



## JOINT STATEMENT ON THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE BOARD ON TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*(4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 virtually in Singapore and UK)*

On 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Governments of the United Kingdom (UK) and Singapore held the first meeting of the Board on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) under the UK-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (UKSFTA). The meeting was hosted by the UK via videoconference. The following Joint Statement presents the discussions of this TSD Board meeting for the benefit of participants in the UK-Singapore Public Stakeholders' Forum.

During the opening discussion on Institutional Mechanisms, the UK and Singapore provided updates on the establishment and functions of their respective Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs). Parties expressed a keenness to facilitate the Public Stakeholders' Forum and exchanged views on their approaches to running the Forum. Parties also recognised the importance of DAG-to-DAG engagement in supporting the implementation of the TSD Chapter. Both countries agreed to exchange their standing lists of possible individuals who may be called upon to serve on the Panel of Experts, should either Party request for a Panel of Experts to be established. Having shared a working understanding of how the TSD Board would operate, both countries also agreed to apply the working principles of the Trade Committee Rules of Procedure as guiding principles in organising the TSD Board.

On the Trade and Environment agenda item, Parties presented updates on their domestic institutional set-up and national policies aimed at achieving sustainable development objectives. The UK updated on topics including Sustainable Forestry, Sustainable Fishing, Biodiversity and Trade and Net Zero. The UK also updated on its actions internationally, such as its accession to CPTPP, its signing of FTAs with Australia and New Zealand, and its work to co-facilitate talks on Environmental Goods and Services (EGS) at the WTO's Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD). The UK also updated on progress and goals related to offshore wind, solar power and hydrogen technology development.

Singapore updated on their Singapore Green Plan 2030 and their biodiversity strategies. The Green Plan is a whole-of-nation sustainability agenda that is an expansive and multi-sectoral effort to advance towards Singapore's net-zero emissions goal by 2050, covering how they live, play, work, commute, and more. Like the UK, Singapore is developing national targets based on the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Singapore also presented on their approach to Green Economy Agreements (GEAs). These are designed to foster international cooperation in the low-carbon economy, and can for instance increase the spread and adoption of EGS, reduce regulatory burdens and operating costs for business, promote green technology development, and support growth and job creation in green sectors. The UK noted this and also looked forward to continued collaboration with Singapore under the UK-Singapore Green Economy Framework.

The UK updated on recent EGS discussions at the WTO, particularly within the TESSD forum. It explained its recent use of value chain analysis to help provide a conceptual framework for EGS. The UK and Singapore welcomed the recent success of the TESSD EGS working group in focusing on renewable energy and noted that future conversations could consider the agritech and water sectors. The UK and Singapore agreed to hold further informal discussions amongst likeminded partners on EGS at the WTO.

During the Discussion on Trade and Labour, the UK and Singapore addressed developments regarding the ratification and implementation of ILO conventions. The UK noted its recent ratification of Convention 190 (Violence and Harassment) in March 2022 in addition to domestic legislative changes, such as the increase to the National Living Wage and the Government's support for six Private Members' Bills to become law: helping new parents, unpaid carers, hospitality workers, giving all employees easier access to flexible working and giving workers a right to request a more predictable working pattern.

Singapore presented an overview of their efforts which support the objectives of the ILO's fundamental conventions. These included their efforts to tackle forced labour, child labour, and human trafficking as well as how they are improving worker safety, ensuring the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. Singapore's presentation also included measures aimed at increasing labour force participation amongst women and the elderly and creating employment opportunities for people with disabilities. They also updated the UK, including in response to UK queries on their new legislation to prohibit workplace discrimination and on how migrant workers are factored into the implementation of their labour laws.

Both Parties concluded by welcoming the constructive discussions at the first meeting of the UK-Singapore Board on Trade and Sustainable Development, recognising the value of this exchange as the start of a long and positive relationship under the TSD Chapter.

## JOINT SUMMARY OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS' FORUM ON TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*(27<sup>th</sup> November 2023 virtually in Singapore and London, UK)*

The first Public Stakeholders' Forum on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) under the UK-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (UKSFTA) was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023 in Singapore and London, UK via videoconference. The Forum was independently moderated by the UK and Singapore Chairs of the Parties' Domestic Advisory Groups (DAG). The event was attended by public stakeholders from both Parties including representatives from both sides' TSD DAGs.

The governments updated stakeholders on the first meeting of the UK-Singapore Trade and Sustainable Development Board held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 via the Joint Statement.

The UK and Singapore stakeholders engaged in a productive session on Trade and Labour. The discussion focused on topics related to the implementation of fundamental International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions, including mental health in the context of workplace anti-discrimination legislation as well as occupational safety and health. In response to a question raised as to whether the UK's Minimum Service Levels Legislation is compatible with international commitments, the UK Government outlined that the Minimum Service Levels Legislation is compatible with its international obligations and achieves a balance between the ability of union members to take strike action and protecting the rights and freedoms of the wider public and society. Connections between the environmental and social dimensions of sustainable trade were also discussed in relation to environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG), especially within global and domestic supply chains. In addition, stakeholders discussed the importance of supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to navigate new requirements on labour and sustainability that were being introduced by governments.

In the session on Trade and Environment, stakeholders welcomed Singapore's formal acceptance of the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies and looked forward to the UK's ratification of the Agreement.

Both governments affirmed their commitment to continue supporting the WTO's work on fisheries subsidies. Stakeholders discussed the contribution of green procurement processes to global sustainability goals as well as ways to boost trade in environmental goods and services. The UK also confirmed its intentions to implement the due diligence provisions on forest risk commodities of its Environment Act.

The UK Government confirmed that its consultation on carbon leakage had closed and that a response would be published in due course. Recognising that carbon leakage is a global issue, the UK expressed its willingness to consider future bilateral and multilateral cooperation in this space. Finally, stakeholders welcomed the launch of the UK-Singapore Green Economy Framework (UKSGEF) and looked forward to future opportunities for business collaboration and cooperation under the Framework.

To close the Forum, the independent co-moderators highlighted the rich nature of the discussion and thanked all participants for their attendance and contributions. Both governments echoed thanks to attendees and recognised the similarities between the sustainability goals of the Parties, highlighting how the constructive discussion supported future engagement and collaboration under the UKSFTA.

Agenda A: UK-Singapore Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development  
4 October 2023

(UK time 09:00-11:30 and 16:00-18:30 Singapore time) on Microsoft Teams.

№	Agenda Items
1	Greetings and opening remarks
2	Institutional Mechanisms
3	Session on Trade and Environment
4	Discussion on Environmental Goods and Services
5	Session on Trade and Labour
6	Actions and next steps
7	Closing remarks