



Rt. Hon Elizabeth Truss MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

September 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

As the Director-General of the Institute of Export & International Trade (IOE&IT) I am writing to congratulate you on your appointment and to wish you every success in stewarding the UK through what is a particularly challenging and turbulent economic period. We stand ready to support you in any way that we can.

It is particularly gratifying from an Institute perspective to have an incoming Prime Minister with such a strong background in international trade. The progress made on Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) while you were Secretary of State for International Trade was significant. That trade was also integral to the development policy you pursued as Foreign Secretary sent a strong message to the World that the UK is first and foremost a trading nation and a dedicated and committed ally.

As well as being a leading professional body with an 85-year track record training and developing businesses to trade more effectively, the Institute is a trusted interlocuter between Government and the international trade sector. We are currently working with the Department for International Trade on a program of support for maximising the value of FTAs. This includes measures to ensure that the technical barriers to trade are reduced. We are very much involved in helping implement the Government's current export strategy including your Target Operating Model and Ecosystems of Trust – both of which should help contribute to the UK being at the forefront of frictionless, technology enabled trade.

I realise two of your immediate priorities will be the cost-of-living crisis and the levelling up agenda. The IOE&IT believes that there is great potential to help alleviate cost of living pressures through harnessing the opportunities provided through international trade. The digitalisation of trade process and documentation will be central to the new trading environment. The Institute is at the forefront both in developing policies and practical services to deliver these ambitions. We represent over 7000 business members and a wider community of 25,000 organisations ranging from micro-businesses to those in the FTSE 30. Our members are driving jobs and growth across every sector of the economy and we stand firmly behind an export led recovery.

As you will be only too aware it is smaller businesses who are most exposed in the current cost of living crisis with inflationary pressures presenting huge challenge. Many of these businesses will be trading internationally and those that are not will certainly be dependent on international supply chains. We would encourage you to establish an MSME action team of experienced trade and customs agents tasked with providing practical, bespoke support for businesses to trade on an international basis so that they can get the support they need. We would be happy to get behind such an initiative.



We were pleased to hear frequent mentions of low-tax investment zones throughout your prime ministerial campaign. The IOE&IT believes that freeports should be closely linked to a wider regional skills agenda (including apprenticeships) and used to help build regional capacity and capability in international trade. We therefore ask that you encourage the continued development of freeports and the wider use of trade facilitation and digital trade corridors to link nations and industry sectors, supported by a comprehensive skills agenda.

Finally, as you take on your new role on the global stage, we hope that you will continue to prioritise trade with developing nations and supporting the empowerment of women in order to ensure that any prosperity which the UK enjoys can also benefit the poorest communities and countries in the world. We are actively engaged on this agenda through the WTO She Trades Initiative and will be sponsoring 4 female entrepreneurs from Bangladesh, Mexico, Rwanda and Uruguay to attend the WTO Public Forum in Geneva later this month.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these important matters further.

In the meantime, I wish you every success in your new role.

Yours sincerely,

Marco Forgione

Director-General, Institute of Export and International Trade