

Joint Trade Ministers' Statement on the 'Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability' Initiative

We refer to the ['Joint Leaders' Statement](#) on the launch of the 'Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability Initiative (ACCTS)' issued on 25 September 2019 in New York, USA, supported by a [Joint Climate Change Ministers' Statement](#), issued on 10 December 2019 in Madrid, Spain. Today, we ministers for trade from Costa Rica, Fiji, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland similarly express our strong support for ACCTS and its aim to bring together some of the interconnected elements of the climate change, trade and sustainable development agendas.

Achieving the Paris Agreement's goals as well as addressing other serious environmental challenges requires a globally transformative approach. If executed thoughtfully, such a transformation can improve economies and lift incomes, as well as support the environment. In a time where the multilateral trading system faces different challenges, the ACCTS initiative will demonstrate in a practical and meaningful way how trade policy and trade rules can play a critical role in helping to drive this transformation in a substantive, sustainable and inclusive manner. The nature of the climate change challenge demands that we use every policy lever at our disposal that supports the urgency of a meaningful response.

As agreed by our Leaders, ACCTS will include measures such as the removal of tariffs on environmental goods and the establishment of new and binding commitments for environmental services; establishment of disciplines to eliminate harmful fossil fuel subsidies; and development of guidelines to inform the development and implementation of voluntary eco-labelling programmes and mechanisms. The outcome should promote sustainable development, ensure mutually supportiveness between trade and environmental policies, and recognise the particular vulnerability of Small Island Developing Countries to the impacts of climate change.

Our intention is that ACCTS will act as a pathfinder and a template for action. The ACCTS will be an "open plurilateral" agreement and will comply with WTO rules. It will be initially agreed among this subset of WTO members, and will be open to all who can meet the established standard.

The current international environment and its associated challenges, requires policy coherence to ensure we can address urgent global challenges. We believe that ACCTS will demonstrate in a practical way how trade rules can help achieve climate-related sustainable development objectives and provide much needed momentum towards an eventual multilateral set of outcomes. It is anticipated that negotiations will begin in March 2020.

24 January 2020