

**MINISTER GAN KIM YONG PARTICIPATES IN FOURTH MEETING OF  
THE COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT FOR  
TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP COMMISSION**

1. Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong represented Singapore at the fourth meeting of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) Commission earlier today. The virtual meeting was hosted by Japan, Chair of the Commission this year, and was attended by Ministers and Senior Officials from the 11 CPTPP economies (Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam).
2. The Commission decided to commence the accession process for the United Kingdom (UK) to the CPTPP, following the UK's formal request to the CPTPP Depositary on 1 February 2021. The Commission has established an Accession Working Group (AWG) to oversee the UK's accession. The AWG will be chaired by Japan, with Singapore and Australia as Vice-Chairs. It will examine the UK's accession request, conduct negotiations on its possible accession, and submit a report to the Commission on the proposed terms and conditions of the UK's accession.
3. Mr Gan said, "Singapore supports the United Kingdom's application to accede to the CPTPP, and as Vice-Chair of the UK Accession Working Group, we will work closely with other members to facilitate the accession process. Trade is a critical enabler for the post-pandemic economic recovery, and countries should work together towards inclusive and sustainable growth. The CPTPP creates a facilitative framework for opportunities in digital trade and supports the growth and development of small and medium enterprises by making it easier for them to participate in regional trade and supply chains. Singapore continues to welcome economies that are willing and able to meet the CPTPP's high standards to join the Agreement and to further advance deeper economic integration in the Asia Pacific and beyond."
4. The Commission also expressed its hope that the remaining signatories that have not yet ratified the CPTPP, would do so as soon as possible to enjoy the full benefits of the Agreement.

**MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY  
2 JUNE 2021**

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**Annexes**

- A: Photo of the Fourth Meeting of the CPTPP Commission**
- B: Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) - Joint Ministerial Statement on the occasion of the Fourth Commission Meeting**
- C: Decision of the CPTPP Commission Regarding the United Kingdom's Formal Request to Commence the Accession Process**

For media queries, please contact:

Eoin Ee  
Communications and Engagement Division  
Tel: +65 6332 7315  
Email: [Eoin\\_EE@mti.gov.sg](mailto:Eoin_EE@mti.gov.sg)

**Annex A: Photo of the Fourth Meeting of the CPTPP Commission**



Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong participated in the fourth meeting of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) Commission earlier today (2 June 2021).

## **Annex B: Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) - Joint Ministerial Statement on the occasion of the Fourth Commission Meeting**

Ministers and Senior Officials, representing Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Viet Nam, met virtually on the occasion of the fourth meeting of the CPTPP Commission, hosted by Japan on June 2, 2021.

We welcome the formal request to accede to the CPTPP received from the United Kingdom on 1 February, 2021 and, acting upon the request, the Parties have reached a decision to commence an accession process with the United Kingdom and establish an Accession Working Group.

### **Significance of the CPTPP and interest in CPTPP accession**

Amidst the downturn of the global economy caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the emergence of inward-looking tendencies, such as restrictive and unjustified trade practices, we affirm that an innovative, high standards agreement like the CPTPP can be a significant contributor to post-COVID-19 trade and economic recovery in our region and beyond. We are resolved to continue our on-going work towards this end, including to strengthen supply chain resilience and facilitate e-commerce.

In this regard, we share the view that the commencement of an accession process with the United Kingdom and the potential expansion of the CPTPP will send a strong signal to our trading partners around the world, of our commitment to support a free, fair, open, effective, inclusive and rules-based trading system.

The commencement of an accession process with the United Kingdom provides an opportunity to advance the CPTPP's high-standard rules for the 21st century and further promote free trade, open and competitive markets and economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

These objectives are aligned with Article 5 of the Agreement and the Accession Process adopted by the CPTPP Commission at its first meeting in Tokyo in January 2019. These make clear that the CPTPP is open to accession by economies committed to these objectives and able to fulfill the Agreement's high standards.

In furthering these objectives, the CPTPP Commission emphasized the importance of aspirant economies demonstrating their full acceptance and commitment to complying with all the existing rules of the Agreement and to delivering the highest standard of market access commitments, consistent with the benchmarks set out in the CPTPP Accession Process.

## **Decision to commence an accession process with the United Kingdom**

In making its decision, mindful of the need to advance the high-standard rules of the CPTPP, the Commission took into consideration the United Kingdom's experience with high-standard trade and investment rules; its clear commitment to promote transparency, predictability, and confidence in the rules-based trading system; and its affirmation of its intention and ability to meet the high standards of the CPTPP.

The work on the accession process with the United Kingdom is just beginning and today's decision is but one step in the process. The United Kingdom has indicated that it is prepared to meet the high standards of the CPTPP. We look forward to working with the United Kingdom to understand how it would fulfill the commitments of the Agreement, especially its compliance with all the existing rules, to receiving the United Kingdom's market access offers and to negotiating the terms and conditions of its accession. The CPTPP aims to achieve the highest standard of comprehensive market access through the elimination of tariffs and other barriers to goods and services trade and investment. We view the United Kingdom as a partner with the potential to contribute faithfully to this endeavour.

In addition, we note that the United Kingdom's potential membership would support the mutual interests, common values and commitment to upholding the rules-based trading system shared by the members of the CPTPP. It would also promote market-oriented principles and help to counter protectionism and the use of unjustified trade restrictive measures.

## **CPTPP entry into force by all Signatories**

We reiterate the importance of maintaining solidarity within CPTPP membership, and express the hope that those Signatories for which the CPTPP has yet to enter into force will ratify the Agreement as soon as possible and engage in this and future accession processes as Parties.

## **Annex C: Decision by the Commission of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership regarding the United Kingdom’s Formal Request to Commence the Accession Process**

*In light of* the formal request to commence negotiations on acceding to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (herein after referred to as “CPTPP”) received from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (hereinafter referred to as “the United Kingdom”) on 1 February, 2021;

*Pursuant to* Article 5 (Accession), Article 27.2 (Functions of the Commission), Article 27.3 (Decision Making) and Article 27.4 (Rules of Procedure of the Commission) of the CPTPP, and the Accession Process in the Annex to the Decision of 19 January, 2019 CPTPP/COM/2019/D002 (hereinafter referred to as “Accession Process”) adopted by the CPTPP Commission (hereinafter referred to as “Commission”); and

*Taking note of* the United Kingdom’s history as a supporter of the rules-based trading system, its experience with high-standard trade and investment rules, and the United Kingdom’s affirmation of its intention to comply with the obligations of the CPTPP and deliver the highest standards of market access, as stipulated in the Accession Process;

*The Commission decides as follows:*

### **Commencement of the Accession Process**

1. Further to Subsection 2.1 (Request to commence accession process) of the Accession Process, the accession process requested by the United Kingdom as an aspirant economy is hereby commenced<sup>1</sup>.

### **Establishment of an Accession Working Group**

2. A working group to negotiate the accession of the United Kingdom (hereinafter referred to as “Accession Working Group”) is hereby established with the following terms of reference and composition:

Terms of Reference: “Pursuant to Article 5 (Accession) of the CPTPP and Sections 3 and 5 of the Accession Process, (i) to examine the request of the Government of the United Kingdom to accede to the CPTPP, including documentation provided by the United Kingdom to demonstrate its ability to comply with the terms of the CPTPP and any other information from the United Kingdom as requested by the CPTPP Parties: (ii) to conduct negotiations on the United Kingdom’s accession to the CPTPP and, (iii) to submit to the Commission, after finalising

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<sup>1</sup> For greater certainty, this decision is without prejudice to each Party’s domestic procedures regarding the accession of the United Kingdom to the CPTPP.

negotiations, a written report on terms and conditions for the United Kingdom's accession to the CPTPP.”

Membership: The Accession Working Group will comprise government representatives from each Party.

Chair: Japan, Vice-Chairs: Australia and Singapore. The responsibilities of the Chair include: coordinating the overall conduct of the Accession Working Group, including its organizational matters; presiding over all meetings of the Accession Working Group; and coordinating the drafting of a written report of the Accession Working Group. The Vice-Chairs will assist the Chair in fulfilling its responsibilities.

3. Pursuant to Article 27.4.4 (Rules of Procedure of the Commission) of the CPTPP and the Accession Process, the Accession Working Group may, as appropriate, establish its rules of procedure and timetable for the conduct of its work.
4. The Accession Working Group may, as appropriate, establish subsidiary groups to carry out its functions.
5. CPTPP Signatories for which the Agreement has yet to enter into force may attend, and participate in the meetings of the Accession Working Group except when the Parties decide otherwise, on the understanding that any decision of the Accession Working Group will be made by the Parties to the CPTPP.
6. While the Accession Working Group does not include government representatives from the United Kingdom, it may invite the United Kingdom to its meetings to negotiate the accession terms and conditions, or for any other reasons.

This decision is effective as of the date of adoption by the Commission, and shall be made publicly available by the Chair of the Commission.