

Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
Westminster  
London  
SW1A 2AA

18 January 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

The chance to develop an independent trade policy for the first time in nearly 50 years offers exciting opportunities to the UK. We can sign trade deals that support and boost our landmark net zero goal, and develop new markets around the world for high standard products. The UK can negotiate agreements that help UK businesses surge towards net zero, and show global leadership by putting climate, nature, animal welfare and public health at the heart of our future trade.

Representing a wide range of businesses, charities and unions, we write to emphasise the importance of underpinning these opportunities with an approach defined by transparency. The government has established several channels of engagement, including a set of advisory groups and a recently strengthened Trade and Agriculture Commission. Yet the UK is set to fall behind other major trading powers – such as the United States and the European Union – by not offering its parliamentarians a clear yes/no vote on whether to approve a trade agreement.

Making sure parliamentarians have a vote would enhance the role of the advisory bodies. It would make sure there is a direct link between the signing of trade agreements and the British public who should benefit from them. And it would bolster the UK's international standing, demonstrating that it is committed to the highest levels of transparency and accountability.

As the UK seeks new trade agreements, we urge your government to accept a recent amendment to the Trade Bill that would give parliament a clear say on future trade arrangements. This would make trade more accountable to the British people, put the UK's trading ambitions on the most solid of foundations and secure the hand of our negotiators.

Yours sincerely,

Stefano Agostini, CEO, Nestlé UK & Ireland  
Minette Batters, President, NFU  
Ruth Bergan, Senior Adviser, Trade Justice Movement  
Nina Bhatia, Partner & Executive Director, Strategy & Commercial Development, John Lewis Partnership  
Andrew Cracknell, CEO, Pilgrim's Pride Ltd  
Kath Dalmeny, Chief Executive, Sustain  
Joan Edwards, Director of Marine Conservation, The Wildlife Trusts  
Martin Lines, UK Chair, Nature Friendly Farming Network  
Philip Lymbery, Global Chief Executive, Compassion in World Farming  
Dr Geoff Mackey, Corporate Affairs & Sustainability Director, UK and Ireland, BASF  
Thalie Martini, Chief Executive, Breast Cancer UK  
Nick Molho, Executive Director, Aldersgate Group  
Sue Riddlestone OBE, CEO & Co-Founder, Bioregional  
Mathew Riley, UK Managing Director, Ramboll  
John Sauven, Executive Director, Greenpeace UK

Chris Sherwood, Executive Director, RSPCA  
Shaun Spiers, Chair, Greener UK  
Tanya Steele, Chief Executive, WWF-UK  
James Thornton, Chief Executive Officer, ClientEarth  
Miriam Turner and Hugh Knowles, Co-Executive Directors, Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland  
Dr Michael Warhurst, Executive Director, CHEM Trust

The contents and recommendations of this letter are also supported by the Co-operative Group.