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Free Trade Agreement Outreach Team
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere
Wellington
Via Email

31st March 2024

Tēnā koe,

Re: Possible New Zealand–United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

Export New Zealand (ExportNZ) welcomes the opportunity to comment regarding the potential for a New Zealand-United Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (NZ-UAE CEPA).

As an organisation that has consistently advocated for a free and fair international trading system, values international cooperation, and promotes opportunities for economic growth; ExportNZ supports the beginning negotiations between New Zealand and the UAE for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

Our organisation understands that progress on a free trade agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has slowed and it is unlikely that we will be able to secure a high-quality agreement with the GCC in the short-term. Although we do not want the New Zealand government to give up on a lucrative FTA with the GCC, we do want to see new opportunities arising in this region of the world. Therefore negotiating the NZ-UAE CEPA is a stepping stone toward a regional-level agreement and could open up some of the opportunities that would have been possible with the GCC FTA.

The UAE can also act as a stepping stone into the rest of the region and act as a gateway and hub for New Zealand businesses wanting to reach into the Gulf States and beyond. Any CEPA should support New Zealand businesses wanting to establish a physical presence and regular person-to-person contacts – while visa access into the UAE is relatively easy, ExportNZ would want to ensure that the pathway to New Zealand businesspeople conducting business in the UAE is straightforward and clear of any complications.

This would also help New Zealand services exporters to conduct and engage in business opportunities in the UAE, which ExportNZ believes is a viable opportunity.

Our organisation understands that there is a push in both the UAE and wider GCC to improve food security in the area. Improving food security should be seen as an opportunity for both New Zealand's primary products sector as well as our technology, innovation, and services sectors to participate in and help foster a sense of reliability and partnership between ourselves and the Gulf States via the NZ-UAE CEPA.

Another key area of interest for New Zealand should be attracting investment from the UAE into New Zealand. We would like to see investors from the UAE given the same rights as investors from other free trade partners. There is a growing need for more foreign direct investment to help support New Zealand grow its export sector, whether that be investment into businesses to increase capacity and capability, or in infrastructure to help exporters access supply chains to and from overseas markets.

ExportNZ welcomes the progress made so far and the potential for formal negotiations to begin on a NZ-UAE CEPA. Our organisation is excited about the prospect of a new trade agreement in a region where there is so much untapped potential for New Zealand exporters to grow. We look forward to engaging further with MFAT officials as discussions are formalised.

Yours Sincerely,



Joshua Tan
Executive Director
Export New Zealand

About Export New Zealand

ExportNZ is a national industry association representing a diverse range of exporters throughout New Zealand. ExportNZ is a division of BusinessNZ, New Zealand's peak business advocacy body. We are a not-for-profit membership organisation and have approximately 2,000 export members around the country.

ExportNZ advocates for, inspires, connects, and celebrates New Zealand exporters. We aim to build a thriving ecosystem that supports each other.

We are exporters helping exporters.

Our value proposition for members is a mixture of policy and advocacy, education and training, networking, trade missions and inspiration through awards events and conferences. Notably, we run a BusinessNZ Chief Technology Officers Group, incorporating the largest innovation-driven companies in New Zealand, many of which export.

BusinessNZ Network

