Plastic Scrap Trade in Latin America and the Caribbean: Related Policies and Regional Comparisons

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• Patterns of plastic scrap trade (World & LATAM / Caribbean)
• Policies (circular economy.earth)
• Many countries still launching policies:
  – RCA vs % recycling
  – Systems thinking – alternatives can be better than improving upstream and downstream.
• Regional comparisons
  – Europe, Asia, Africa
Patterns of plastic scrap trade (World)

Value: USD 3.5b
Volume: 8.9 m t (2018)

*considering only reported flows in plastic scrap
Source: Pacini et. al., (2020)
in Sustainable Production and Consumption
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modularity class</th>
<th>Number of countries</th>
<th>Traded volume</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Regional hub</th>
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<td>21.2%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
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Patterns of plastic scrap trade (Latam & Caribbean)
Latam & Caribbean - Policies

• Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia have a number of policies (EPR, National Circular Economy Policies, Product Policy & Waste management and recycling)

• Most Caribbean countries have more limited policy frameworks (focusing on waste management and recycling)
Going beyond plastics...

- Tackling plastics doesn’t end the problem
- Better materials governance & less material usage should be the goals!

Traded Mass (Million tons, 2018)
Regional Comparisons

- Circular Economy-related policies are moving fast in Africa and Asia.
- EU has comprehensive strategy.
- China has a broad national policy.
- LATAM less pronounced in policy movements.

Source: Circular Economy in Russia: Drivers and Barriers for Waste Management Development (2019)
Introduction of substitutes requires systems thinking

**Example**

- **Natural fiber**
  - Not competitive (or + imports)
  - Lower pollution risk

- **Paper**
  - Competitive
  - Lower pollution risk

- **Glass**
  - Not competitive (or + imports)
  - Increased pollution risk

- **Metal**
  - Competitive
  - Increased pollution risk

Recovery or Recycling rates

100%

RCA (proxy for competitiveness)

RCA < 1

RCA > 1