

Making Trade Agreements Work for Women with Disabilities: What's Been Achieved and What Remains Undone?



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Setting the Scene: Trade Agreements and Sustainable Development

Problem? Existing Barriers

Solution? Trade Agreements can Help

How? A Look at Good Practice Examples

What Remains Undone? Policy Recommendations

Trade Agreements with Provisions on Sustainable Development Concerns

18%

**FTAs with
Climate Change**

30%

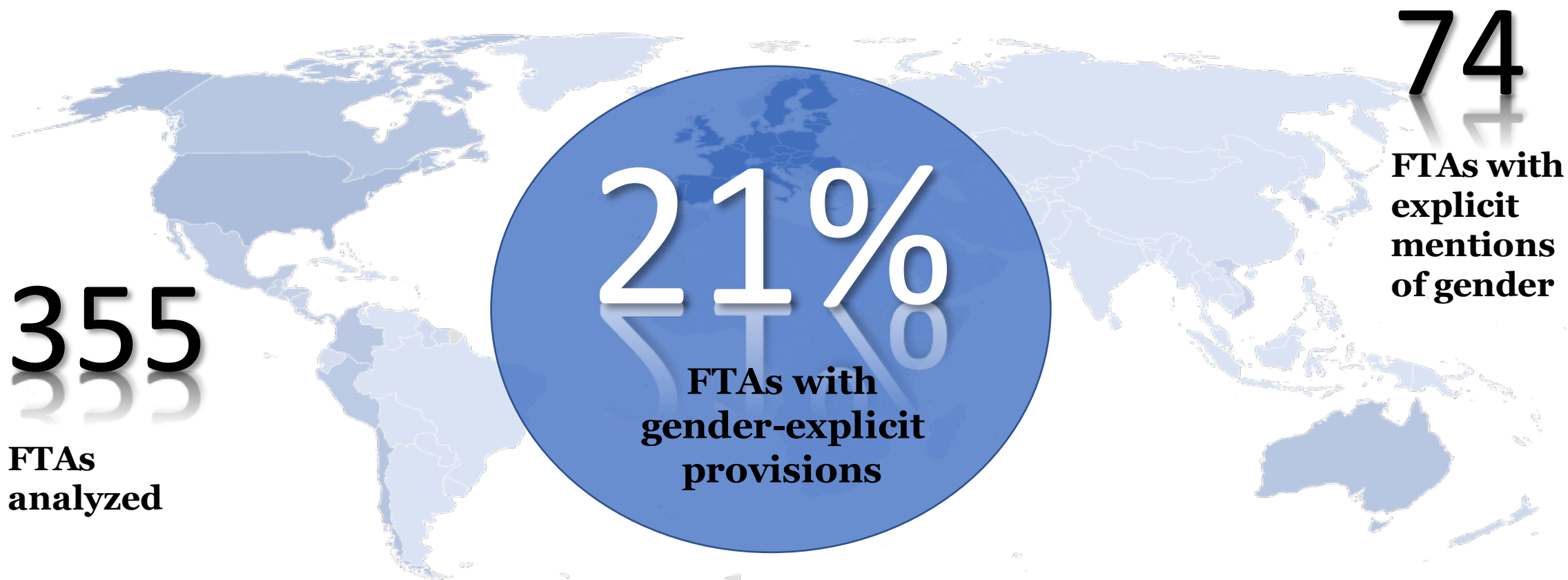
**FTAs with
Labour Rights**

75%

**FTAs with
Human Rights**

*Numbers and percentage values are approximate

Gender Provisions in Trade Agreements (FTAs)



Explicit keywords:

gender, women, woman, female, maternity, girl, childcare, sex and others



Disability Provisions in Trade Agreements (FTAs)

355

FTAs
analyzed

27%

FTAs with
disability-explicit
provisions

98

FTAs with
explicit
mentions
of disability

List of explicit keywords:

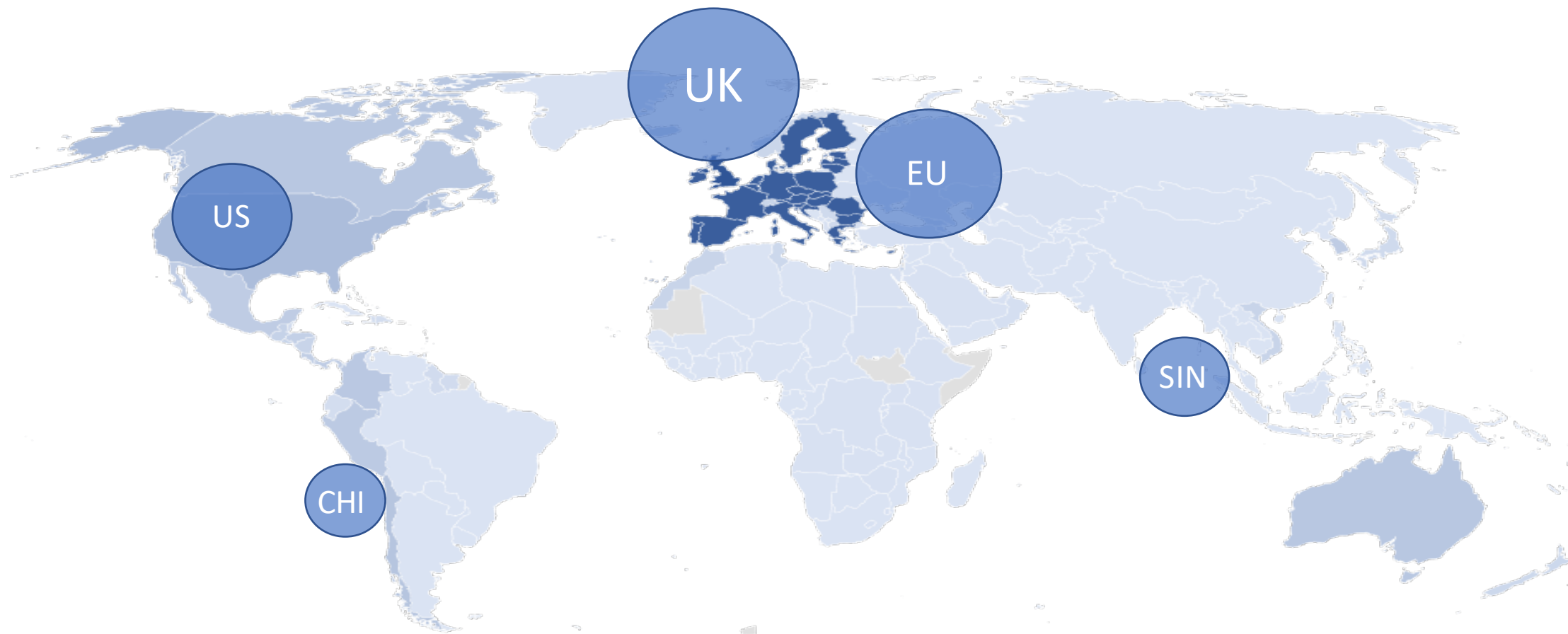
disabled, disability, disabilities, differently-abled, handicapped, invalidity, PWD

Low High



Top 5 Players

The UK, US, EU, Singapore and Chile have the highest count of disability-explicit provisions in their FTAs



**The colour code reflects the aggregation of the number of times explicit words are used in all WTO notified FTAs signed by each country.*

***The darker it is, the higher the frequency of explicit words included in its FTAs.*

**** Only FTAs with explicit provisions were considered for the illustration.*

***** Only trade agreements notified to WTO and currently in force (as of 15 February 2022) are included in this assessment.*



The Barriers

Problems faced by persons with disabilities to access economic opportunities

Key Barriers

Access to professional and business networks

Access to finance

Access to decent employment, wages and working conditions

Access to digital learning and infrastructure

Discrimination and bias in the workplace

Cultural and social stereotypes

Reasonable accommodation in the workplace

Access to assistive and other medical products

Access to education and skills development opportunities

Can Trade Agreements Help Overcome These Barriers?

1 Yes, they can help



- ✓ Creation of business and entrepreneurial opportunities
- ✓ Creation of employment opportunities
- ✓ Benefits for consumers

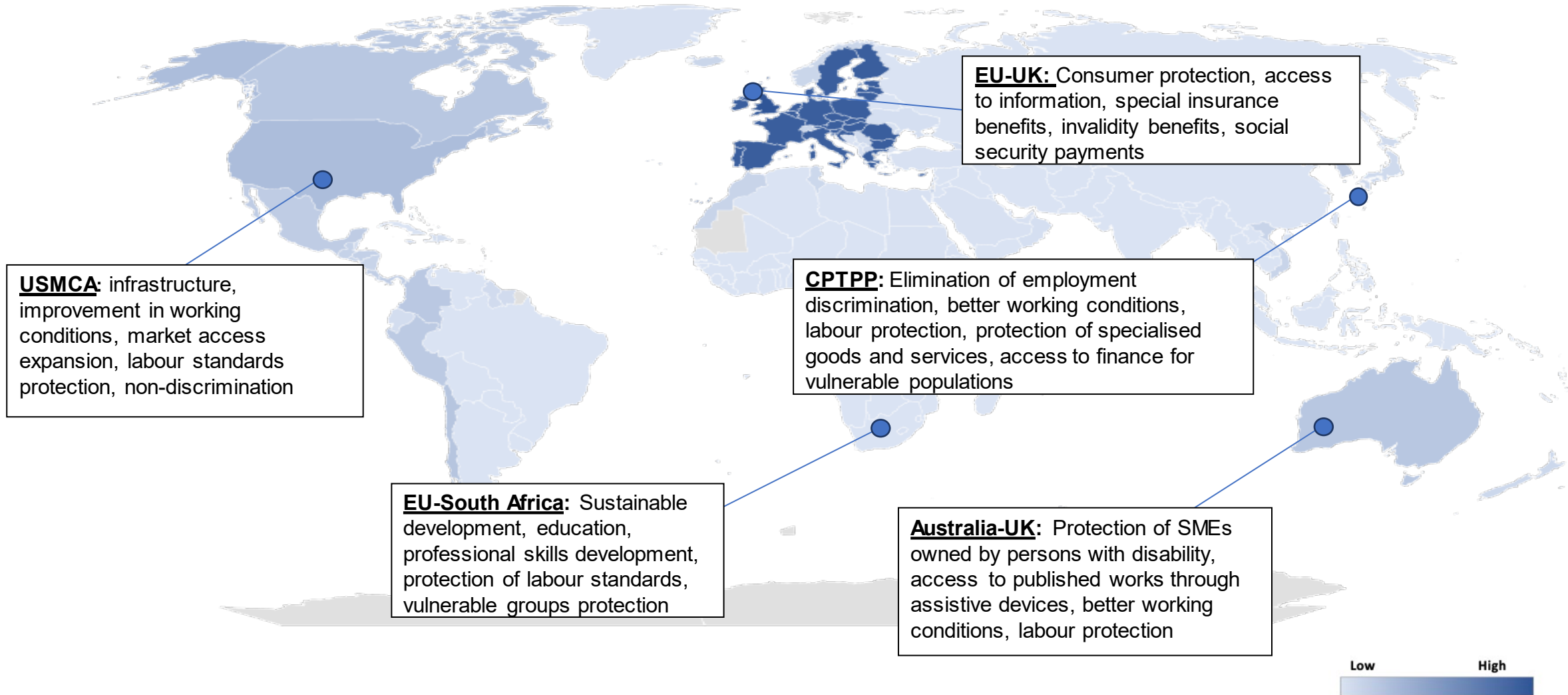
2 No, they can have adverse impacts



- ✓ Reduction in scope and number of public-funded social security programs
- ✓ Cost and availability of assistive devices and other medical needs
- ✓ Strengthened intellectual property rights

The Frontrunners

The UK and EU are pioneers in terms of the number and content of disability provisions within their FTAs



What Remains Undone? Some Policy Recommendations

1

Policy Recommendation 1

Define “disability” in future trade agreements.

2

Policy Recommendation 2

Provide for implementation and enforcement of provisions.

3

Policy Recommendation 3

Collect data, to inform content and scope of disability provisions.

4

Policy Recommendation 4

Frame it right, and make it a business case.

5

Policy Recommendation 5

Reaffirm commitments to the UN CRPD.

Thank you



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