to take unprecedented action to support jobs. Last week the Chancellor extended the UK Government furlough and self-employed support schemes, alongside an additional £1 billion in Barnett Consequentials for the Scottish Government.
>
> For those looking for work, we are also investing billions as part of our Plan for Jobs, including the recruitment of hundreds of work coaches across Scotland and our £2 billion Kickstart job scheme for young people.
>
> From the start of the pandemic UK Government support has been a lifeline for many Scottish people and businesses, demonstrating the strength of the Union in these difficult times.

Background points

- Many of our communities are living under newly-tightened, temporary restrictions. The UK Government furlough scheme, paying 80 per cent of wages, will run UK-wide until the end of March. The self-employed support scheme has also been extended to the of March and will increase from 55% to 80% of average profits – up to £7,500.
- More than 76,000 businesses in Scotland have benefitted from UK Government loan schemes, worth more than £9.4 billion. Scotland's hospitality and tourism businesses are benefitting from a VAT cut which will run till March 2021.
- In total, the Scottish Government has been allocated an additional £8.2 billion from the UK Government since March 2020. This is on top of the block grant and in addition to direct UK Government support to people and businesses in Scotland.
- The UK Government is investing billions to help people back into work, including through our £2 billion Kickstart scheme to get young people into jobs. Extra help from work coaches in Jobcentres is helping unemployed people of all ages back into work by focusing on skills.
- The UK Government has provided extra funding for the welfare safety net to help those unable to access other forms of support. These temporary welfare measures include a £20 per week increase for everyone on Universal Credit.

Analysis

Scotland's key indicators seem to be in a stable position, however, the claimant count rate is now at 7.7% (Oct). This is up from 4.0% pre-lockdown but marginally down from September (-0.1%). We have seen from last month's furlough figures that over 242,600 employments are paused and around 137,000 self-employed people in Scotland received UK Government support. Scotland unemployment rate at 4.5% is now below that of the UK overall at 4.8%.

The UK overall experienced a somewhat accelerating decrease in employment (-164,000 and its rate fell by 0.6%) over the last three months and over the same period unemployment increased at a faster pace too, with an increase of 243,000 (+0.7%). Over the year, the UK's employment is now down (-247,000).

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73rd World Health Assembly: UK statement to Committee A

The UK greatly values the World Health Organisation and the crucial leadership role it plays at this difficult time.

To reflect this support our Prime Minister announced at UNGA that the UK will be contributing £340 million in core voluntary contributions over the next 4 years. Of which 30% will be conditional on WHO's delivery of the reforms needed to strengthen its essential global coordination role, including on pandemic preparedness and response.

The UK's increase in flexible funding therefore reflects our belief that WHO should have the funds required to be the modern, agile and inclusive organisation that we need it to be, and reflects that we recognise there is more to be done to achieve this.

We also recognise WHO's leadership in establishing the Emergencies Programme in its current form, following reforms in 2016, which have allowed them to lead swift responses to an increasing number of crises.

As Member States, we now have a unique opportunity to build on this success and, through our current collective focus, accelerate further reform. We have all learned lessons during the COVID-19 pandemic about how we might strengthen national and global capabilities. This also applies to WHO. The IOAC's report is timely. While it rightfully recognises WHO's leadership on COVID-19, its examples demonstrate that there is yet more to do if WHO's emergencies programme is to be fit for the challenges we face in 2020 and beyond. We stand ready to roll up our sleeves and work with you.

The outcomes of the IPPR, IHR and IOAC reviews are therefore crucial in setting the direction that we will collectively follow to achieve these aims and we look forward to concrete recommendations on – the Intermediate Public Health Alert, significantly improving IHR compliance, sustainable organisational funding, expanded surveillance of zoonoses and greater coordinated action at the animal-human health interface through a stronger role for WHO within the tripartite.

We welcome the circulation of the source of the virus terms of reference. The UK has been clear that having this shared understanding of the origins of this virus is key to improving our response to it. And therefore, that this investigation should be prioritised and we expect the investigation and its outcomes to be grounded in robust science.

In addition, effective vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics are central to the global response. The UK is strongly committed to ensuring equitable access to vaccines, including for the poorest countries. The UK support for COVAX includes a contribution of up to £571 million of which £500 million will directly support vaccines for developing countries, and we encourage others who have not yet done so, to step up their support.

Thank you