

WTO Dialogue on Plastic Pollution (DPP)

Statement by the Forum on Trade, Environment, & the SDGs (TESS)

DPP Pre-Plenary Meeting

12 April 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to intervene this morning.

TESS congratulates Members on the launch of the DPP Ministerial Statement at MC13 as well as the new work plan outlining implementation of the statement. We welcome the statement as a clear signal of Members' intent to further build on the excellent collective work and outcomes achieved since the launch of the Dialogue. In particular, the shared principles for cooperation identified by Members provide a strong foundation for specific individual and collective initiatives that Members may wish to pursue, building on the list of actions identified in the statement.

As we stated at the Plenary Meeting that was held on 26 January before MC13, the Ministerial Statement is a testament to the hard work of co-convenors and Members to keep their eye on the goal of doing something effective and meaningful here at the WTO and to have a concrete impact on plastic pollution on the ground, while also recognizing the complex set of challenges at hand. It reflects Members' ambition and political will to work together while balancing the diversity of their views and taking on board inputs from stakeholders.

As we further noted at the 26 January Plenary Meeting, the statement makes clear that the DPP process can and intends to both complement and contribute to the INC process on an international legally binding instrument without prejudging it. We are also pleased to reiterate again that the draft statement notes the UNEA resolution's call "to continue and step-up activities, and adopt voluntary measures, to combat plastic pollution" while the INC negotiations are underway and the DPP is one of the venues through which this can happen.

TESS welcomes the intention of DPP Members, noted in the Ministerial Statement and in the work plan, to advance further technical discussions and make progress towards concrete, pragmatic, and effective outcomes on these actions and understandings at the latest by MC14. As we noted at the 26 January Plenary Meeting, in order to realize this commitment, it will be vital that the format, agenda of meetings, questions for discussion, presentations, and other work under the three workstreams as set out in the work plan are designed specifically to foster such outcomes. We also welcome the reference in the Ministerial Statement that the factual compilation with actions, policies, and measures identified through the Dialogue's discussions and survey and attached to the statement will continue to be updated periodically. We hope the factual compilation will reflect new and concrete initiatives and actions that DPP Members can agree to pursue and act upon individually or collectively leading up to MC14. These can also build on trade-related elements from stakeholder presentations, such as the ones that we will hear in the sessions on crosscutting issues, reduction to tackle plastic pollution, and promoting trade to tackle plastic pollution.

Two quick final points.

First, a reminder to all is that the next session of the WCO's committee that reviews HS amendments for the 2028 cycle is in May. As you are aware, there are now a number of proposals on the table for consideration by WCO Members, spurred by the discussions and leadership of the DPP process. So, we encourage you to ensure that your customs and environment authorities are contributing actively to those discussions—progress on this issue would already be a very concrete outcome from the DPP for MC14.

Second, TESS will be hosting an event at INC-4 later this month on trade and plastic pollution, where we hope to provide an opportunity to raise awareness about the DPP's work at the WTO. In particular, we hope that representatives of a number of DPP members will participate and speak to share their experiences on trade-related measures and priorities for cooperation in this regard.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to these discussions. We look forward to continue supporting DPP delegates and stakeholders as they move forward with the post MC13 work programme.