



The Rt. Hon. Greg Hands MP
Minister for Trade Policy
Department for International Trade
3 Whitehall Place
London

29th October 2020

Dear Minister,

We are writing to you as the Chairs of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Africa to express our deep concern at the seeming disregard the UK Government is currently showing to regional integration efforts in Africa, namely the UK's pursuit of bilateral trade deals with Kenya and Ghana.

Whilst we welcome the UK's commitment to continuing to offer enhanced market access on development grounds via the EBA, GSP and GSP+ schemes which will ensure continued market access for the majority of African nations trading with the UK, there are loopholes when it comes to Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon and Cote d'Ivoire. We understand that there is prospect of reaching agreements with Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon relatively soon. However, with Ghana and Kenya, greater concerns remain.

We are disappointed that the Government has made the active choice not to offer Ghana and Kenya the same level of market access post-Brexit as their immediate neighbouring countries within their regional trade blocs of ECOWAS and ECA respectively. Other member countries in these blocs are all classified as Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and as such have EBA (Everything But Arms). Seeking to agree new bilateral trade agreements separately with Kenya and Ghana will require them to offer new access to UK exporters and undermine the external tariffs of ECOWAS and ECA, damage regional trade, supply chains and ultimately livelihoods.

It is understandable that Ghana, as the Chair of the African Continental Free Trade Area, has chosen not to sign a new bilateral deal with the UK, instead making the choice to prioritise ensuring that there are no new trade barriers in ECOWAS. The inflexibility now shown by the UK may force Ghana to revert to a GSP and consequently plunge Ghanaian banana and cocoa producers, many of whom are extremely economically precarious, into deeper poverty as those supply chains will be hit with large new tariffs.

Kenya is more receptive to a bilateral deal to avoid the threat of new tariffs on flowers, green beans and other valuable exports. This will however, completely undermine the EAC's common external tariff, and lead to new obstructive border checks on the Kenyan border with Tanzania and Uganda.

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Africa
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Despite the UK's pledge to support regional trade and integration in Africa and the African Continental Free Trade Area, including the signing of an MoU with the African Union, using the threat of removing market access from exporters is undermining the continent's regional and continental trade goals and is in direct opposition to the FCDO's major priority for aid spending in East Africa.

Rather than trying to rush these arrangements through, we ask the Government instead to put in place mechanisms to allow Kenya and Ghana continued market access beyond the end of the year to allow more time for full consideration of the impacts both economic and political. As both countries are in trade blocs comprising a majority of LDCs, it would be appropriate and compliant with WTO rules for the UK to offer an EBA style arrangement, an idea that is also supported by the African Union and the Centre for Global Development who have spoken out against bilateral deals.

We would welcome an urgent meeting via Teams or Zoom to discuss this pressing issue with you further.

Yours sincerely,

Chi Onwurah MP
(Chair of the APPG for Africa)

Lord David Chidgey
(Co-Chair of the APPG for Africa)

cc.

James Duddridge MP, Minister for Africa
Theo Clarke MP, Trade Envoy to Kenya
Adam Afriyie MP, Trade Envoy to Ghana