

For Immediate Release

SINGAPORE REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO FACILITATE CROSS-BORDER FLOWS WITH AUSTRALIA, CANADA, REPUBLIC OF KOREA AND NEW ZEALAND

1. Minister for Trade and Industry Chan Chun Sing, Australian Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Simon Birmingham, Canadian Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade Mary Ng, Republic of Korea Minister for Trade Yoo Myung-hee and New Zealand Minister for Trade and Export Growth David Parker held a videoconference today where they reaffirmed their commitment to facilitate cross-border flows and identified concrete actions to help alleviate the impact of COVID-19.

2. At the videoconference, the Trade Ministers endorsed and launched the Joint Ministerial Statement on Action Plans to Facilitate the Flow of Goods and Services as well as the Essential Movement of People. Under this Joint Statement, the Ministers agreed to the following:

3. First, expedite customs procedures and refrain from introducing export restrictions on essential items such as food and medical supplies. This will ensure the smooth and timely flow of goods and open supply chains. The Ministers also agreed to ensure the continued operation of logistics networks via air, sea and land freight.

4. Second, facilitate the resumption of essential cross-border travel, while balancing public health considerations in line with efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, the Ministers committed to establish guidelines to facilitate the essential movement of people, for purposes such as maintaining global supply chains.

5. Third, minimise the impact of COVID-19 on trade and investment and facilitate an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This would include working closely with key multilateral economic institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO), sharing of best practices, and consulting with the private sector to design and implement business-friendly and creative solutions.

6. Mr Chan said, "This Joint Statement, together with other bilateral and plurilateral statements made recently, represents our collective commitment to maintain trade and supply chain connectivity amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, Singapore will work with like-minded partners to facilitate the resumption of essential cross-border travel, with mutual assurance of health standards. We agreed to work out guidelines that will allow our people to travel between our countries once more, without compromising efforts to safeguard public health. These initiatives will not only help us overcome the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also position us well for a swift recovery once the situation stabilises."

**Ministry of Trade and Industry
1 May 2020**

ANNEX A: Photos and Caption

**ANNEX B: Joint Ministerial Statement on Action Plans to Facilitate the
Flow of Goods and Services as well as the Essential Movement of People**

**ANNEX C: Speech by Minister for Trade and Industry Chan Chun Sing at
the videoconference with Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea and New
Zealand**

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ANNEX A: Photos and Caption



Caption: Minister for Trade and Industry Chan Chun Sing at the videoconference with Trade Ministers of Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea and New Zealand, to launch the *Joint Ministerial Statement on Action Plans to Facilitate the Flow of Goods and Services as well as the Essential Movement of People*

ANNEX B: Joint Ministerial Statement on Action Plans to Facilitate the Flow of Goods and Services as well as the Essential Movement of People

The COVID-19 outbreak has presented a global challenge that requires a coordinated global response. The G20 Trade and Investment Ministers, along with Ministers of attending guest invitees, in their Extraordinary Meeting held on March 30th 2020, reaffirmed their collective determination to ensure the continued flow of goods, services and personnel as well as maintaining the global supply chains.

Based on the G20 Ministerial Statement, we will identify concrete actions that could help alleviate the impact of COVID-19 and work with other countries to develop these actions as follows:

1. Working to ensure the Flow of Goods in Global Supply Chains

- Expedite customs procedures with a view to reducing processing times and related administrative burdens in accordance with national laws and regulations.
 - Encourage more use of electronic means for customs processing, which minimize face-to-face interactions without lengthening processing times.
 - Ensure facilitation of transport and customs clearances of essential goods, such as food, critical medical supplies and personal protection equipment.
- Facilitate the timely flow of goods including essential supplies by ensuring operation of logistics networks via air, sea, and land freight.
 - Work out bilateral and/or multilateral cooperative arrangements to expedite necessary approval procedures for air crew and to utilise additional aircraft for cargo operations.
 - Promote transparency of import and export regulations to facilitate continued movement of goods.
- Refrain from the introduction of export prohibitions or restrictions, tariffs and non-tariff barriers on essential goods, including food, pharmaceuticals, and critical medical supplies. This underscores the importance of preserving the ability of countries to import essential medical supplies, pharmaceuticals and food to meet their domestic needs.
 - If such measures are instituted,

- Ensure that measures are targeted, proportionate, transparent, temporary and consistent with WTO rules.
- Provide advance notification of the measure to the WTO as soon as practicable.
- Work towards removing such measures when the situation allows for it.
- Establish a consultation mechanism between the relevant authorities of the signatory countries to identify and address trade disruptions that affect the trade in essential goods.

2. Facilitating the Essential Movement of People

- Facilitate the resumption of essential cross-border travel, with mutual assurance of health standards, while ensuring the safeguarding of public health in line with our efforts to combat the pandemic as well as to minimize the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.
- Establish guidelines to allow, on an exceptional basis, essential cross-border travel for purposes such as maintaining global supply chains, including essential business travel, in accordance with national laws and regulations, without undermining the efforts to prevent the spread of the virus.

3. Minimizing the Negative Impacts on Trade and Investment arising from the Pandemic to facilitate an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery

- Reiterate and garner strong support for the rules-based international trade system, including WTO rules, and work closely with key multilateral economic institutions.
- Provide relevant information to affected countries and to the WTO in a timely manner when adopting a measure with a foreseeable impact on international trade and investment.
- Develop and share best practices including those for ensuring flows of goods and services, minimizing restrictions on people movement, and aiding sectors that are adversely affected by the pandemic.
- Engage actively with the private sector to design and implement measures in a business-friendly manner and to work together for creative solutions.

**MINISTER FOR TRADE, TOURISM AND INVESTMENT, AUSTRALIA,
SENATOR THE HON SIMON BIRMINGHAM**

**MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS, EXPORT PROMOTION AND
INTERNATIONAL TRADE, CANADA, HON MARY NG**

**MINISTER FOR TRADE AND EXPORT GROWTH, NEW ZEALAND, HON
DAVID PARKER**

MINISTER FOR TRADE, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, HON YOO MYUNG-HEE

**MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, SINGAPORE, HON CHAN CHUN
SING**

1 May 2020

ANNEX C: Speech by Minister for Trade and Industry Chan Chun Sing at the videoconference with Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea and New Zealand

1. Good morning Myung-hee, Simon and David, and good evening Mary. Very happy to be meeting Mary for the first time since you took over from Minister Jim Carr. Please send my regards to Jim.
2. Let me start by thanking Minister Yoo for hosting this virtual session. All of us share the same concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on the lives, livelihoods and lifelines of our people. The COVID-19 pandemic is not only an unprecedented public health crisis, but also poses unprecedented socio-economic disruptions and changes to the way we live.
3. Such a crisis requires a collective and coordinated response from us. It is significant that we have come together today to endorse the Joint Ministerial Statement on Action Plans to Facilitate the Flow of Goods and Services as well as the Essential Movement of People.
4. At the G20 Virtual Trade and Investment Ministerial Meeting a month ago, a number of us highlighted how global production and trading systems are facing unprecedented challenges to production capacities, capabilities and connectivity. To mitigate these challenges, we must resist the protectionist tide of looking inwards and allowing trade restrictive measures to persist. Our Statement today will certainly build upon existing affirmation of supply chain connectivity in two key ways.
5. First, we have identified some concrete actions that countries can collectively take to maintain our supply chain connectivity, which serve to underscore our resolve to keep our production capacities and capabilities up. Examples include expediting customs procedures and promoting transparency of import and export regulations.

6. I welcome discussions on how we can take further steps to spur trade and return us to business normalcy as soon as possible. One example is the Joint Declaration that Singapore and New Zealand have concluded. We can explore similar arrangements to facilitate the flow of essential goods and medical supplies.

7. Second, and very importantly as Minister Yoo has mentioned, today's Statement brings a new and important focus, which is our shared commitment to facilitate the resumption of essential cross-border business travel. Travel restrictions arising from COVID-19 have disrupted business activities all around the world. Resuming travel with mutual assurance will be important.

8. We should ask our officials to work out how we can take calibrated steps towards the resumption of essential travel so that we can bring about economic recovery. For us to achieve this, it will be important for us to have some standardised protocols for mutual assurance of health standards, in terms of testing and contact tracing. If we can work together on similar standards for reassurance, that will be a great help towards the resumption of travel. This will also allow the inter-dependency of supply chains to resume. The lack of passenger flights has affected cargo capacities and led to a disruption in supply chain connectivity for essential goods for many countries. I look forward to our officials having discussions on this.

9. Finally, I would like to thank Minister Yoo for your leadership to convene this meeting so that our policies will be more coordinated to help our people and businesses to recover. I hope that today's Statement will further catalyse concrete outcomes that will position our economies for a strong rebound.

10. I look forward to continuing our close partnership. Thank you.