

International Agreements Committee Call for Evidence: UK accession to Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)

21/09/2022

About us

The Trade Justice Movement (TJM) is a UK-wide network of sixty civil society organisations, with millions of individual members, calling for trade rules that work for people and the planet. Our members include trade unions, NGOs, consumer groups and faith organisations. Together we are calling for trade justice, where the global system of trade ensures sustainable outcomes for ordinary people and the environment.

Summary

This submission seeks to deal with some of TJM's primary concerns surrounding the UK's accession to CPTPP. Underpinning much of this submission are our profound misgivings about the way the negotiation and ratification of the UK's trade treaties are conducted. The process for CPTPP has not assuaged these concerns. Issues that should be urgently addressed include the absence of an overarching trade strategy against which the rationale for signing FTAs such as CPTPP could be properly judged, the limited opportunities for parliamentary and public participation in both the initial mandate-setting and the negotiations themselves, the opaque way in which negotiations are conducted, and the absence of binding parliamentary procedures, particularly an affirmative vote, during the ratification of a signed treaty. The recent machinery of government changes and corresponding changes to the structure of Commons select committees has exacerbated some of these problems. In addition, more clarity is needed regarding the content of the way ex-post assessments of this and other new trade agreements will be presented, so that the wide-reaching impacts of FTAs can be understood, not simply their impact on GDP. We welcome the Committee's work in undertaking this inquiry and the value this has in addressing this democratic deficit.

We are also pleased to have had the opportunity to express our concerns about several aspects of the agreement which will have significant impacts both domestically and internationally. The inclusion of an investor-state dispute settlement mechanism is key among them, and we argue in particular that there is a clear and urgent case for the UK Government to pursue a side letter with Canada disapplying ISDS provisions between the two countries. We also briefly address the risks that CPTPP brings in terms of climate and environmental policy and intellectual property rules. Submissions by other NGOs will doubtless cover issues around agriculture, services and food standards effectively, and these are not addressed directly here. There are issues that sit outside of the scope of this inquiry, such as disparate labour rights in CPTPP member states, which are also worthy of scrutiny.

Introductory question

What is your view of the overall likely economic benefit of CPTPP for the UK? What are your reasons for this view? Are Government projections realistic?

1. Impact assessments that solely focus on economic benefits of proposed free trade agreements (FTAs), and do not seek to analyse the wider potential costs of any agreement, are by their nature limited. Reducing the projected benefit or cost of an FTA to the (in this case, marginal) GDP gains is inadequate given the breadth of policy areas upon which CPTPP membership will impact, and

meaningful projections of the social and environmental implications of any FTA would be more valuable. Public Health Wales (PHW), for example, have produced a health impact assessment, researching some of the potential implications of CPTPP accession on public health in Wales.¹ This assessment could be mirrored in areas such as climate and environmental impacts, gender, human rights, and other such areas that are inadequately captured in the kind of Government projections we have so far seen. Such research contributes to a much more comprehensive framework for us to understand the implications of FTAs, including their cumulative impact. In addition, projections of GDP increase as currently constituted say little for how any such gains will be distributed.

2. It is worth noting that there have been imperfections with the Government's processes of developing economic impact assessments to date; the Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC) was forced to rank the Department's initial impact assessment for the UK-Australia FTA, for example, as "not fit for purpose", owing to the fact that it "disproportionately emphasised the beneficial impacts with very limited discussion of the risks, disadvantageous impacts, and potential mitigations."² The Department's reviewed IA was subsequently accepted. This initial finding reflects a tendency of such assessments towards an excessive emphasis on the prospective benefits of trade agreements, and corroborates a significant body of research highlighting a tendency to overstate the potential benefits of FTAs. Researchers at Tufts University, Massachusetts, for example, criticised the US's initial projected benefits of the proposed TPP Agreement (the forerunner to CPTPP) in 2016, describing the claims as being based on "unjustified assumptions" and overlooking potential negative impacts on employment rates, inequality levels and worker purchasing power.³
3. In the longer term, in order to effectively assess the Government's projections, it would be valuable to understand in what format the Government plans to produce its ex-post analysis of CPTPP and other new FTAs in the coming years. Such analysis should include the use of a counterfactual scenario in which there was no such agreement, and reports must be transparent and invite stakeholder responses and parliamentary debate. The Government recently received negative media coverage over the impact of the UK-Japan agreement, as it was reported that exports had fallen in the period since the FTA was signed.⁴ It is imperative that potential negative media reception does not compromise the transparency of such publications in the future so that Parliament and the public can understand the implications of these agreements. Doing this successfully will require collaboration across Government departments.

Intellectual property

¹ Green, L, Silva, L., Fletcher, M., Petchey, L., Morgan L., Douglas, M., Azam, S., McNamara, C. (2023) 'The health, well-being and equity impact of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) Agreement on Wales' Available at: https://phwwhocc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/PHW-CPTPP-Report-Eng-10_07.pdf

² Regulatory Policy Committee (2021) 'The UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement'. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1042706/RPC-DIT-5109_2_-_UK-Australia_FTA_opinion_final_20211216_002.pdf

³ Sundaram, J. (2016) 'Some Real Costs of the Trans-Pacific Partnership' Available at: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2016/WorkGroups/House%20Commerce/Bills/H.R.16/H.R.16~Sen.%20Virginia%20Lyo ns~Global%20Development%20and%20Environment%20Institute%20-%20Tufts%20University~4-21-2016.pdf>

⁴ Ungoed-Thomas, J. and Savage, M. (2022) 'Brexit Blow: Exports to Japan slump after 'landmark' free trade agreement'. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/nov/26/brexit-britain-japantrade-deal-exports-slump>

The Government states that it “ensured our accession to CPTPP is consistent with our existing international obligations, such as the European Patent Convention (EPC)”.^[1] Are you satisfied with this outcome? Does it solve the issue of conflicting obligations between the EPC and CPTPP regimes?

Has the NHS been satisfactorily protected in CPTPP accession?

4. There are a range of concerns that arise in trade agreements that have extensive intellectual property provisions such as those included in CPTPP. These can include direct and indirect impacts on health outcomes, including access to medicine and health services, issues around seed patenting, technology transfer, and much else besides.
5. With regard to health, Mediciens sans Frontieres (MSF) initially described the TPP (the forerunner to CPTPP) as “a bad deal for medicine: it’s bad for humanitarian medical treatment providers such as MSF, and it’s bad for people who need access to affordable medicines around the world”.⁵ Although CPTPP removed some of the IP provisions of the TPP, significant provisions remain. These provisions extend patent terms, allow minor changes to products to attract additional patent extensions, and prevent generics producers from using existing clinical data. The impact of these provisions is likely to be to drive up the cost of medicines. Public Health Wales’ Health Impact Assessment suggested that “CPTPP’s intellectual property provisions could also have potential negative impacts for the population because it could lead to an increased cost of medicines, biologics and medical devices”.⁶
6. On the wider point raised in the inquiry’s question about NHS protection, it is worth noting that PHW also point to ISDS risks here, setting out that “potential negative impacts could also emerge due to the potential use of ISDS to prevent measures that would limit competition or prevent future nationalisation of health services...in effect, the ISDS mechanism could block development of new models of care and service delivery”.⁷
7. CPTPP also contains provisions which lower income countries have long resisted, such as a requirement to sign up to extensive seed patenting rules under the Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties 1991 (UPOV ‘91). The convention affords plant breeders a 20–25-year monopoly over seeds that are new, distinct, uniform, and stable. Farmers are not allowed to produce, reproduce, sell, or exchange seeds of these varieties without the breeder’s permission. This system can lock farmers into reliance on monopoly seed companies, and sometimes also use of associated agrochemicals as well. Farmers are not able to save and exchange seeds that are patented but must buy costly seeds to plant new crops. This can have a particularly damaging effect on small-scale farmers in poorer CPTPP member states.

ISDS

The UK has agreed to exclude ISDS provisions with Australia and New Zealand, but they are included for the other member states. What is your view on this approach?

⁵ Mediciens sans Frontieres (2015). ‘Statement by MSF on the official release of the full text of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement’. Available at: <https://www.msfacecess.org/statement-msf-official-release-full-text-trans-pacific-partnership-trade-agreement>

⁶ Green, L, Silva, L., Fletcher, M., Petchey, L., Morgan L., Douglas, M., Azam, S., McNamara, C. (2023) ‘The health, well-being and equity impact of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) Agreement on Wales’, pg 34. Available at: https://phwwhocc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/PHW-CPTPP-Report-Eng-10_07.pdf

⁷ Green, L, Silva, L., Fletcher, M., Petchey, L., Morgan L., Douglas, M., Azam, S., McNamara, C. (2023) ‘The health, well-being and equity impact of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) Agreement on Wales’, pg 20. Available at: https://phwwhocc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/PHW-CPTPP-Report-Eng-10_07.pdf

8. The inclusion of Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) in CPTPP is a key area of concern. The Government did not set out any specific commitments relating to its negotiating priorities regarding ISDS in its Strategic Approach document for accession talks. This, coupled with the absence of an overarching trade strategy which makes explicit the Government's negotiating stance with regard to ISDS (something which your Committee has called for, a call TJM wholeheartedly shares), mean that there is a worrying ambiguity about the approach to ISDS that negotiators undertook.
9. It is unclear, for example, how side letters with Australia and New Zealand were approached; given that both the Governments of Australia⁸ and New Zealand⁹ were elected on platforms that pledged to prohibit the signing of trade agreements that include ISDS, and both countries had signed a number of side letters with other CPTPP member states at the point of their own respective accessions, it is reasonable to assume that it was not the UK Government who initially sought such exclusions. However, transparency on this question would be extremely valuable given the damaging impact on the right to regulate across a range of policy areas that ISDS provisions entail.
10. Where an explicit approach to ISDS has been set out by the UK Government, it is an alarmingly complacent one. The primary justification offered for the continued inclusion of ISDS in international trade agreements including this one is that the UK has not been successfully challenged via ISDS (proffered in response to both oral¹⁰ and written¹¹ parliamentary questions). Professor Jane Kelsey in a 2016 evidence submission to New Zealand's Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Committee pointed to a similarly lax attitude on the part of Australia prior to the infamous case involving Phillip Morris's case over plain packaging regulations on cigarettes. The case cost the Australian Government tens of millions of dollars to defend despite winning on a matter of jurisdiction.
11. A significant increase in the risk facing the UK of challenge via ISDS is Canada's membership of CPTPP. Canadian companies, like those in the UK, are particularly aggressive users of ISDS, having brought 65 cases. Canada is a hub for mining and fossil fuel firms, and the majority of ISDS cases¹² lodged by Canadian firms related to energy or environmental policies.
12. Indeed, the UK Government has accepted elsewhere that this additional risk exists; the Department for International Trade's strategic approach to the concurrent bilateral FTA negotiations being undertaken with Canada set an objective to, "Ensure the agreement does not contain an investor state dispute mechanism (ISDS)."¹³ Such a commitment has not been contained in other strategic approach documents for other bilateral FTA negotiations. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI)

⁸ Australian Labour Party (2021) 'ALP National Platform'. Available at: <https://alp.org.au/media/2594/2021-alp-national-platform-final-endorsed-platform.pdf>

⁹ Cheng, D. (2017) 'Ban on foreign house buyers by early 2018 - but Aussie buyers exempt'. Available at: https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/ban-on-foreign-house-buyers-by-early-2018-but-aussie-buyers-exempt/2YCYCPHTWZU2UUTROWWIARZ4OM/?c_id=3&objectid=11939067

¹⁰ Hansard (2023) 'Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership' Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-09-14/debates/92BCC87F-7B32-404C-9478-D9CFB53D09F2/ComprehensiveAndProgressiveAgreementForTrans-PacificPartnership#contribution-03A99752-829C-4797-B65B-D50E1D953DA3>

¹¹ UK Parliament (2023) 'Trade Agreements: Dispute Resolution' Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-16/123964/>

¹² Canadian Centre for Policy Studies (2022) 'On the Offensive' Available at: <https://policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2022/05/On%20the%20Offensive.pdf>

¹³ Department for International Trade (2022) 'UK approach to negotiating a free trade agreement with Canada' Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-approach-to-negotiating-a-free-trade-agreement-with-canada>

has stated, drawing on Canada's experience under NAFTA, that there is "a risk of the UK becoming disproportionately targeted through ISDS."¹⁴ There are specific sectors which may be at immediate risk. One is in the UK's water utilities, given the sector's troubles and potential need for regulatory intervention by the government. London's Thames Water, for example, is partially owned by Canadian pension funds.

13. The arguments over the disastrous effects of ISDS for the climate and on environmental regulations are well-known. High profile cases have been brought against measures seeking to protect the natural environment such as water pollution controls, fracking bans, limits on oil and gas exploration and mining regulations. This is in addition to the 'regulatory chill' that the threat of litigation brings. However, it is important to note that ISDS can be wielded in other areas of public policy, including public health. Public Health Wales have set out in detail a range of potential barriers to enacting evidence-based policies that encourage healthy behaviours that ISDS can bring, citing the possibility of deterrence of progressive measures intended to improve public health, such as nutrition labelling of food and beverages, tobacco control measures and alcohol policies.¹⁵
14. TJM therefore firmly believes that ISDS exemptions should have been sought with all CPTPP member states. However, at this stage, we would urgently call for the Government to seek a specific side letter with Canada to disapply provisions between the two countries, given that Canada is one of the CPTPP member states with which the UK does not presently have agreed ISDS provisions under any other trade or investment agreement, as well as the particular risk that ISDS provisions with Canada bring. There is a clear precedent for such side letters being agreed at this stage in the ratification process; Chile, for example, agreed a side letter on ISDS exemptions with New Zealand just days before CPTPP came into force.¹⁶ We therefore believe that there is a clear argument for such an agreement to be sought as an urgent priority.

Environmental standards

What is your view on the implications of CPTPP for the UK's domestic environmental policies and regulations, and for UK policy on greenhouse gas intensive practices among other member countries?

- **What effect might the joint statement on climate change, the environment and sustainable trade have in this regard?**

What is your view on the implications of CPTPP accession for deforestation and palm oil imports? What effect might the accompanying UK-Malaysia joint statement have in this regard?

15. There has long been a mismatch between the UK Government's stated ambitions on climate and the UK's trade policy. In lieu of any kind of trade strategy, there is little requirement placed on negotiators for deals to include binding environmental provisions or restrictions on how deals affect standards. The Government opposed amendments to the Trade Act which would have maintained

¹⁴ CBI (2021) 'Joining the CPTPP: opportunities and challenges for UK business' Available at:

<https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/6859/joining-the-cptpp-opportunities-and-challenges-for-uk-business.pdf>

¹⁵ Green, L, Silva, L., Fletcher, M., Petchey, L., Morgan L., Douglas, M., Azam, S., McNamara, C. (2023) 'The health, well-being and equity impact of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) Agreement on Wales', pg 21 Available at: https://phwwhocc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/PHW-CPTPP-Report-Eng-10_07.pdf

¹⁶ Bondy, C., Genest, A, & Giakoumakis, E. (2023) 'The CPTPP Enters into Force for Chile – but Mind the Fine Print'. Available at: <https://www.steptoeglobaltradeblog.com/2023/03/the-cptpp-enters-into-force-for-chile-but-mind-the-fine-print/#:~:text=The%20Chilean%20Senate%20approved%20the,procedures%20on%20December%2022%2C%202022.>

high standards and has since continued its opposition to such measures. The points raised in our response to Q10 are certainly also strongly pertinent here.

16. The UK's own assessment predicts that greenhouse gas emissions will increase as a result of accession to CPTPP. Whilst the increase is small, at 0.003%, it is far from the significant reductions that are required to achieve our climate commitments. The chapter's environmental commitments, such as they are, are not enforceable. The Australian Fair Trade & Investment Network (Aftinet) points out how the lack of enforceability in CPTPP's environment chapter "contrasts sharply with the legal rights of corporations to sue governments over domestic laws, including environmental laws, under the provisions for ISDS". They refer to the fact that despite initial pledges that the agreement would include enforceable commitments by governments "to at least seven international environmental agreements", in reality, "the text mentions only four, and only one - on trade in endangered species - has clearly enforceable commitments."¹⁷ Proof that weakening of environmental measures was done in order to gain a trade advantage is required, something that is notoriously difficult to prove.
17. The CPTPP also risks encouraging a race to the bottom on standards on a number of issues. UK pesticide standards could be undermined: 119 pesticides that are banned in the UK are allowed for use in one or more CPTPP members. Sustain and Pesticide Action Network have written in more detail about the potential implications of these divergent standards.¹⁸ The Trade and Agriculture Commission has suggested that such divergent standards can create a cost disadvantage for UK agricultural producers who are bound by higher standards.¹⁹ CPTPP contains a regulatory cooperation chapter, which allows for dialogue between countries to reduce regulatory barriers to trade. Such provisions often lead to a convergence to the lowest common denominator.²⁰ An equivalence is necessarily drawn between different standards regimes, such that both countries' goods are available in each market, and this incentivises regulators in the country with higher standards to cut them, in order to reduce costs for producers and so that they are able to compete with imports from the other party. Mutual recognition also makes it difficult for a government to raise its own domestic standards, since it has committed as part of the FTA to recognise the other country's lower standards, over which it has no control. Raising standards at a later moment requires coordination between FTA members, which can be politically difficult and slow. The regulatory cooperation chapter in CPTPP sets out a structure for agreeing regulations between the eleven member countries of CPTPP based on dialogue between representatives from each party, but the processes by which these representatives decide on new regulations is vague.
18. The implications of the UK's accession with regard to palm oil extraction, and the potential for increased deforestation and therefore an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, have also been widely publicised. The UK has acceded to Malaysia's demand to lower tariffs on palm oil to zero²¹,

¹⁷ Aftinet (2018) 'Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties and the Senate Inquiry on the TPP-11' Available at: <http://aftinet.org.au/cms/sites/default/files/180419%20AFTINET%20JSCOT%20submission%20final.pdf#overlay-context=node/1567>

¹⁸ Sustain (2021). 'Toxic Trade - CPTPP' Available at: <https://www.sustainweb.org/reports/toxic-trade-cptpp/>

¹⁹ Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (2022) 'Oral Evidence: Australia FTA'. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/10191/html/>

²⁰ Trade Justice Movement (2019). 'Dynamic Alignment and Regulatory Cooperation between the UK and the EU after Brexit'. Available at: <https://www.tjm.org.uk/resources/briefings/dynamic-alignment-and-regulatory-cooperation-between-the-uk-and-the-eu-after-brexite>

²¹ UK Government (2023). 'Conclusion of Negotiations on the Accession of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership'. Available at:

which could increase deforestation, further undermine indigenous and local community land rights, and threaten natural habitats for species like orangutans. The UK-Malaysia Joint Statement on Sustainable Agricultural Commodity Trade and Cooperation to Conserve Forests provides no new binding commitments on either party. Following from Fern's analysis of the arrangements reached under the Indonesia-EFTA FTA²², the UK should instead pursue formal arrangements, ideally in the form of an enforceable side letter, based on establishing a binding tie between tariff preferences and compliance with reciprocal social and environmental criteria. Such a mechanism should be established bilaterally between the UK and Malaysia in meaningful consultation with civil society in both countries, and should include the establishment of an independent authority to deal with complaints, as well as civil society engagement in both countries to establish a definition of sustainable palm oil.

Concluding questions

What are your views on the likely future development of the CPTPP and how this could affect the UK? What are your views on how it should develop?

- **How do you expect the Government might approach current and future applications to join CPTPP?**

Are there any other aspects of the CPTPP which you think are of concern for UK manufacturers, producers and consumers, and for UK interests in general?

- **How might CPTPP accession affect existing trade relationships such as those with the EU?**

19. When considering ways in which UK interests can be best represented in trade negotiations, it is worth reiterating long-standing concerns about the scrutiny deficit that UK trade negotiations remain subject to, and the clear detrimental impact this has domestically and on trade outcomes for the UK.
20. As your Committee is well aware from your own work and correspondence with the Government, the UK has not to date set out a formal trade strategy, which makes it very difficult to meaningfully assess the content of negotiated trade agreements, including CPTPP accession. Implementing such a strategy, as the IAC has called for, would ensure the Government had given sufficient consideration to questions about the future development of CPTPP, and would also allow Parliament and civil society to hold the Government to account in respect of its delivery against the strategy.
21. The Government's official position on this question has most recently been published in its response to the International Trade Committee's Seventh Report: Free Trade Negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council, and specifically to a clear recommendation that a trade strategy should now be produced "as a matter of urgency".²³ In response, the Government it sets out that its trade priorities are to:

(1) Remove barriers to business.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/comprehensive-and-progressive-agreement-for-trans-pacific-partnershipcptpp-conclusion-of-negotiations/conclusion-of-negotiations-on-the-accession-of-the-united-kingdom-of-great-britain-and-northern-ireland-to-the-comprehensive-and-progressive-trans-pac>

²² Fern (2022) 'Using tariffs to incentivise sustainable palm oil' Available at: https://www.fern.org/fileadmin/uploads/fern/Documents/2022/Fern_briefing_-_Using_tariffs_to_incentivise_sustainable_palm_oil.pdf

²³ International Trade Committee (2023). 'Free Trade Agreement Negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council.' Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/39159/documents/192632/default/>

- (2) Help UK businesses to grow by selling their products overseas.
- (3) Make the UK the top investment destination in Europe.
- (4) Attract and retain the industries of the future.
- (5) Defend free trade²⁴

22. Plainly, this does not represent a single, coherent strategy. Individual case documents for new FTAs do not adequately explain the Department's ambitions and how they fit across concurrent negotiations, and five priorities stated above are too thin to explain how different aspects of negotiations are approached.
23. The deficit has been increased by the recent machinery of Government changes, and in particular, the corresponding restructuring of Commons select committees. The newly constituted Business and Trade Committee is a continuation of the former Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Committee, and as such, it remains to be seen whether it will have capacity to properly assess the Government's trade policy; it has already published a report expressing concern about its "finite resources" and that conducting scrutiny on new FTAs is "impractical".²⁵ There is also the problem of lost expertise among members, given that no former International Trade Committee (ITC) members have been appointed to the BTC. The International Trade Committee was able to publish a very welcome final report on negotiations with CPTPP before being wound up, but it is unlikely that there will be a Commons Committee undertaking dedicated scrutiny of CPTPP during ratification.
24. To address this, we share the calls made by the Public Law Project for treaty scrutiny reform.²⁶ All Commons committees should include treaty scrutiny in their core tasks, and there should be a new, dedicated treaty scrutiny committee in the Commons mirroring the remit of your Committee that could build knowledge and expertise on both the trade agreements that come before Parliament and on the constitutional arrangements around treaty scrutiny more widely. This would be invaluable as the Government seeks ratification of CPTPP.
25. TJM has made several calls for reform of the ways in which negotiating mandates are arrived upon, and the opportunities for participation in active negotiations for both Parliament and the public. The absence of public consultation both domestically and internationally has given rise to some largely overlooked concerns; one such area is potential preference erosion impacts in third countries, particularly in developing countries. Afruibana, the Association of African banana exporters, for example, have stated that they are "alarmed to see that the U.K. has agreed to a quota of bananas from Peru and Mexico entering the U.K. at a reduced tariff as part of their CPTPP accession process" given the impact it could have on producers they represent. Such third country impacts, particularly on countries in the Global South, should always be properly assessed and mitigated.
26. However, given the stage that negotiations over CPTPP accession have now reached, our primary concern is with Parliament's limited role over ratification. Our view is that all trade agreements should be subject to an affirmative vote in Parliament, and as such, a Commons debate on a substantive motion should be held during the CRaG period regarding CPTPP accession.

²⁴ Business and Trade Committee (2023). 'Free Trade Agreement Negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council: Government response to the International Trade Committee's Seventh Report.' Available at:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/40659/documents/198181/default/>

²⁵ Business and Trade Committee (2023). 'Scrutiny of Free Trade Agreements'. Available at:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/40868/documents/199062/default/>

²⁶ Public Law Project (2023). 'Stifled in the cradle: Commons treaty scrutiny delivered a new blow'. Available at:

<https://publiclawproject.org.uk/blog/stifled-in-the-cradle-commons-treaty-scrutiny-delivered-a-new-blow/>