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

WTO SECRETARIAT PRESENTATION ON THE STATE-OF-PLAY OF DISCUSSIONS AT THE WTO
DIALOGUE ON PLASTIC POLLUTION

Pre-Plenary Meeting – 23 November 2023

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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State-of-play of discussions at the WTO Dialogue on Plastic Pollution


15 November 2023

Daniel Ramos
Secretary to the Dialogue on Plastic Pollution
WTO Trade and Environment Division

Dialogue on Plastics Pollution (short overview)




- Launched in November 2020
- **76 co-sponsors**, representing 85%+ of trade in plastics + stakeholders
- **Coordinators**: Australia, Barbados, China, Ecuador, Fiji, Morocco
- **Objectives**:
 - To explore how improved trade cooperation could contribute to efforts to reduce plastics pollution and transition to a more circular and environmentally sustainable global plastics economy
 - To complement existing international processes in other for a (BRS, WCO, INC...)



13th WTO MINISTERIAL
CONFERENCE
ABU DHABI - UAE
2024

13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) outcomes



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The WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13)
26 to 29 February 2024 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

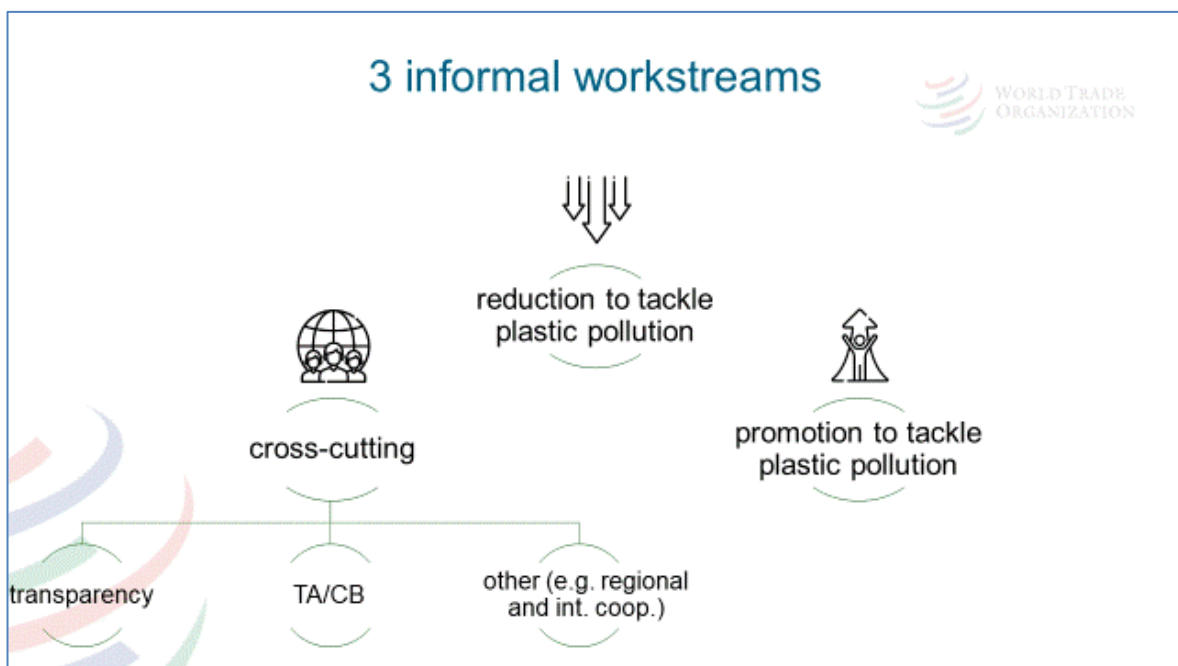
FIRST DRAFT – POSSIBLE MC13 STATEMENT

First Draft General Structure


- **Preamble:** Setting the context
- **Shared Principles:** Guiding principles for the statement
- **Actions**

Attached to the First Draft: **Open, illustrative, non-exhaustive and evolving compilation of suggestions, practices, options, and opportunities**
[related to the 3 workstreams, based on the factual reports, surveys]

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The WCO 2027 HS amendment process

8 May 2023, Letter from DPP Coordinators to WCO Secretariat

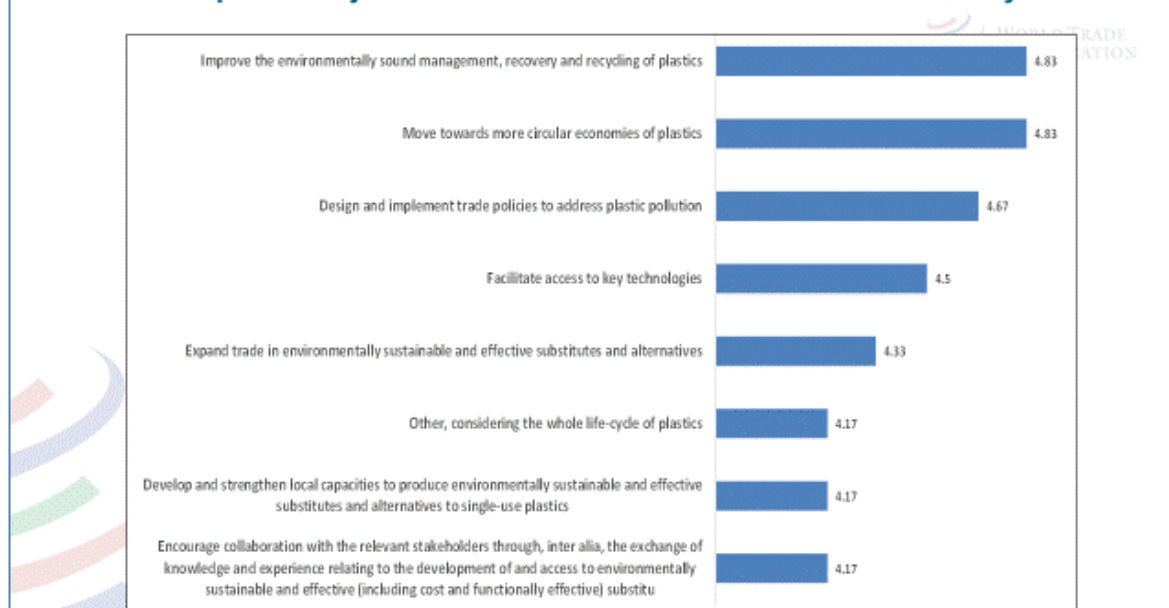


Proposal of potential amendments to be explored:

- Greater differentiation of plastics in primary forms by polymer type and by feedstock (e.g. [expanded] polystyrene)
- Greater differentiation of specific single-use plastic products of high environmental concern, including **a customs definition for single-use (disposable) goods**
- More granular identification of goods containing plastics
- Greater differentiation of fishing nets and fishing gear of high environmental concern
- Greater differentiation of potential non-plastic substitutes and plastic alternatives

Overall positive reaction to the proposals, with potential further proposals from WCO members.

The specific objectives most often referred to in the Aft Survey



The specific needs and objectives most often referred to in the Aft Survey

Objective	Specific Support Needed most often referred (average scores)
Move towards more circular economies of plastics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to technology (4.83) Domestic private sector engagement (4.83) Civil society engagement (4.83) Regional cooperation (4.83)
Improve the environmentally sound management, recovery and recycling of plastics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic private sector engagement (4.83) Civil society engagement (4.83) Technical assistance on policy implementation (4.6)
Facilitate access to key technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to technology (5) Domestic private sector engagement (4.83) Civil society engagement (4.83)
Expand trade in environmentally sustainable and effective substitutes and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to technology (4.83) Domestic private sector engagement (4.83) Civil society engagement (4.83)
Encourage collaboration with the relevant stakeholders through, <i>inter alia</i> , the exchange of knowledge and experience relating to the development of and access to environmentally sustainable and effective (including cost and functionally effective) substitutes and alternatives to single-use plastics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic private sector engagement (4.83) Civil society engagement (4.83) Cooperation from exporting Members (4.67)



reduction to tackle
plastic pollution

What are Trade-related Plastic Measures (TrPMs)?



Sustainability requirements

- Bans/restrictions on importation [and exportation] of [recyclable] waste (incl export licenses)
- Import licensing for plastic bag components (avoid circumv.)
- Minimum recycled content
- Requirements applicable to minimum thickness, (re)usability
- Exclusion of certain components
- Design requirements / guidelines
- Labelling requirements



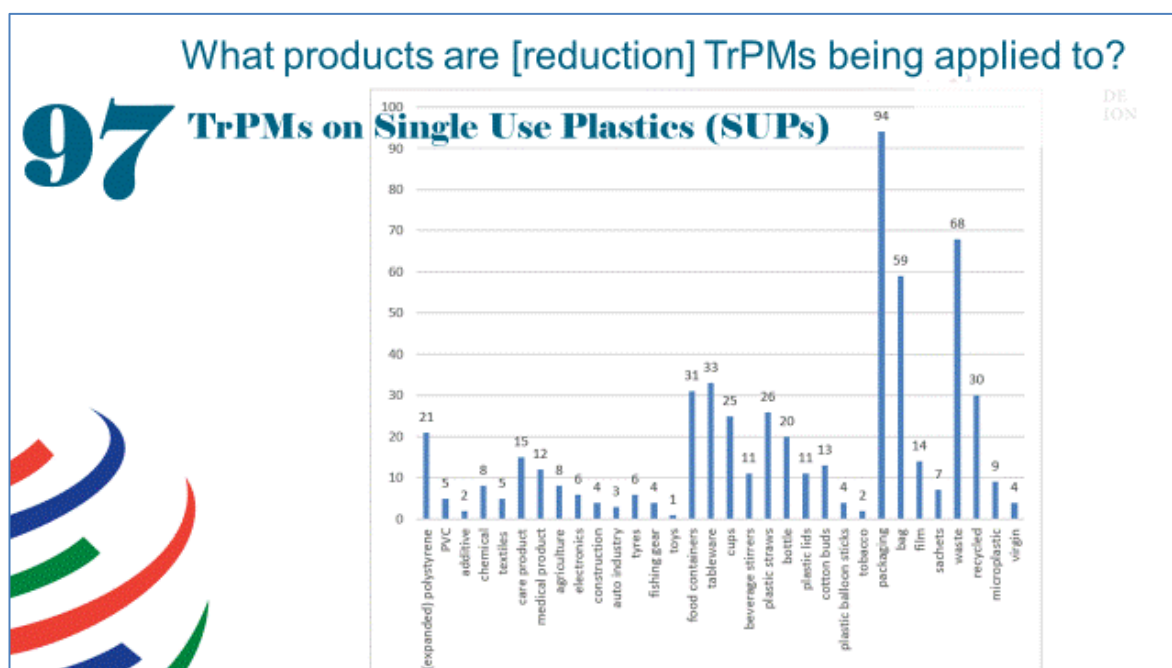
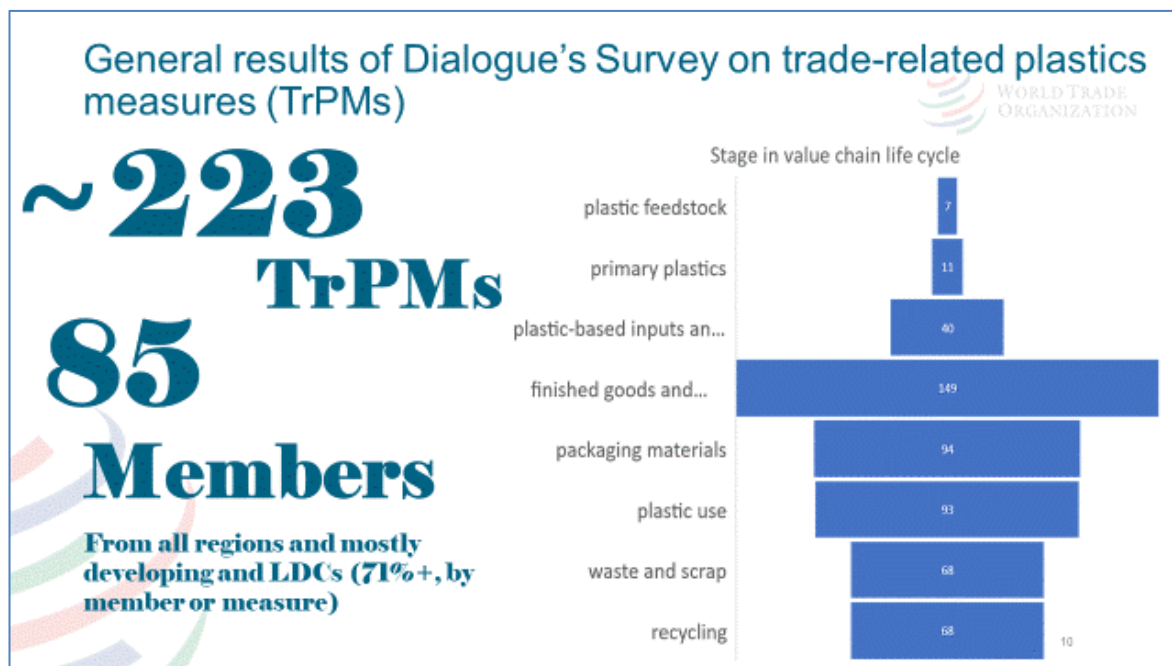
Taxes and other market tools

- Env / chemical taxes (appl. to plastics)
- deposit schemes [incl. EPR schemes]
- [preferential] Tariffs on certain goods (incl. Tariff quotas)
- Packaging fees
- Trade defence tools (e.g. applied to substitutes)



Support measures

- Preferential tax treatment to alternatives/substitutes
- Direct grants to R&D
- Government procurement requirements/preferential rates for goods with recycled content
- Expenditure on resource utilization of agricultural wastes, incl. recycling of waste plastic films





promotion to tackle
plastic pollution

Promotion: Services mentioned by TrPMs and raised in the Dialogue discussions



- Re-fill and cleaning bottle and other consumer goods containers schemes
- Reusable/returnable (takeaway food) packaging
- Social and environmental impact assessment services
- Tracking, segregation, traceability and identification services
- Renting, leasing and other product-service systems
- Labelling, certification and conformity assessment services (e.g. regarding commercial compostability)
- Product eco-design, research and development
- Return and reimbursement systems (e.g. bottle and boxes deposit systems)
- Upcycling processes
- Research and development services
- Post-consumer sorting, disassembly, remanufacturing and recycling services
- Waste recovery, collection and management
- Clean-up services

What potential non-plastic substitutes?




Abaca (Manila hemp)	Algae biomass / Seaweed (brown, red, green)	Aluminium
Areca leaves	Balsa Wood	Bamboo
Banana/Plantain (leaves, stem, pseudo-stems or fibers)	By-products of ready-made garments ("jhoot")	Calabash hard shell
Casein	Cellulose (fiber, nanofibers)	Ceramics
Clay	Coconut Husks	Coir
Cork	Corn husks, other by-products	Cotton (linters)
Down	Fish skin or residues	Flax
Fruit peels	Glass	Grape waste
Hay	Hemp	Jute
Leather	Linen	Microbial cellulose of mixed vegetables and bacteria
Murta	Mushroom-based resins and materials	Natural waxes (e.g. beeswax)
Nettles	Palm	Paper (cardboard)
Pineapple leaves	Plant Waste	Rattan
Ray	Rayon	Rice paper
Silk	Sisal	Steel
Straw	Sugarcane pulp – bagasse	Tofu waste
Wheat (fibre, paper, husks, stems)	White clover	Wood (bark, pulp, chip)
Wools (e.g. alpaca, angora, cashmere, sheep)	Natural fibers (vegetable fibres; animal fibres)	Mineral materials

Technologies relevant for the production of non-plastic substitutes

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But also challenges

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- (in general) plastics average unit price still much cheaper than substitutes
 - Tariffs and non-tariff barriers to potential non-plastic substitutes are higher than for plastics
 - plastic materials and products generally enjoy lower tariffs and are concentrated below 10%, while product substitutes range between 5% and 25%
 - for example, paper straws have a global average tariff rate of 13.3 per cent, while plastic straws' global average tariff is 7.7 per cent
 - Natural fibres from plant and tree-based products, dedicated crops, and agricultural by-products have higher numbers of NTMs and are most regulated in general
 - There is a lack of internal standards on potential non-plastic substitutes that could facilitate market access
 - Subsidies – transparency to understand how FFS relate to plastic prod. + identify direct support to product and underpricing ...

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- Technical regulations or specifications (and related conformity assessment procedures), usually pursuing the following objectives:
 - Promotion of non-plastic substitutes and alternative plastics (e.g. by requiring minimum recycled content or certain preferable characteristics such as ease of recycling, composting or degradability, restricting certain goods while expressly exempting non-plastic substitutes and/or alternative plastics, or requiring labels to inform consumers)
 - Promotion of technologies for waste management and other uses (e.g. requiring certain minimum performance for recycling processes or eco-design and circularity requirements as part of wider technology development efforts)
- Bans/prohibitions, usually pursuing the following objectives:
 - Promotion of non-plastics substitutes and alternative plastics (e.g. by expressly exempting substitutes and/or alternatives, often coupled with wider technology development efforts)
- Support measures, including grants and direct payments, preference in public procurement, tax concessions, and non-monetary support (e.g. advisory services and research and development, governmental certification or recognition labels, education campaigns and provision of collection and waste management infrastructure), usually pursuing the following objectives:
 - Promotion of non-plastics substitutes and alternative plastics, often specifically targeting the single-use plastics issue (e.g. research and development of new sustainable technologies, alternatives, and non-plastic substitutes, including through innovation grants and competitions, or public procurement schemes with mandatory or preferential requirements for sustainable alternatives and non-plastic substitutes to certain plastic products, reusable packaging, or a minimum content of recycled plastics)
 - Promoting re-use and re-fill models (e.g. financing or providing collection, cleaning services)
 - Promotion of technologies for waste management and other uses (e.g. waste-to-energy or waste-to-fuel facilities and other resource utilization schemes, or specific plastic goods)

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2021 Ministerial Statement calls for “concrete, pragmatic, and effective outcomes” at the latest by the WTO 13th Ministerial Conference – Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, during the **week of 26 February 2024**

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