# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Trade Negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council** |
| **DATE** | **22 June 2022** |
| **BY** | **Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for Economy** |

On 22 June 2022 the UK government announced its intention to launch trade negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The GCC, also known as the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, is a regional, intergovernmental political and economic union that consists of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

There is already a significant amount of trade between the UK and GCC states and the Welsh Government is supportive of measures to increase this further. In 2021, goods trade between Wales and GCC states reached £1.2bn, of which imports and exports were worth around £733m and £493m respectively. A comprehensive FTA with the GCC could provide opportunities for businesses to secure or strengthen goods and services trade with GCC states.

However, we do have concerns about negotiations with some of the GCC states. Our approach to trade policy, based on using a Well-being of Future Generations Act lens, means we consider trade deals to be about more than purely economic gains. We believe trade deals should contain provisions on other key issues such as worker and gender rights and the environment. The Welsh Government will make representations to UK Government at both official and ministerial levels wherever possible to ensure our concerns are heard. We would support the progression within any agreement on the issues set out above, including dedicated chapters and provisions where appropriate. In addition, as a member of the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance (BOGA), Wales is committed to working with stakeholders to facilitate the managed phase-out of oil and gas production. Therefore, we would want to see a trade deal with the GCC that includes strong transitioning arrangements to support all parties to diversify away from oil production and focus on renewable energy.

We will engage with a wide range of stakeholders to understand the impacts of trade deal on sectors in Wales and identify potential opportunities for Welsh producers in the upcoming negotiations.