



DIALOGUE ON PLASTIC POLLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE PLASTICS TRADE

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT FOR THE PRESS

The Dialogue on Plastic Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (DPP) explores how enhanced cooperation at the WTO can support global, regional and domestic efforts to reduce plastic pollution and advance more environmentally sustainable plastics trade. It brings together **83 co-sponsors, representing close to 90% of global plastics trade**, and is coordinated by Australia, Barbados, China, Ecuador, Fiji and Morocco.

Launched during WTO Trade and Environment Week 2020, the Dialogue has focused on identifying the linkages between trade and plastic pollution, and how trade policy can contribute to addressing the crisis. Among the key insights highlighted are:

- Annual trade in plastics and plastics-containing goods accounts for around **5% of global trade – or approximately USD 1.1 to 1.3 trillion** – significantly higher than previously estimated, with substantial "hidden flows" of plastics embedded in traded goods (e.g. packaging, electronics, textiles) that remain difficult to fully capture.
- This corresponds to **roughly 350-400 million metric tonnes of plastics traded globally** each year, crossing borders multiple times along complex value chains – from primary polymers to intermediate inputs, final products and, eventually, waste.
- Only **around 1-2% of plastics trade is in waste form**, with the vast majority of trade taking place upstream in raw materials, intermediate goods and finished products.
- WTO Members have now notified **well over 250 trade-related measures** to address plastic pollution, covering **more than 90 Members**, with around 70% originating from developing countries and LDCs. These include bans on single-use plastics, controls on plastic waste trade, and a growing number of standards and regulatory measures.

The initiative takes an inclusive approach, engaging stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, international organizations and academia, who contribute technical expertise, experience and transparency to the discussions.

In December 2021, a [Ministerial Statement](#) was adopted, setting out shared understandings and a roadmap towards concrete, pragmatic and effective outcomes by MC13. Building on this, coordinators prepared an [MC13 Ministerial Statement](#) outlining key principles and six actions to ensure trade contributes to addressing plastic pollution. Since MC13, the Dialogue has advanced substantial technical work across eight focus areas under its three workstreams. This has culminated in a practical [MC14 outcome package](#), comprising a Ministerial Statement and five technical outcome documents.

Dialogue Factbox

Coordinators: Australia, Barbados, China, Ecuador, Fiji and Morocco

Co-sponsors: 83 Members, representing close to 90% of global plastics trade

Albania; Angola; Argentina; Australia; Austria; Barbados; Belgium; Bolivia, Plurinational State of; Bulgaria; Brazil; Cabo Verde; Cambodia; Cameroon; Canada; Central African Republic; Chad; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Ecuador; Estonia; European Union; Fiji; Finland; France; Gambia; Germany; Greece; Guatemala; Honduras; Hong Kong, China; Hungary; Iceland; Ireland; Italy; Jamaica; Japan; Kazakhstan; Korea, Republic of; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Macao, China; Maldives; Malta; Mauritius; Mexico; Mongolia; Montenegro; Morocco; Mozambique; Netherlands; New Zealand; North

Macedonia; Norway; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Samoa; Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of; Singapore; Slovak Republic; Slovenia; Spain; Suriname; Sweden; Switzerland; Thailand; Tonga; United Kingdom; United States; Uruguay; and Vanuatu.

Key documents and resources

Dialogue MC14 Ministerial Statement and technical outcome documents - [WT/MIN\(26\)/21](#)

Dialogue MC13 Ministerial Statement and compilations - [WT/MIN\(24\)/14](#)

Factual Report of the Trade-Related Plastics Measures (TrPMs) Survey - [INF/TE/IDP/W/11](#)

Factual Report of the Aid for Trade (AFT) global review and needs assessment survey - [INF/TE/IDP/W/12](#)

Dialogue website: [WTO | Plastics pollution and environmentally sustainable plastics trade](#)

MC14 outcome package

The MC14 Ministerial Statement reaffirms Members' commitment to international cooperation to reduce plastic pollution and advance more environmentally sustainable plastics trade. It highlights progress since MC13, including deeper technical work and improved trade transparency, and sets out a high-level, Member-driven roadmap for continued engagement. The Statement underscores priorities such as better monitoring of plastics trade flows, enhanced cooperation on single-use plastics, structured experience-sharing on trade-related measures, support for sustainable alternatives, and strengthened technical assistance for developing and least-developed Members – with a view to delivering further concrete outcomes by MC15.

Attached to the Statement are five technical outcome documents, reflecting the Dialogue's work progress since MC13:

- **Technical Outcome A:** Analytical summary of statistical approaches to estimate trade flows of embedded plastics, packaging and single-use products. Consolidates methodologies and experiences shared by Members to better measure plastics trade flows, including embedded plastics, and highlights data gaps and opportunities linked to HS2028 reform.
- **Technical Outcome B:** Analytical summary of the different approaches in regulating single-use plastic products. Maps the range of criteria and regulatory approaches used by Members to address single-use plastics and identifies areas where greater coherence could improve effectiveness and reduce costs.
- **Technical Outcome C:** Synopsis of Member considerations in the adoption of trade-related plastics measures. Structures lessons learned and practical considerations emerging from Members' experience in designing and implementing trade-related plastics measures.
- **Technical Outcome D:** Synopsis of services and technologies for waste management and clean-up activities. Identifies key goods, services and technologies needed across the plastics waste lifecycle and highlights trade-related and capacity constraints affecting access to them.
- **Technical Outcome E:** Synopsis of non-plastic substitutes, alternatives and services to single-use plastic products. Summarizes examples of alternatives and related services discussed in the Dialogue and outlines trade-related challenges and opportunities for scaling environmentally sound solutions.

Cooperation with other international processes

Following efforts by the Dialogue and other stakeholders, in January 2024, the World Customs Organisation (WCO) published a major update of the Harmonized System for the customs classification to enter into force in 2028 (HS2028), which introduces new and more granular subheadings for plastic products. These amendments include specific single-use plastics and plastics embedded in goods and explicitly recognise the contribution of the WTO Dialogue on Plastic Pollution in supporting this process.

The Dialogue is also supportive of the ongoing efforts at the UN to conclude a new internationally binding instrument to tackle plastic pollution.