



# Addressing trade-related aspects of marine litter and plastic pollution

4<sup>th</sup> Oceans Forum on Trade related aspects of SDG 14

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# 4 impacts of plastics on the Ocean

**Plastic & chemical pollution (land origin)**



- About 8-12 million tonnes of plastic end up in the ocean (about 3-6 % of the annual plastic production)
- Six ocean' patches + hidden pollution
- Toxic chemicals such as phthalates, flame retardants & bisphenol -A

**Food web**



- About 51 trillion microplastic particles are in the oceans
- Ingestion of microplastics by fish and other species

**Marine fauna & flora**



- More than 640,000 tonnes of abandoned fishing nets are on the ocean
- Ghost fishing gear is a threat to mammals, turtles & seabirds through ingestion, suffocation & entanglement

**Ocean economy sectors & livelihoods**



- Plastic waste damages:
  - Aesthetic/use value of coastal tourist & sport fishing destinations
  - Marine transport, ports, & coastal infrastructure
- It is more expensive to clean than to prevent
- 91% of consumers state that they are concerned about plastic waste issues (UNEP, 2020)

# Why trade and plastic?

Trade in plastics account for over **USD 1 trillion** per year and 344 MM tons.

Trade accounts for a major share of all plastic produced – an important **policy lever**.

70% of all plastics produced ends up as **waste**. This constitutes a recognized problem by IDP ministerial declaration & UNEA 5.2 resolution.

*Plastic substitutes*: Non-plastic materials (agriculture, waste, marine or mineral-based)

*Plastic alternatives*: Plastic materials with better upstream (bioplastics) or downstream (biodegradable plastics)

.... Plastics are fabulous materials – but *Single-Use Plastics (SUPs) and readily substitutable plastics* are the key aspects of this discussion in trade.

## Post-UNEA 5.2: The Road to 2024

### Towards a United Nations treaty to combat plastic pollution & marine litter

#### Main elements:

- An **intergovernmental negotiating committee**, commencing in 2022 and to be completed by the end of 2024
- An **internationally legal binding instrument** to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment
- An agreement to establish a **science-policy panel** on chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution
- **Wide range of approaches**, sustainable alternatives and technologies to address the full life-cycle of plastics, include circular economy
- Enhanced international collaboration to facilitate **access to technology and scientific and technical cooperation**
- Call for **capacity building and technical and financial assistance** for effective implementation by developing countries and countries with economies in transition

## The Road to 2024:

# Towards a United Nations treaty to combat plastic pollution & marine litter

What is **not mentioned** in the UNEA 5.2 Resolution (UNEP/EA.5/L.23/Rev.1)?

- The role of **trade**
  - **Goods**
  - **Services**
- **Trade measures** tools (regulations, bans, taxes, etc.).
- The **development implications** of the transition for both developed and developing countries
- The importance of **substitutes and alternative materials**
- The effects of **fuel subsidies** on plastic prices, production and consumption decisions
- The role of **public and private finance** in supporting the transition

## Focusing on single-use plastics (SUPs) and promoting material substitutes

- **Lack of effective plastic-waste management and recycling capacity** in most developing countries.
- Substituting plastics with environmentally friendly materials such as paper and other compostables/recyclables could prevent **17% of projected plastic waste generation by 2040** (representing 71 million metric tonnes of avoidable macro plastic waste)(Pew,2020).
- **SUPs materials substitutes are just one of a set of complementary solutions** (reduce, reuse, recycle and manage waste).
- SUP material substitutes that rely on **domestic feedstocks** can generate **exports, economic activity, jobs and FOREX benefits** for developing countries. Imported feedstock can also be an input for manufacturing end-use products.
- Such material shift can improve **oceans and ecosystems health**.

# Plastic Substitutes – Illustrative HS codes list

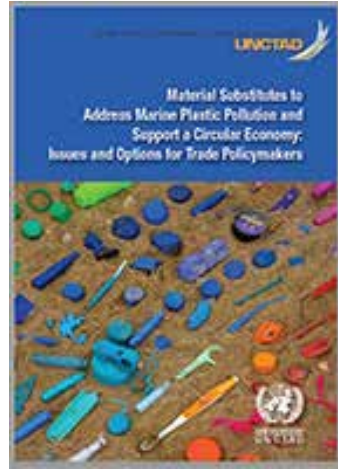
<b>FOOD CONTAINERS AND SINGLE-USE ACCESSORIES</b>	Containers: banana/plantain leaf	4602.19	Basketwork, wickerwork and other articles, made directly to shape from plaiting materials or made up from goods of heading 4601; articles of loofah; Of Other vegetable materials
	Containers: coconut husk	4602.19	Basketwork, wickerwork and other articles, made directly to shape from plaiting materials or made up from goods of heading 4601; articles of loofah; Of Other vegetable materials
		4819.10	Cartons, boxes and cases, of corrugated paper or paperboard
	Containers: paper	4819.20	Folding cartons, boxes and cases, of non-corrugated paper or paperboard
		4823.69	Trays, dishes, plates, cups and the like, of paper or paperboard; Other
	Straws: paper	4823.90	Other paper, paperboard, cellulose wadding and webs of cellulose fibres, cut to size or shape; other articles of paper pulp, paper, paperboard, cellulose wadding or webs of cellulose fibres; Other
	Straws: wheat fibre	4602.19	Basketwork, wickerwork and other articles, made directly to shape from plaiting materials or made up from goods of heading 4601; articles of loofah; Of other vegetable materials
<b>GROCERY BAGS/PACKAGING</b>	Cotton	6305.20	Sacks and bags, of a kind used for the packing of goods; Of cotton
	Hemp	6305.90	Sacks and bags, of a kind used for the packing of goods; Of other textile materials
	Jute	6305.10	Sacks and bags, of a kind used for the packing of goods; Of jute or of other textile bast fibres of heading 5303 (excluding flax, true hemp and ramie)
	Paper	4819.30	Sacks and bags, having a base of a width of 40 cm or more; of paper, paperboard, cellulose wadding or webs of cellulose fibres
		4819.40	Other sacks and bags, including cones; of paper, paperboard, cellulose wadding or webs of cellulose fibres
<b>LIQUID CONTAINERS</b>	Glass	7010.90	Carboys, bottles, flasks, jars, pots, phials, ampoules and other containers, of glass, of a kind used for the conveyance or packing of goods; preserving jars of glass; stoppers, lids and other closures, of glass; Other
		7612.90	Aluminium casks, drums, cans, boxes and similar containers (including rigid or collapsible tubular containers), for any material (other than compressed or liquefied gas), of a capacity not exceeding 300 litres, whether or not lined or heat-insulated, but not fitted with mechanical or thermal equipment; Other
	Aluminium	7615.10	Table, kitchen or other household articles and parts thereof; pot scourers and scouring or polishing pads, gloves and the like; Of aluminium
		7616.99	Other articles of aluminium; Other



## Some suggestions for recommendations by the 4<sup>th</sup> Oceans Forum

- ü Advocate to accelerate the adoption of the treaty on ending plastic pollution
- ü Accelerate collaboration, sharing of information, knowledge and best practices to eliminate plastic pollution
- ü Promote further research, development, and adoption of material substitutes to single-use plastics to address plastic pollution in the ocean.
- ü Explore opportunities to make use of natural materials, marine byproducts and post-harvest agricultural waste, which could help spur innovation, support circular economy and develop new industrial capacities
- ü Promote further development of the Harmonized System (HS), in special classifications relevant to material substitutes.
- ü Promote incentives to eliminate plastics, including by addressing the tariff rates applied to plastic and substitute materials to facilitate trade of substitute materials which are less polluting to the ocean.





<https://unctad.org/topic/trade-and-environment/oceans-economy>

<https://unctad.org/project/sustainable-manufacturing-and-environmental-pollution-smep>