

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

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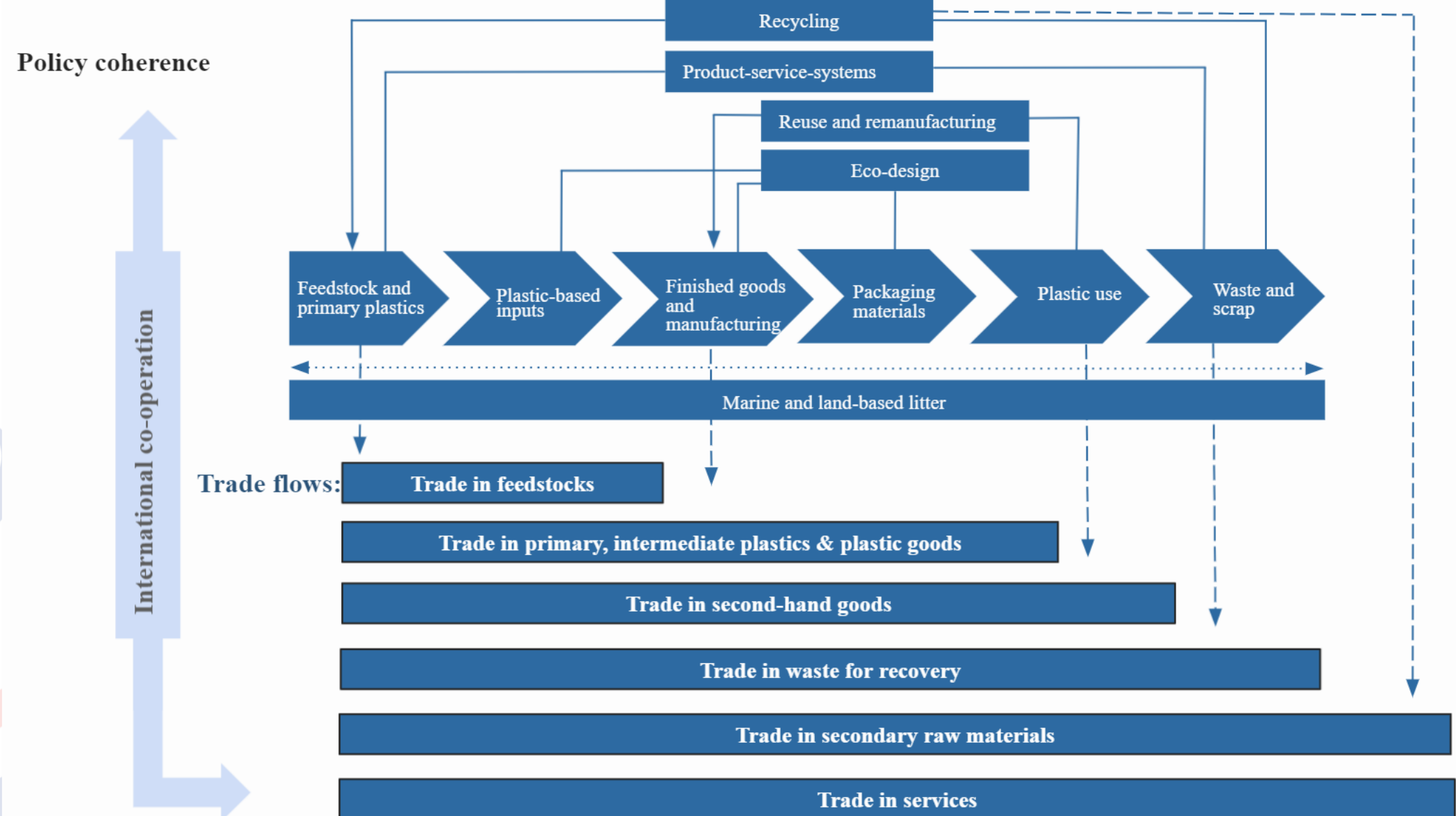
# Dialogue on Plastics Pollution (short overview)



- ▶ Launched in November 2020
- ▶ **76 co-sponsors**, representing more than 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 fora (BRS, WCO, INC...)

# How Trade (and Trade policies) interact with plastic pollution?

[INF/TE/IDP/W/3 – Factual Report 1<sup>st</sup> year]



# 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

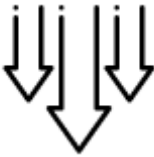
- Env / chemical taxes (appl. to plastics)
- deposit schemes [incl. EPR schemes]
- [preferential] Tariffs on certain goods (incl. Tariff quotas)
- Packaging fees
- Trade defence tools (e.g. applied to substitutes)



## 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

# 3 informal working groups



reduction to tackle plastic pollution



promotion to tackle plastic pollution

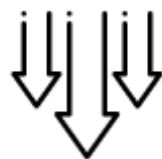


cross-cutting

Technical Assistance / Capacity Building

other (e.g. regional and int. coop.)

transparency



reduction to tackle  
plastic pollution

# General numbers and state of play of Dialogue's Survey on trade-related plastics measures (TrPMs)



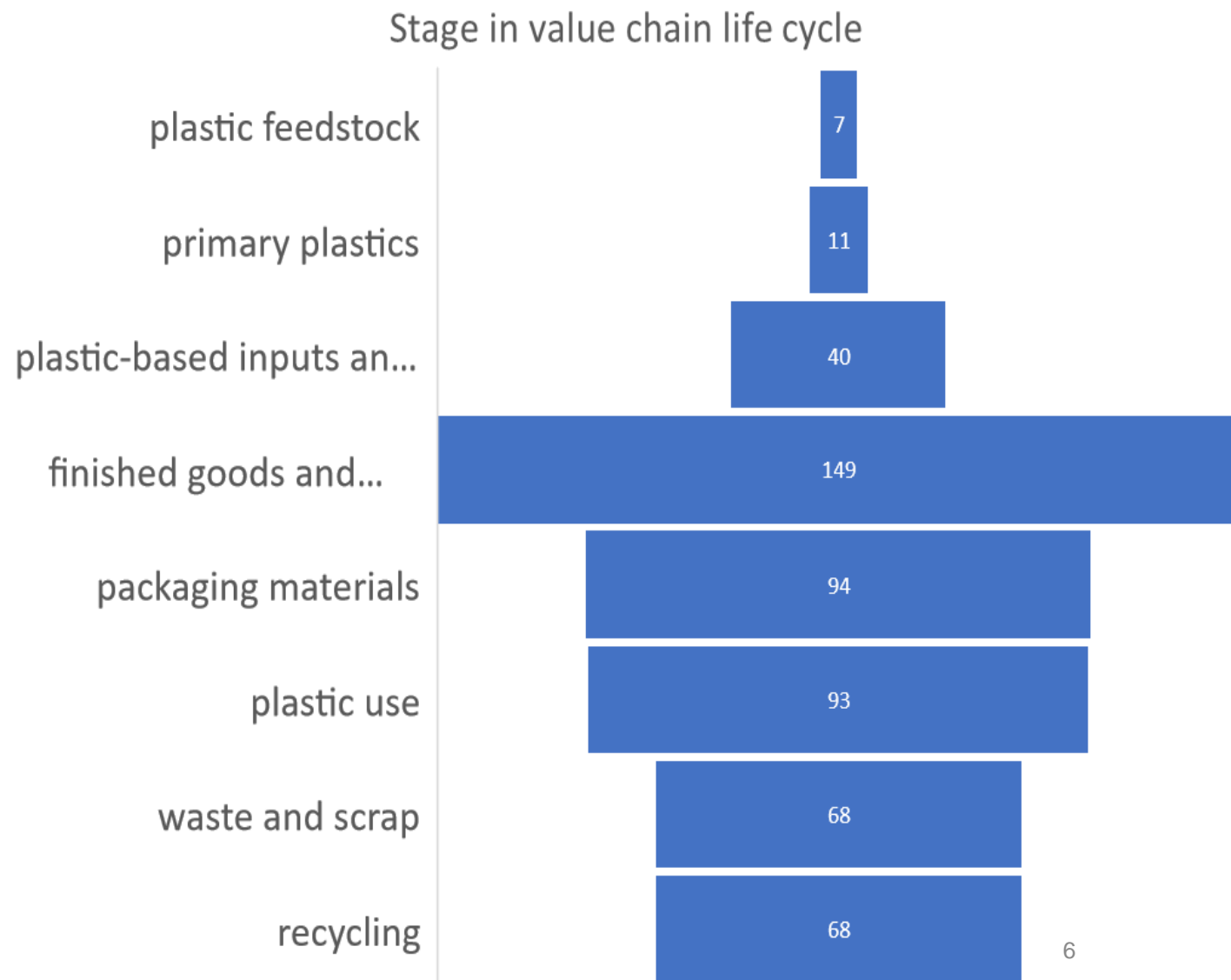
WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

~ 223 TrPMs

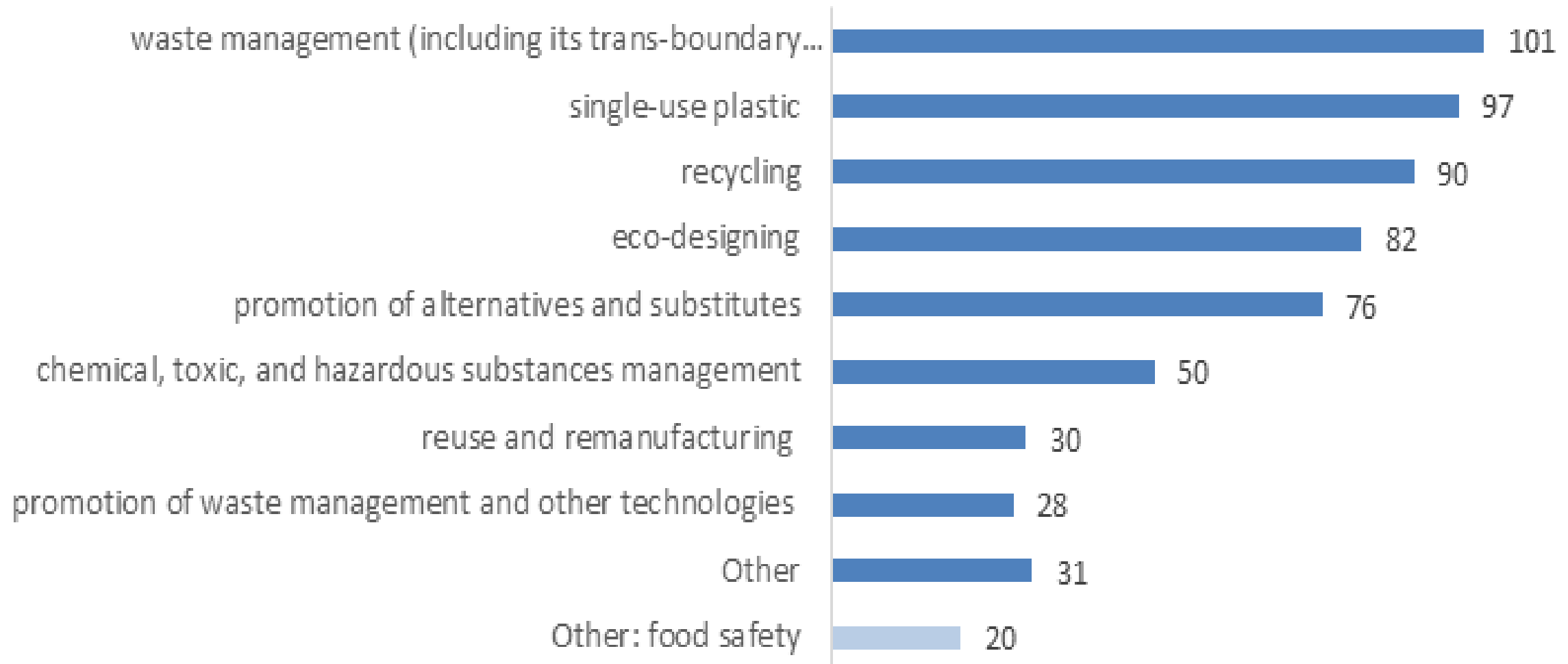
85

Members

From all regions and mostly developing and LDCs (75%+, by member or measure)



# What are TrPMs being adopted for?





# What products are [reduction] TrPMs being applied to?

[Factual summary of “reduction discussions” - INF/TE/IDP/RD/125/[Rev.1]]

# 94

## TrPMs on Packaging

# 97

## TrPMs on Single Use Plastics (SUPs)

### TrPMs on other SUP products:

- **Bottle 20**
- **Film 14**
- **Cotton buds 13**
- **Beverage stirrers 11**
- **Plastic lids 11**
- **Sachets 7**
- **Plastic balloon sticks 4**
- **Tobacco 2**

plastic film

degradable plastic

polystyrene

cotton bud

pvc plastic straw

plastic balloon stick

plastic bag

sachet oxo degradable plastic

bottle

fishing gear

tableware food container

beverage stirrer

cups

plastic lid



promotion to tackle plastic pollution



# Growing opportunities for non-plastic substitutes

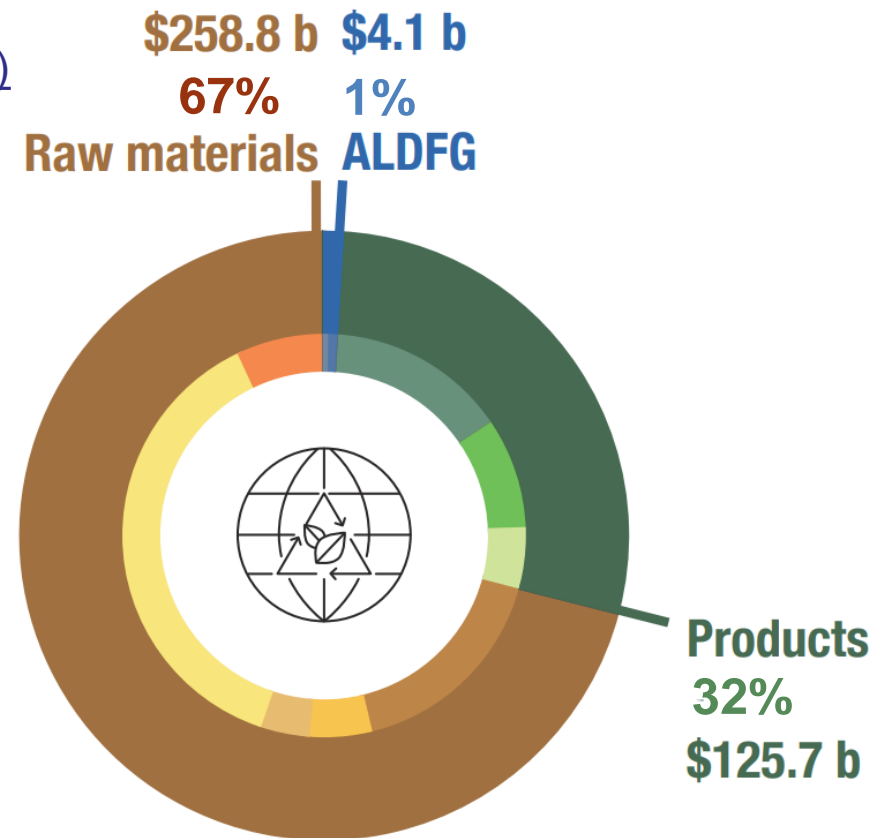
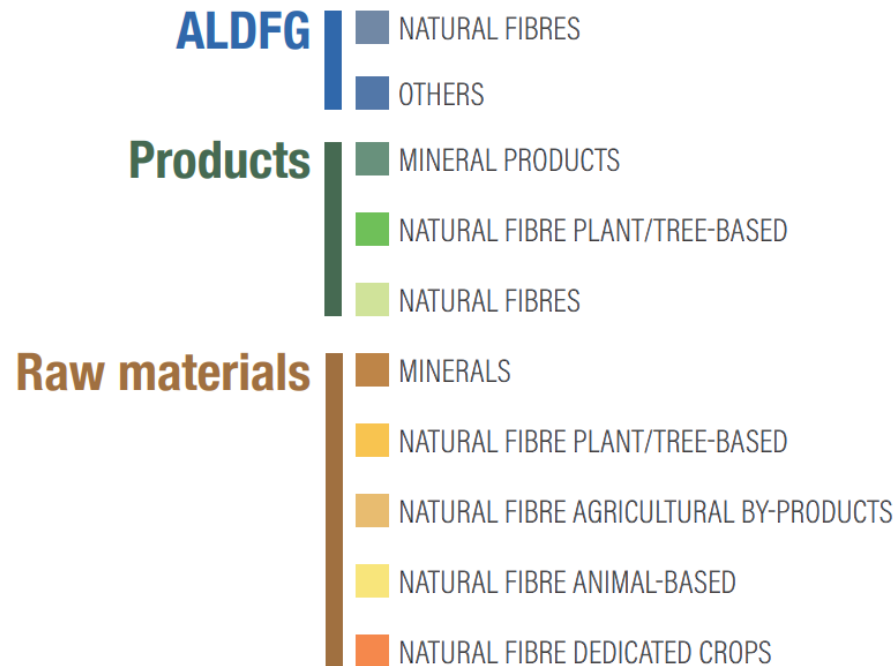
- UNCTAD - illustrative list of 282 HS codes for non-plastic substitutes\*

\* should be effective, safe, env sustainable (re-usable, recyclable, biodegradable, lower LCA impact...), food security, adapted to local capacity, needs and input sources... -

- Trade value of plastic substitutes in 2020 was \$388 billion (2/3 raw materials)

[Plastic Pollution: The pressing case for natural and environmentally friendly substitutes to plastics \(unctad.org\)](https://unctad.org/plastic-pollution)

PLASTIC SUBSTITUTES BY SOURCE



# But also challenges

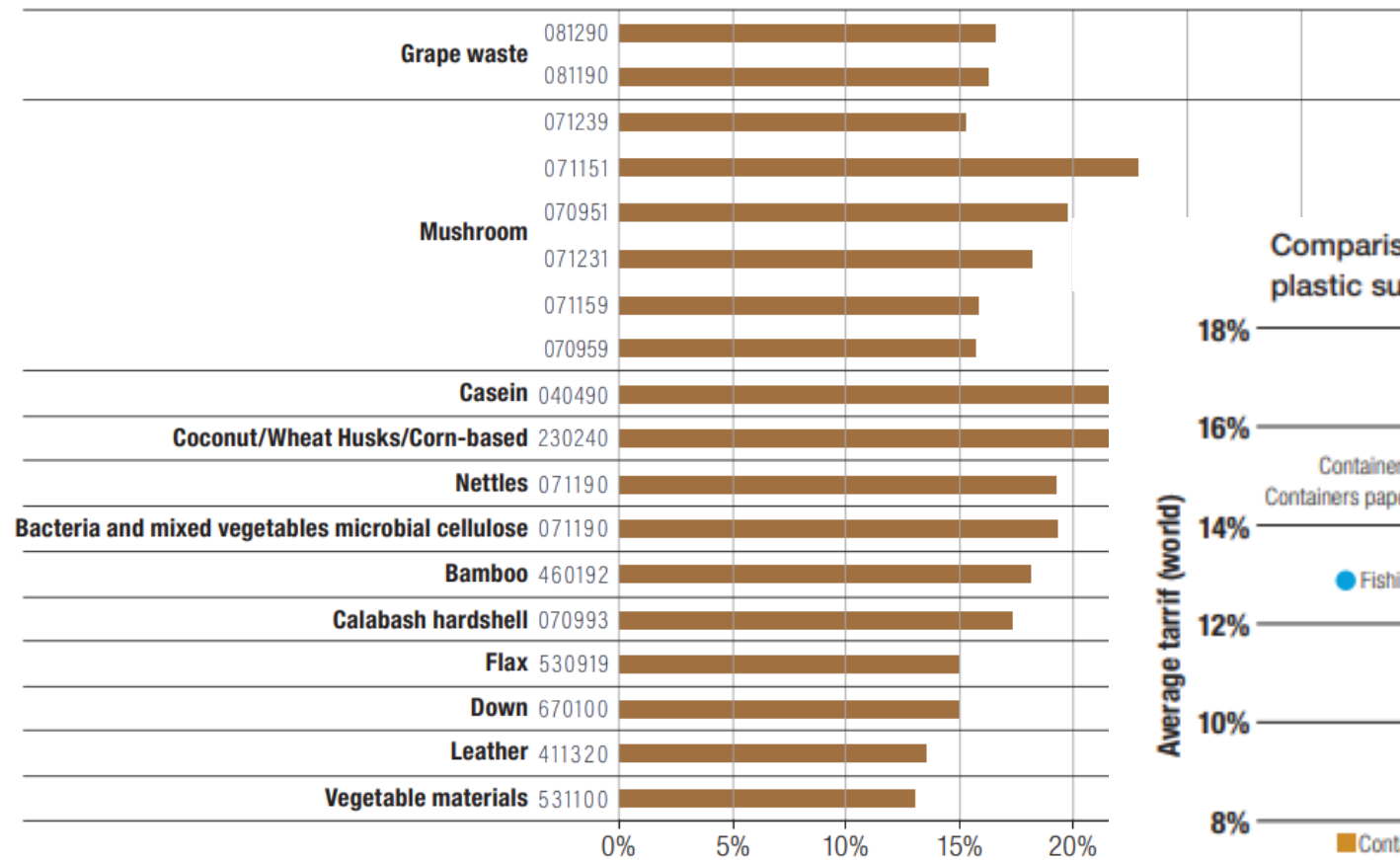
- ▶ (in general) plastics average unit price still much cheaper than substitutes
- ▶ Tariffs and non-tariff barriers to potential non-plastic substitutes are higher than for plastics
  - ▶ plastic materials and products generally enjoy lower tariffs and are concentrated below 10%, while product substitutes 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 Fossil Fuel Subsidies relate to plastic production + identify direct support to product and underpricing

# But also challenges

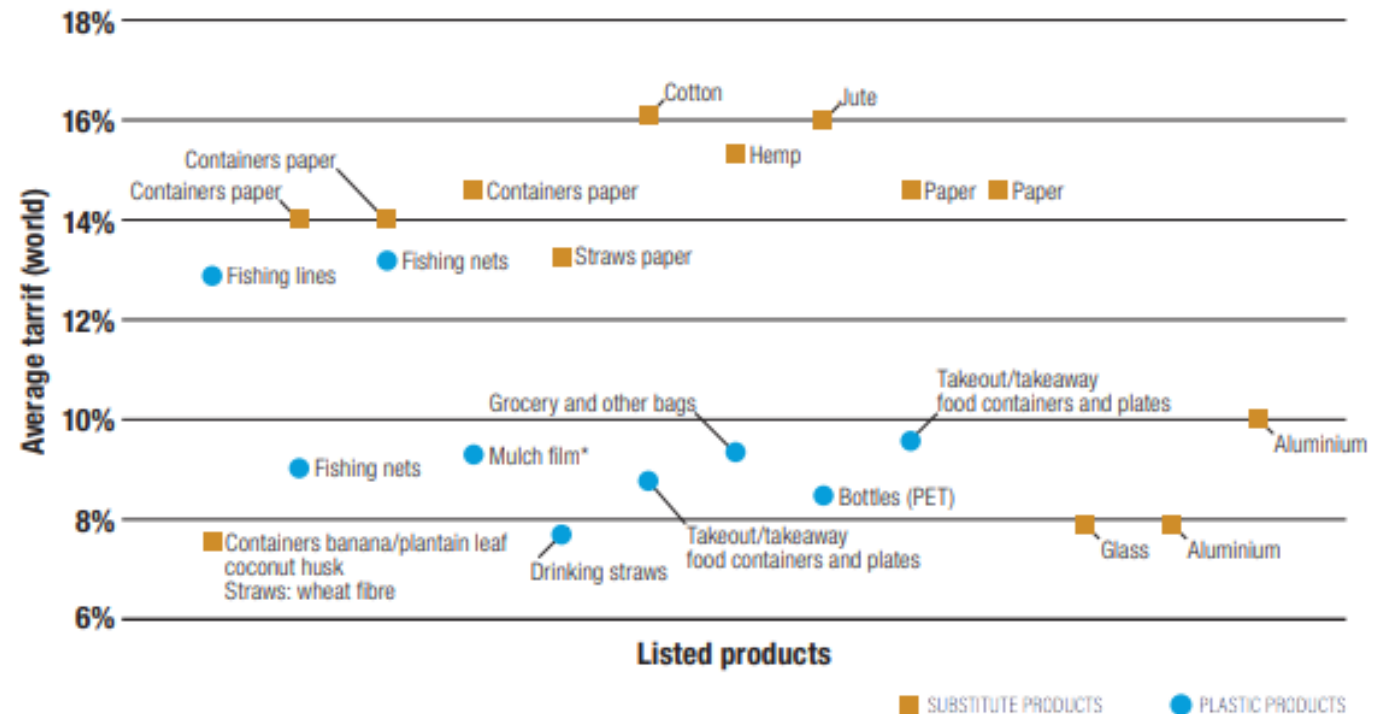
- highest tariffs applied to plastics raw materials (avg 9.61 per cent)



Average import tariffs applied on selected plastic substitutes raw material



Comparison of world average import tariffs applied to selected plastic products vs plastic substitutes





2021 Ministerial Statement calls for “concrete, pragmatic, and effective outcomes” at the latest by the WTO 13<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference.

Possible MC-13 statement under development.



13<sup>th</sup> WTO MINISTERIAL  
CONFERENCE  
ABU DHABI - UAE

2024

**The WTO's 13th Ministerial  
Conference (MC13)**

**26 to 29 February 2024 in Abu Dhabi,  
United Arab Emirates**

# THANK YOU

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