

WTO Dialogue on Plastic Pollution (DPP)

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

DPP Pre-Plenary Meeting

18 September 2024

FIRST STATEMENT

Thank you for the opportunity to intervene this morning.

To begin, TESS would like to welcome the continued engagement from the membership in the Dialogue on Plastic Pollution and the co-facilitators for their efforts to deepen and focus the work of the DPP post MC13; this will be vital in order to achieve the stated goal of reaching concrete, pragmatic, and effective outcomes at MC14.

Concerning Point of Focus 3 and the question on ***trade-related capacity building programmes and identified needs***: We wanted to advise that TESS is currently working on a guide—in consultation with a range of experts—to support World Bank client countries in navigating trade policies relevant to their plastic pollution reduction goals. One of the key objectives of this guide is to identify capacity gaps faced by countries, both in implementing domestic trade-related policy tools for tackling plastic pollution and supporting implementation of regulations and standards that their businesses may face in export markets. We will be having a consultation with interested members on the guide in October or November this year, and look forward to feedback at that time on how to improve the report. The guide will be published in December 2024.

As we finalize the report, we will share with the DPP Secretariat and interested Members a synopsis of the specific trade-related needs identified in the course of drafting that report.

Alongside, and following on the intervention from Canada about discussions of capacity building needs and financing in the context of the plastics treaty, we agree that these are relevant to and can be informed by your ongoing work at the DPP on trade-related capacity building needs. In that spirit, TESS will also be reviewing the kinds of trade-related challenges and needs that developing countries raise in the context of the INC negotiations. This can also be a way to hear from environment ministries in developing countries and to connect the dots between the very rich discussions here and in the INC context. We would be pleased to share a synopsis of that with the DPP later this year.

Regarding aid for trade needs, several delegations have noted the importance of trade-related cooperation and aid for trade to address needs related to environmentally sound and safe plastic waste management. A quick note to say that we will shortly be publishing a policy paper with QUNO on cooperation around environmentally sound and safe plastic waste management technologies and services that could be pursued in the DPP. The paper:

- Identifies environmentally sound and safe plastic waste management technologies and services, including analysis of whether and which of these have associated HS or CPC codes.
- Reviews standards, tariffs, and non-tariff barriers that hinder trade in environmentally sound and safe plastic waste management technologies and services.
- Reviews the state of play and best practices with regard to environmental regulations relevant to plastic waste management and their implementation, including relevant international provisions, such as the Basel Convention technical guidelines.

Most importantly for this conversation on aid for trade, the paper further identifies some of the specific constraints faced by small island developing states, least developed countries, and small, vulnerable economies in plastic waste management and how trade-related cooperation, including around environmentally sound and safe waste management technologies, can help address these challenges. So, we hope that this paper will be useful to inform some of the matchmaking efforts on aid for trade and plastic pollution.

Thank you.

SECOND STATEMENT

Concerning Point of Focus 4 and the question on ***streamlining information on trade-related policy measures*** (TrPMs).

To avoid redundancy in data collection, we suggest that it could be useful to streamline and harmonize requirements for notifying trade-related policy measures.

On ***the establishment of a repository for TrPMs***: We believe that a global online repository, potentially hosted by the WTO and linked to HS codes, could serve as a valuable resource. Such a repository would enhance transparency, support cooperation, and facilitate cooperation in the design and implementation of trade policies. In addition, it could provide WTO Members with a reference point for reviewing their own TrPMs, and identifying good practices, opportunities, and gaps.

On the question of ***a domestic coordination mechanism for TrPMs***: TESS is of the view that inter-ministerial consultation and coordination mechanisms, including designated focal points, will be a key step forward for tackling the nexus of trade and plastic pollution in a coherent manner. The coordination mechanism will require the presence of representatives from the trade and industry ministries to address trade-related dimensions. As policies and measures to address plastic pollution have environmental and health dimensions, and a range of sustainable development implications, and because they also involve numerous actors along the supply chain, domestic coordination mechanisms are vital to facilitate coordination and coherent policymaking. There are a number of ministries relevant in this regard—from environment and commerce as well as those involved in small business development and human health—and a range of stakeholder groups.

Effective plastic pollution policies, including on the trade-related aspects, will rely on consideration of a diverse set of views and concerns from a range of ministries, businesses across the life cycle, and stakeholders—i.e. those with expertise on member obligations under WTO rules as well as multilateral environmental agreements including the future international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. As such, a useful output of the DPP could be some guidelines or best practices that can support members to identify the relevant ministries, technical experts, and stakeholders to engage in the coordination mechanism, as well as resources that they could draw upon.

As we have the floor, we seize this opportunity to remind DPP members that the last session of the HS Review Sub Committee will take place during the last two weeks of November and that there is a proposal under consideration on *Possible HS Amendments to Improve Transparency in the Trade Flows of Plastic Products*, submitted by the “coordinators” of the DPP, which focuses in particular on proposed HS reforms related to single use plastics. We would like to remind members that any further proposals regarding plastics can be still prepared by 10 October 2024. We encourage DPP members to reach out to their counterparts at the World Customs Organization regarding the importance of increasing transparency of trade flows across the life cycle of plastics and how this can support the capacity of countries to effectively address plastic pollution, including by enabling them to better focus on particularly challenging plastics that have been identified in the work of the DPP such as single use plastics and unnecessary packaging.

Finally, following the spirit of the questions for today’s session, we encourage the DPP coordinators to focus forthcoming sessions in the other workstreams on possible concrete pathways and steps to adopt outcomes of shared interest within the existing work plan ahead of MC14.