

RCEP Ministerial Meeting, 23 June 2020

Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth, Hon Damien O'Connor, represented New Zealand at the 10th Intersessional Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Ministerial meeting held virtually on 23 June 2020. The Meeting was attended by Ministers representing ASEAN, Australia, China, Japan, Republic of Korea and New Zealand. The meeting was the first Ministerial-level RCEP meeting in 2020 and was chaired by the current ASEAN Chair Viet Nam (Minister of Trade and Industry H.E. Tran Tuan Anh).

The meeting focused on the parties' determination to achieve signature in 2020, as instructed by Leaders at the 3rd RCEP Summit in November 2019. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministers emphasised that signing RCEP this year will serve as a clear signal of the RCEP parties' support for the multilateral trading system, regional integration as well as economic development across the region.

The Ministers were pleased to note that the vast majority of market access negotiations have reached mutually satisfactory outcomes, and that work on the remaining areas is in its final stages. The Ministers also acknowledged the importance of India and emphasised that RCEP remains open for India.

Minister O'Connor reiterated New Zealand's commitment to achieving signature in 2020, emphasising that RCEP will serve an important role in the region's shared recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Minister O'Connor engaged in a number of virtual bilateral meetings with counterparts at the margins of the RCEP Ministerial with the view to strengthen New Zealand relationships and advancing market access negotiations within RCEP.

The next Ministerial meeting will likely be held virtually in late August.

The Joint Media Statement of the 10th Intersessional Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Ministerial Meeting can be found here: <https://asean.org/storage/2020/06/Joint-Statement-of-10th-RCEP-ISSL-MM.pdf>