



UNOFFICIAL ROOM DOCUMENT¹

**DIALOGUE ON PLASTICS POLLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE
PLASTICS TRADE**

STATEMENT BY THE FORUM ON TRADE, ENVIRONMENT & THE SDGS (TESS)

Plenary Meeting – 7 December 2022

DOCUMENT DE SÉANCE NON OFFICIEL¹

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* In Original language only/En langue originale seulement/En el idioma original solamente.

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IDP PLENARY DECEMBER 7, 2022

Statement on item e) i) of the convening notice:

e. Open discussion on the following guiding question:

i. Considering the substantive technical work developed in 2022, what are the next steps and options the Dialogue should pursue to implement its 2021 Ministerial Statement (WT/MIN(21)/8/Rev.2), in particular Ministers' call to achieve "concrete, pragmatic, and effective outcomes ... at the latest by MC13".

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1. Thank you to the dialogue coordinators for the opportunity to contribute today and for your leadership of this process. It was also great to see Ambassador Wilson from Barbados here for the first time, continuing the great leadership of Barbados on this Dialogue.
 2. In its first year, the Dialogue on Plastics Pollution has made a significant contribution to building shared understanding of the linkages between trade and plastic pollution, as well as options for harnessing trade and trade policies to support national and international efforts to end plastic pollution.
 3. In 2022, the Dialogue has also been a critical vehicle for members to share national experiences and to build the knowledge base for future work, including through surveys of their trade-related plastic pollution members and capacity building needs.
 4. In so doing, the Dialogue has demonstrated that the engagement of stakeholders and experts in the work of the Dialogue can contribute to and strengthen the identification of issues, challenges, and opportunities relevant to cooperation in this area.
 5. In regard to the question on next steps, the founding ministerial statement for the Dialogue underlines the goal of identifying concrete, pragmatic, and effective outcomes at the latest by MC13. As noted by many members and stakeholders, we agree that Dialogue provides an opportunity to identify and foster specific areas for trade-related cooperation at the WTO and that this can support the international negotiations on an internationally legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution.
 6. 2023 will be a critical year for members not only to identify best practices and actions that they *could* take collectively, but also to advance work to foster those collective actions so that you achieve concrete, pragmatic, and effective outcomes envisaged for MC13.
 7. A suggestion from TESS, which we offer to spur discussion, is that for each workstream delegations could work toward a matrix of options for trade-related contributions, best practices, or actions for to which WTO members could make voluntary political commitments or pledges, working individually or collaboratively. Such an effort would need to be guided by some specific proposals from members or groups of members on options and examples of pledges.

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8. Importantly, some of the voluntary, collective actions may be of interest to a wider set of WTO members, including those that have not formally co-sponsored the Dialogue. Just as the Dialogue is open for all members to join or participate, inviting the broad diversity of members to consider contributing to the concrete outcomes for MC13 would help broaden the impact of effort.
 9. Continuing to share information about the Dialogue with the Committee on Trade and Environment will be vital on this front, and with wider international processes focused on plastic pollution. A key priority going forward is to ensure that environmental policymakers are invited to lend their expertise and support for trade-related efforts that can support their efforts to tackle plastic pollution, and that trade policymakers seek guidance from environmental policymakers on how best to support their efforts.
 10. In this regard, a joint session or workshop of the Dialogue in 2023 of environment and trade policymakers on plastics pollution, or indeed with collaboration with UNEP, could be a concrete way to forge cooperation between trade and environmental ministries nationally and support coordination across international processes particularly. The workshop could focus, for instance, on the reduce and circularity aspects of the Dialogue's work-
 11. Regarding the question of specific options that could be prioritised under the three workstreams towards MC13:
 12. Under Workstream 1 on Crosscutting Issues for International Cooperation, members may wish to:
 - Advance concrete national or collective proposals for enhancing transparency of trade flows across the life cycle of plastics. This can include proposals for HS reform on plastics as well as environmentally sound plastic substitutes, including through the ongoing HS review cycle at the WCO to facilitate enhanced transparency, enable more granular data collection and facilitate policy and regulatory action.
 - Advance concrete cooperation and partnerships around plastics pollution and Aid for Trade, drawing on priorities identified by members in these meetings and also in responses received for the Aid for Trade Global Review and Needs Assessment survey and the survey on Trade-related Measures on Plastic Pollution.
 - Continue to identify priorities for cooperation around international standards that are most relevant to promoting more sustainable supply chains and trade, such as on plastic packaging, product design, and non-plastic substitutes, and the cross-cutting issues of the material composition of products, which will be key to making transparency and phasing out the most harmful plastics and additives.
 13. Under Workstream 2, Promoting Trade to Tackle Plastic Pollution, members may wish to:
 - Promote trade in environmentally sustainable and effective non-plastic substitutes. Here, members with the potential to produce and trade these substitutes, could develop specific proposals on how specific co-operation on trade-related policies, standards, technology transfer, Aid for Trade, and investment could help and options for collective action in that regard.
 - Identify options and potential outcomes on environmentally sound waste management. Here it would be useful to focus on the potential role of trade and trade policies in promoting other production, diffusion, and uptake of products, services, and technologies vital for environmentally sound plastic waste collection, sorting, management, recycling, and clean up.
 14. Critical here will be to learn from existing work on bolstering waste management capacity, led by priorities expressed by developing countries, and bearing in mind the need to focus on technologies and services that are environmentally sound and credible, and are appropriate and adapted to local circumstances and to local employment needs. Here, we would underline that many developing countries have innovative approaches in this regard, and so there is significant scope for South-South information-exchange, cooperation and partnerships.

15. Under Workstream 3, Circularity and Reduction to Tackle Plastic Pollution, as a starting point, members may wish to
- Consider specific options to phase down, or indeed in some instances end, trade in single use and problematic plastics. Here there is scope for voluntary commitments to ban exports and imports of goods that are prohibited domestically (such as many types of single-use plastics and packaging) and to explore: a) if there are ways to build on the range of measures that countries are already taking on single use plastics; b) opportunities to expand the geographical range of countries taking collective/shared action on specific categories of single use plastics, including through regional collaboration, and c) opportunities to expand the range of single use products considered for trade-related action and cooperation.
 - Members could focus on specific actions that they could take individually and collectively to reduce and phase-out use of unnecessary and problematic packaging for widely traded products, drawing on national examples and best practices. This could also include identifying how trade and trade policies can support re-use and refill systems as one approach to reducing packaging and thus to reduce plastic pollution.
 - Again international cooperation on standards, such as on ecodesign and labelling of products, packaging and transparency of material composition of products, will be relevant as a cross-cutting issue relevant to trade and internationally supply chains. This can include issues related to extending product life (such as through repairability and re-usability), reducing unnecessary use of plastics and limiting the number of plastics and combinations used in products, eliminating harmful additives, and remanufacturing of products. This area of work could also include consideration of technologies that could assist countries and customs authorities to monitor and have a more precise picture of trade flows across borders, especially for those trade flows most relevant to plastic pollution.
16. In the reduce and circularity stream, it would be useful for coordinators and cosponsors to consider how to forge cooperation between trade and environmental ministries nationally and support coordination on the reduce and circularity aspect of the Dialogue's work. Several delegations have noted the need to connect the dots with policymaking and experts on these topics at the national level and in other international processes, especially when it comes to action focused on specific sectors. This could for instance be something to discuss with UNEP as a potential partner.
17. Finally, we welcome the ongoing commitment of coordinators and facilitators to engaging stakeholders in this work and for the recognition that you have expressed for the contributions that stakeholders can make to outcomes that are effective, ambitious and environmentally credible by building support for action on trade and plastic pollution, providing evidence and expertise, producing evidence-based policy options and vision in terms of outcomes that could be achieved, and fostering synergies across international processes with the shared goal of ending plastic pollution.
18. We also take the opportunity to congratulate you on the web page for this Dialogue on the WTO website, which is playing a vital role in enabling stakeholders and governments to participate and support this process, including by providing meeting agendas, presentations and statements from stakeholders, as well as from the Secretariat and some members. This is also a way that policymakers in environmental ministries can easily access information about this process and so build synergies. We encourage more members and stakeholders to consider making their individual statements in this Dialogue publicly available on the website too.
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