What is the most significant challenge to Canadian trade policy that the pandemic presents?

1. The pandemic has led to an increase in protectionism globally and highlighted value chain vulnerabilities particularly as it pertains to essential goods.

2. The most significant challenge is that major issues such as climate change, digital commerce, and others are pushed aside to deal with the pandemic.

3. The need for harmonization between domestic policies including industrial policy with Canadian trade policy so that we generate the most prosperity for all Canadians.

4. An accelerated ongoing trend of anti-globalization and a move to more inward / protectionist policies such as the increased use of subsidies and export controls

5. The challenge of finding the right balance between benefits trade can bring and domestic imperatives and citizen’s well-being.

6. Canada’s inadequate capacity to make essential products through our own domestic production, and the need to continue to diversify in a global situation that is causing stakeholders to focus more internally.

7. In our view, the most significant challenge to Can. trade policy is around challenges to transparency related to market and trade distortion measures.

8. The most significant challenge is the further increased protectionism that we have seen during the pandemic and likely to continue.
What is the most significant shortcoming of trade rules that the pandemic has revealed?

1. Rules don’t assist in disciplining removal of pandemic measures which leads to uncertainty that is enhanced by the lack of transparency among Countries.

2. The WTO and its system of trade rules are not equipped to address a global crisis in a way that requires national actors to maintain open and transparent trade in essential goods.

3. The need for stronger rules on transparency to create more certainty/stability in international trade.

4. The rules-based system of international cooperation has been further weakened by attempts to restrict exports (ie medical equipment) needed to defend against Covid-19 and by the lack of transparency.

5. Although there are many serious gaps in the rules, subsidies (both industrial and agricultural) present the largest shortcoming.

6. The reliance on WTO members to be governed by these rules and their ability to enforce them, avoiding the difficulties caused by a lack of transparency.

7. Trade rules have proven inadequate to address this challenge (of protectionism), including dispute settlement is too slow to be helpful.

8. Global trading rules allow for flexibility to respond to the international crisis, including the ability to rely on exceptions when necessary, while still providing a disciplinary framework that the international community has mostly respected.
What is the most interaction (either positive or negative) between the pandemic and long-run trends in relation to trade policy?

1. The pandemic has shown that thanks to globalization and interconnectedness, the multilateral trading system has proven more resilient than anticipated, specially when crisis of this magnitude affect us all.

2. Countries are focused on domestic capabilities and looking inward instead of working to problem solve through the international community.

3. The most significant long-term trends influenced by the pandemic include accelerating a move toward a digital economy/digital trade rules, the need to strengthen supply chains (including in cases becoming less dependent on certain countries such as China), and exacerbating a trend toward protectionist policies.

4. The challenges brought by the pandemic has accelerated the divide between China and the West.

5. The imperative for agility in adapting the trading system and rules to rapidly changing circumstances, to promote a greener and more equitable post-pandemic recovery, in the context of governments still being compelled to focus on domestic priorities of their citizens.

6. The need to improve rules/policies for digital trade has been accelerated by covid-19, with a focus on services and information sharing, that highlights the need for multi-lateral agreements.

7. Accelerated some of the challenges/issues digital trade rules are not keeping up, massive amount of subsidisation.

8. The most significant interaction is how to balance economic growth through international trade with economic self-reliance/resiliency in order to limit protectionism and still support strategic interests (e.g. vaccines/PPE)