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DIALOGUE ON PLASTICS POLLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE PLASTICS TRADE

FACTUAL REPORT OF THE AID FOR TRADE (AFT) GLOBAL REVIEW AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

1. In furthering the objectives of their 2021 Ministerial Statement¹ to address trade-related capacity building and technical assistance needs of developing Members, least developed Members and vulnerable Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and consider plastic pollution and environmentally sustainable plastics trade in Aid for Trade (Aft) with environmentally sustainable objectives, the Dialogue on Plastics Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (Dialogue) launched on 9 June 2022 a voluntary survey on Aft Global Review and Needs Assessment.²

2. It outlined five main questions (with follow-up questions and guiding options for answers) addressed to different groups of Members and stakeholders, regarding: (i) how to better reflect plastic pollution in Aft programmes in the following Aft Global Review cycles; (ii) what needs were required to efficiently implement trade-related policies and actions to address plastic pollution; (iii) what assistance was already received to address plastic pollution, in particular to support trade-related actions; (iv) what assistance was already provided by WTO Members to address plastic pollution, in particular to support trade-related actions; and (v) what assistance was already provided by regional and international institutions working on plastics to address plastic pollution, in particular to support trade-related actions.

3. Preliminary results and insights were presented and discussed at several meetings of the Dialogue since its launch. This report provides a factual overview of the responses and insights gained from the Aft Global Review and Needs Assessment survey exercise (Aft survey). It focuses on the harmonized categories contained in the survey, as well as further information that could be extracted from the data.

¹ See Ministerial Statement on Plastic Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade ([WT/MIN\(21\)/8/Rev.2](#)), 10 December 2021. Current co-sponsors are: Albania; Angola; Australia; Austria; Barbados; Belgium; Bolivia, Plurinational State of; Bulgaria; Cabo Verde; Cambodia; Cameroon; Canada; Central African Republic; Chad; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Ecuador; Estonia; European Union; Fiji; Finland; France; Gambia; Germany; Greece; Honduras; Hong Kong, China; Hungary; Iceland; Ireland; Italy; Jamaica; Japan; Kazakhstan; Korea, Republic of; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Macao, China; Maldives; Malta; Mauritius; Mexico; Morocco; Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Samoa; Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of; Singapore; Slovak Republic; Slovenia; Spain; Suriname; Sweden; Switzerland; Thailand; Tonga; United Kingdom; United States; Uruguay; and Vanuatu.

² Aid for Trade Global Review and Needs Assessment Survey ([INF/TE/IDP/W/8/Rev.1](#))

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1 OVERVIEW OF MAIN RESULTS

1.1 General information

1. The AfT survey consisted of four sections, with each section respectively addressed to:
 1. All participants;
 2. Recipient partners;
 3. Donor Members and South-South Partners; and
 4. Regional and international donor institutions and organizations working on plastics.
2. In total, 15 delegations and institutions submitted responses to the survey, including 7 recipient partners, 6 donor Members and South-South partners, and 2 regional/international institutions working on plastics pollution.

Graph 1: Breakdown of submissions by recipient partners, donor Members and South-South partners, and regional/international institutions

3. The WTO Secretariat had presented some preliminary results based on the data available from nine submissions at the time (16 February 2023).³ Since then, six more submissions were received and more information could be sought in the future.

Table 1: Recipient partners, donor Members, South-South partners, and regional/international organizations who submitted responses to the AfT survey

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Australia | Kuwait | Tonga |
| Cabo Verde | Norway | United Kingdom |
| European Union | Paraguay | United States |
| Ecuador | The Philippines | International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) |
| Japan | Saudi Arabia | Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) |

1.2 Enhancing transparency of plastic pollution efforts in AfT programmes in future AfT Global Review cycles

4. All participants were asked the following headline question:

How can plastic pollution in AfT programmes be better reflected in the next AfT Global Review cycle?

5. To gather more granular information on the topic, three follow-up questions were asked, covering: (i) improvements to the AfT questionnaire; (ii) enhanced engagement by delegations with the review process; and (iii) potential engagement by relevant stakeholders. The responses are examined below.

6. In total, 13 participants (6 recipient partners, 6 donor Members, and 1 institution) shared their views regarding relevant information, policies, efforts, and actions needed to increase transparency and delegations' and stakeholders' engagement in the AfT Global Review process and ensure programmes aimed to support efforts to address plastic pollution were better identified.

1.2.1 Improvements to the AfT questionnaire

7. The first follow-up question was:

What relevant information can be gathered, for example through questions specific to plastics and plastic pollution to be included in the questionnaire sent to participants? For example, should

³ See Aide Memoire by the Facilitators on the Pre-Plenary Meeting held on 16 February 2023 ([INF/TE/IDP/R/11](#)).

participants be invited to simply indicate programmes related to addressing plastic pollution? Should there be some prior categorisation to help better identify the nature of existing programmes (e.g. by objective, type of policy, type of plastics, alternatives and substitutes and services, including goods, services and technologies targeted etc) and the links to trade (e.g. is trade considered in the programme, what trade measures might accompany or support the implementation of the policy/programme, etc.)?

8. Participants put forth a range of suggestions (see Table 2 below) seeking to ensure information gathered in the 2024-25 and following Aft Global Review cycles was relevant to and were better targeted at Aft programmes addressing plastics and plastic pollution.

9. Overall, participants converged on the utility of a prior categorisation of existing programmes to better identify their nature, scope and linkages to trade (8), which would in turn help with the development of more targeted Aft programmes related to addressing plastic pollution. Some participants also thought it helpful that the Aft questionnaire allow for inputs on Members' priorities and needs on technical assistance and capacity building programmes specific or complementary to plastics and plastic pollution (2), and that Members be able to share case studies and experiences in their implementation of domestic programmes, policies, activities, and efforts (2). Others called for Members to provide more specific information on their domestic programmes (3), which could be useful for other Members to evaluate if they could be replicated in their respective contexts.

Table 2: Suggested improvements to the Aft questionnaire to gather more targeted information on Aft programmes addressing plastics and plastic pollution

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Prior categorisation of programmes | Priorities and needs on technical assistance and capacity building programmes specific or complementary to plastics and plastic pollution |
| Sharing of case studies and domestic experiences | Specific information on existing domestic programmes |

10. As regards the categorisation of existing programmes, participants generally agreed that categorisation could be based on:

- objective (e.g. research programmes into alternatives and substitutes to plastics);
- type of policy and programme;
- type of plastics targeted (including specific polymers and additives);
- alternatives and substitutes available; and
- services, including access to technologies targeted at tackling plastic pollution.

11. One respondent noted the utility of having information on the plastics that were embedded in imported and exported goods, including their specific types and future uses. Another participant suggested that spatial distribution (e.g. urban/rural, or city/municipality classification) of plastic pollution, including waste management policies and programmes could also be taken into consideration. In this regard, non-governmental organizations in the Philippines such as Mother Earth Foundation and Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation Inc had implemented plastic waste management programmes in specific local government units (LGUs), and information on spatial distribution could be useful in evaluating the readiness and capacity of different types of LGUs in implementing plastic waste policies and programmes.

12. One donor member suggested that participants of the Aft Global Review should have the opportunity to provide information on policies, education, efforts to encourage substitutes and alternatives, and best practices, as well as on activities designed to facilitate trade in the collection, recycling and upcycling of plastics. Further, participants should be able to comment on the opportunities and challenges represented by the circular economy as it relates to plastic pollution. It was also vital to ensure that key cross-cutting issues were being considered in efforts to address plastic pollution.

13. One recipient partner pointed to the value of case studies showcasing:

- how a member fostered an enabling business environment for recycling infrastructure and alternatives to single-use plastic bags, and to increase private sector participation;
- the use of technologies that have transformed the recycling industries and the production of alternatives to plastics;
- awareness efforts to promote the use of biodegradable and alternatives among the public; and
- learnings from other SIDS.

14. One donor member suggested that the Aft review could seek to gather a greater breadth of information, including official development assistance programmes that were outside of the traditional Aft space and which address different elements of plastic pollution. This would help to provide an overview of the relevant development assistance, which could serve to identify the relevant links to trade.

15. While participants generally recognized the value of having oversight of the multitude of domestic, regional and global programmes, with some calling for parties to provide more specific information on existing domestic programmes that address plastic pollution, others cautioned the need to avoid comprehensive or complex reporting or granular information. Instead, questions could be marked by a high-level categorisation or focus on relevant programmes that do not duplicate other existing reporting obligations, such as those under the Basel Convention or any new international agreement on ending plastic pollution. One donor Member recommended that the questionnaire include a reminder to Members to also notify any relevant measure under the appropriate WTO committees to fulfil their reporting and transparency obligations.

1.2.2 Efforts by Dialogue co-sponsors and other Members to better engage in the Aft review process

16. The second follow-up question was:

What could IDP co-sponsors and other Members do themselves in their engagement in the process?

17. To increase Members' engagement in the Aft review process, participants underscored the importance of prioritising plastic pollution in their Aft strategies, increasing engagement in the Aft review exercise and in the Dialogue, and strengthening Dialogue and Aft coordination as well as coordination between Dialogue and the INC negotiations on a global plastics treaty. Other suggestions included training and capacity building workshops (technical and non-technical) for delegates; mobilisation of financial resources, including by assigning dedicated budgetary funding; coherence in their trade policy and regulatory design; establishing a public platform or on the WTO website of good practices by Members; and greater communication and public advocacy.

Table 3: Suggestions to increase Members' engagement in the Aft review process

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Prioritise plastic pollution in Aft strategies | Increase engagement in Aft review exercise | Increase engagement in the Dialogue |
| Feed Dialogue findings into Aft review | Facilitate links between Dialogue and INC negotiations | Coherence in trade policy and regulatory design |
| Monitoring and evaluation | Mobilise financial resources | South-South cooperation |
| Training and capacity building workshops (technical and non-technical) for delegates | Public platform (e.g. WTO website) containing good practices of Members | Communication and public advocacy |

18. In terms of increasing engagement in the Aft review exercise, one donor member suggested that donors could present to the Aft stocktake efforts by their governments to assist recipients, to facilitate a global picture of Aft efforts. This could then be analysed in the Aft review to determine overlapping and/or complementary activities and encourage greater coordination and cooperation among donors. In addition, South-South cooperation on lessons learned to address plastic pollution could also be identified through the stocktake. In the same vein, one recipient partner called for all Members to provide relevant information in order to identify commonalities, opportunities for improvement and for the implementation of business measures through an exchange of experiences and good practices.

19. Reiterating that it was important for Dialogue co-sponsors and other Members to review the draft questionnaire provided by the Secretariat and provide as comprehensive a response as possible, another donor Member suggested that Members could further encourage participation by the environment community, including through greater join-ups between government departments when completing the questionnaire, so as to provide information on official development assistance programmes that relate to plastic pollution but which were outside of the traditional Aft space. A widened participation by the environment community and between government departments could also be reflected in their participation in events at the Aft Global Review. In addition, Dialogue co-sponsors could raise the profile of plastic pollution in the Aft review through their contributions to discussions on the theme and by ensuring that there are specific questions in the questionnaire that relate to plastic pollution.

20. To facilitate the sharing of best practices in the Aft review exercise, one donor member noted that the Aft experience sharing model may be of interest, where Members could develop a mapping exercise (similar to workshops) to engage in the process of exploring plastic pollution issues. It noted that a mapping exercise could consist of: (i) a set of questions addressing critical knowledge gaps; (ii) a set of associated activities to answer them; and (iii) learning activities (e.g. experience sharing) aimed at disseminating findings. This mapping exercise is intended as a way for Members to learn from each other while building trust and collaboration with Dialogue stakeholders and Members to revitalise joint work.

21. In terms of increasing engagement in the Dialogue, one recipient partner and one donor member called for more information sharing sessions by technical experts and Members on topics such as alternatives and substitutes, responses to plastic pollution and marine debris, and on trade-related plastics measures, including those under consideration in the INC negotiations. Such information sharing could include an inventory of the types of plastics that are being proposed to be banned, as this will affect both the domestic and global economies, particularly for producers and end-users of these products. More broadly, one recipient partner called for Dialogue co-sponsors to continue with efforts to expand the membership of the Dialogue.

22. The need for Dialogue inputs to be represented in the Aft review and INC negotiations was also emphasised. One donor member underscored the need to ensure that relevant findings from the Dialogue are fed into the Aft review but cautioned against overly comprehensive reporting requirements. One stakeholder suggested facilitating trade-related links with Dialogue co-sponsors and the INC negotiations through their respective domestic contacts to ensure that Dialogue inputs are represented in the discussions.

23. To build capacity, one recipient partner recommended training and workshops on technical and non-technical issues for delegates on topics such as the latest research and technical information on plastic pollution, biodegradable materials and alternatives to plastics, as well as ongoing developments in the preparation of the global plastics treaty under the INC and how Members could be involved at various stages of the negotiating process. Another recipient partner recommended that Members could design and adopt relevant domestic and regional trade-related policy and regulatory frameworks to reduce and eliminate plastic pollution. Such policies could include phased bans on single-use plastics, mandatory extended producer responsibility (EPR) programmes, and taxes on virgin plastics.

24. Participation by Members in monitoring and evaluation of their technical assistance programmes and trade-related plastic measures was noted by one recipient partner to be helpful in supporting the development and implementation of effective and sustainable solutions to plastic pollution. However, one donor member pointed to the limited administrative capacity of Members to conduct additional monitoring in the context of other existing regular monitoring requests, such as those under the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). They further noted that classification codes for monitoring had not been established for programmes related to plastics or circular economy, and that monitoring requests remained burdensome even in areas with established classification codes from the OECD-DAC definition of Aft.

1.2.3 Involvement of relevant stakeholders engaged in global, regional and domestic programmes to tackle plastic pollution

25. The third follow-up question was:

Should relevant stakeholders, including organizations engaged in global, regional and domestic programmes related to addressing plastic pollution, also be involved? If yes, which and how? For example, through specific Workshops that can be directly embedded into the Aft Work Programme? If so, on what topics?

26. All 14 participants of the survey were in favour of involving relevant stakeholders – particularly organizations engaged in global, regional and domestic programmes to tackle plastic pollution – in the Aft Global Review, with many going further to recognize the importance of stakeholder participation in the review process. Nonetheless, one recipient partner expressed that the Aft review should be member-driven where it is Members that are parties to the WTO and best positioned to understand their own domestic circumstances, including stakeholder activities.

27. Overall, participants pointed to the following categories of stakeholders that Members could engage with in the course of the Dialogue's work on Aft issues and as part of the Aft Global Review process, namely:

- civil society (e.g. women and youth groups);
- academia;
- businesses;
- industry associations;
- chambers of commerce;
- regional and international organizations dealing with the environment, marine, customs, health, standards;
- financial institutions;
- research institutions.

28. Participants also identified examples of stakeholders involved in work on plastics and plastic pollution that were of relevance to the Aft discussions. Table 4 contains a non-exhaustive list of stakeholders mentioned.

Table 4: Non-exhaustive list of stakeholders mentioned

| Type | Stakeholder |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Intergovernmental | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) |
| | United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) |
| | Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions Secretariat |
| | Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution (INC) Secretariat |
| | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) |
| | Global Environment Facility (GEF) |
| | World Bank Group (incl. PROBLUE fund) |
| | Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) |
| | International Organization for Standardization (ISO) |
| | United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) |
| | United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) |
| | International Maritime Organization (IMO) |
| | International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) |
| | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) |
| | World Customs Organization (WCO) |
| Regional | Inter-American Development Bank |
| | European Investment Bank (EIB) |
| | Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) |
| | Oceania Customs Organizations (OCO) |
| | Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) |
| Civil Society and Multi-stakeholder | Forum on Trade, Environment, and the SDGs (TESS) |
| | Pew Charitable Trusts |

| Type | Stakeholder |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Businesses / Industry | World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) |
| | World Economic Forum (incl. Global Plastic Action Partnership) |
| | International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) |
| | International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) |
| | Suppliers of raw materials for the production of plastic products |
| | Manufacturers/producers of plastic products |
| | End-users or businesses that depend on plastic products |
| | Producers of substitutes and alternatives to plastics and plastic products, including refill and reuse systems |
| | Industry leaders with highly visible EPR programmes and strong community presence |

29. Participants were generally in agreement on engaging with stakeholders through workshops, meetings and discussions on a spectrum of topics (see Table 5), top among them circular plastic economy approaches; sustainable plastic waste management; financing mechanisms; alternatives and substitutes; quantitative analyses such as on AfT flows and trade statistics; and customs requirements.

Table 5: Illustrative list of topics for engagement with stakeholders

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Circular plastic economy | Sustainable waste management | Customs requirements |
| Financing mechanisms | Quantitative analyses e.g. on AfT flows and trade statistics | Alternatives and substitutes |
| Marine plastic pollution | Transboundary movement of plastic and waste management | Agricultural plastics |
| Health impacts of plastic pollution | INC process | Industry-led initiatives |
| Linking customs/trade data systems and environmental data systems | Use and treatment after receipt of plastic products | Community-based solutions |

30. One donor member recommended that these workshops be thematically focused along the capacity-building topics outlined in the 2021 Dialogue Ministerial Statement⁴, that is, on programmes supporting:

- i. moving towards more circular plastics economies;
- ii. improving the environmentally sound management, recovery and recycling of plastics;
- iii. facilitating access to key technologies; and
- iv. expanding trade in environmentally sustainable and effective substitutes and alternatives.

31. It added that these workshops could also focus on developing methodologies and fostering experience sharing, where developing Members could be invited to present priorities and avenues for intervention in their respective contexts (albeit being mindful of varying administrative capacities so as not to create undue administrative burden on Members).

32. Another donor member noted that those stakeholders not involved in the AfT stocktake, such as some private sector and/or philanthropic initiatives, could participate in workshops in advance of the stocktake and review to assist Members to efficiently participate in review discussions as well as their submissions for the review. Further, researchers, non-governmental organizations and other relevant experts could be involved in a follow-up to the review to help determine gaps in AfT and how they might best be filled by donors and international development organizations. For example, could more be done to focus the attention of multilateral AfT on trade facilitation in recycled and upcycled plastics? How can industries designed to collect and distribute plastics for reused be better supported? How can donors help developing Members address marine plastic pollution?

33. One recipient partner expressed support for capacity building, training, and awareness programmes for:

⁴ Ministerial Statement on Plastic Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (WT/MIN(21)/8/Rev.2), 10 December 2021.

- Domestic customs officials, on the Harmonized System (HS) codes and latest trade-related measures on plastics and conventions related to plastic pollution;
- Micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) organizations or associations involved in the production and distribution of plastics, biodegradable materials or alternatives to plastics;
- Government bodies and MSME organizations or associations involved in waste management, including recycling and disposal of plastics.

34. To allow for more targeted engagement, another recipient partner suggested that workshops could be contextualised and made relevant for certain regions by holding them at the regional or domestic level, with the participation of relevant regional and domestic organizations.

35. Cooperation with organizations leading research on foreign aid, plastic pollution and trade such as the OECD found support in two donor member responses. This could include specific workshops on topics such as OECD's monitoring of Aft flows related to plastics. The WTO could also leverage on the analytical capacities of the OECD to conduct joint WTO-OECD quantitative analyses to better analyse the nature of existing programmes and suggest appropriate prior categorisation, such as the type of plastics and alternatives and substitutes targeted by the programme. This analysis could be complemented by cooperation between the WTO and OECD on how best to source information on Aft programmes focusing on plastics.

36. Beyond workshops and meetings, one recipient partner pointed to pilot projects, coastal clean ups and village clean up inspections as unorthodox approaches to stakeholder engagement. One example cited was the No Pelestiki Campaign in Tonga, which offered natural alternatives to plastic bags such as fabric bags and baskets woven from coconut fibres as a substitute. It further highlighted some domestic examples in the region on the implementation of sustainable finance mechanisms such as container deposit legislation and advance recovery fees.

1.3 Needs identified in priority areas in plastic pollution

37. Recipient partners were asked the following headline question:

What trade-related actions are envisioned in relation to objectives identified in the IDP Ministerial Statement (see below)? What specific needs do you require to efficiently implement trade-related policies and actions to address plastic pollution [for each specific objective].

38. To gather more granular information on the topic and facilitate analysis, recipient partners were asked to provide a score from (low priority) 1 to 5 (high priority) on each of the eight harmonized objectives in the survey. They were equally asked to provide a score from 1 to 5 on a set of harmonized needs required to implement trade-related actions to realize each of the objectives. The responses and results are examined below.

1.3.1 Priority areas in addressing trade-related aspects of plastic pollution

39. The survey identified eight harmonized objectives in relation to the 2021 Dialogue Ministerial Statement, namely:

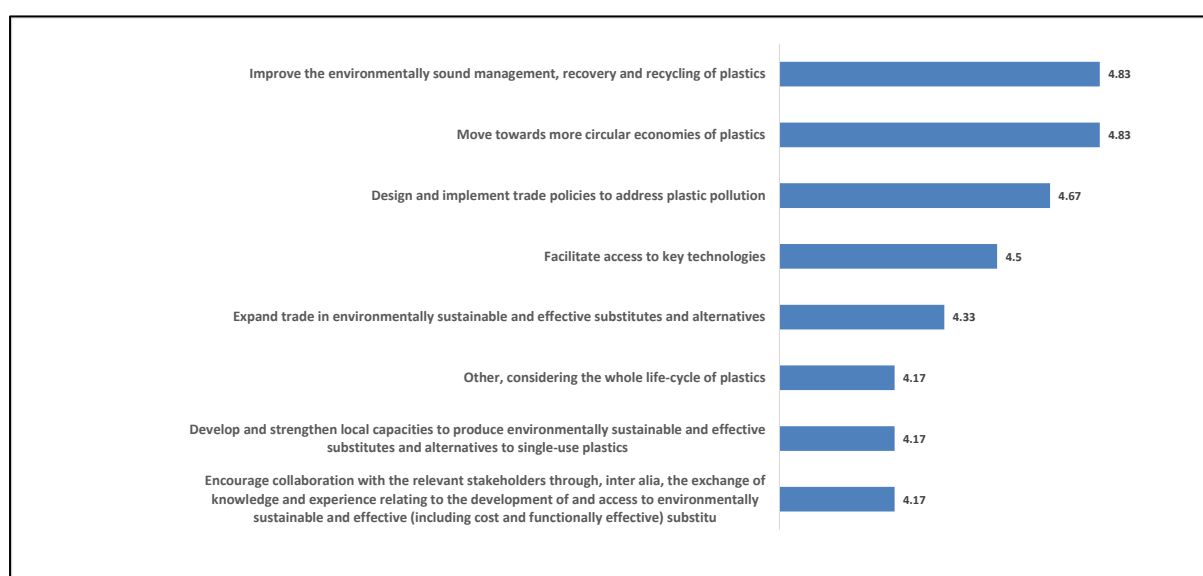
- Move towards more circular economies of plastics;
- Improve the environmentally sound management, recovery and recycling of plastics;
- Facilitate access to key technologies;
- Expand trade in environmentally sustainable and effective substitutes and alternatives;
- Encourage collaboration with the relevant stakeholders through, *inter alia*, the exchange of knowledge and experience relating to the development of and access to environmentally sustainable and effective (including cost and functionally effective) substitutes and alternatives to single-use plastics;
- Develop and strengthen local capacities to produce environmentally sustainable and effective substitutes and alternatives to single-use plastics;
- Design and implement trade policies to address plastic pollution; and
- Other objectives, considering the whole lifecycle of plastics.

40. All objectives had high average scores in the survey, above 4.15 average scores (see graph 2 below). Of the eight objectives, recipient partners ranked highest the objectives of moving towards

more circular economies of plastics (4.83) and improving the environmentally sound management, recovery and recycling of plastics (4.83), followed by designing and implementing trade policies to address plastic pollution (4.67).

41. It should be noted that three of the objectives relating to sustainable and effective substitutes and alternatives, that is – (i) expanding trade in environmentally sustainable and effective substitutes and alternatives (4.33); (ii) encourage collaboration with the relevant stakeholders through, *inter alia*, the exchange of knowledge and experience relating to the development of and access to environmentally sustainable and effective (including cost and functionally effective) substitutes and alternatives to single-use plastics (4.17); and (iii) develop and strengthen local capacities to produce environmentally sustainable and effective substitutes and alternatives to single-use plastics (4.17) – were indicated as priority areas by almost all recipient partners who responded to the survey (with scores of 4 or 5), notwithstanding their relatively lower scores.

Graph 2. Priority areas in efforts to address trade-related aspects of plastic pollution



42. Recipient partners also outlined a sample of trade-related plastic measures (TrPMs) pursued in relation to the objectives, with four Members indicating measures that sought to introduce restrictions of trade targeted at the most environmentally harmful plastics such as single-use plastics and packaging, and plastics that are hazardous.

43. One Member highlighted a domestic regulation to reduce the use of plastics such as by introducing a replacement schedule of single-use polyethylene bags with reusable and/or biodegradable ones. Another Member pointed to its domestic legislation that prohibited the import of plastic waste, with forthcoming plans to prohibit the import of plastic straws. This was complemented by technical assistance to businesses on registration and certification requirements, in addition to monthly information digests on how to incorporate recycled material into various products. Another Member informed of proposed guidelines on the phase-out of two identified non-environmentally acceptable products, which included recommendations to: (i) develop markets for alternatives for these products; (ii) ensure that affected industries producing materials covered by the ban were afforded sufficient support and incentives to shift to producing alternatives instead; and (iii) assist industries in redesigning their packaging of products. Other Members also pointed to measures to improve transparency, reporting and notifications on TrPMs, as well as on experience and lessons relevant to plastics and plastic pollution.

44. A separate survey on TrPMs was launched simultaneously with the AftT survey and a similar factual report on its results has been produced, providing further and more granular insights on the topic.⁵

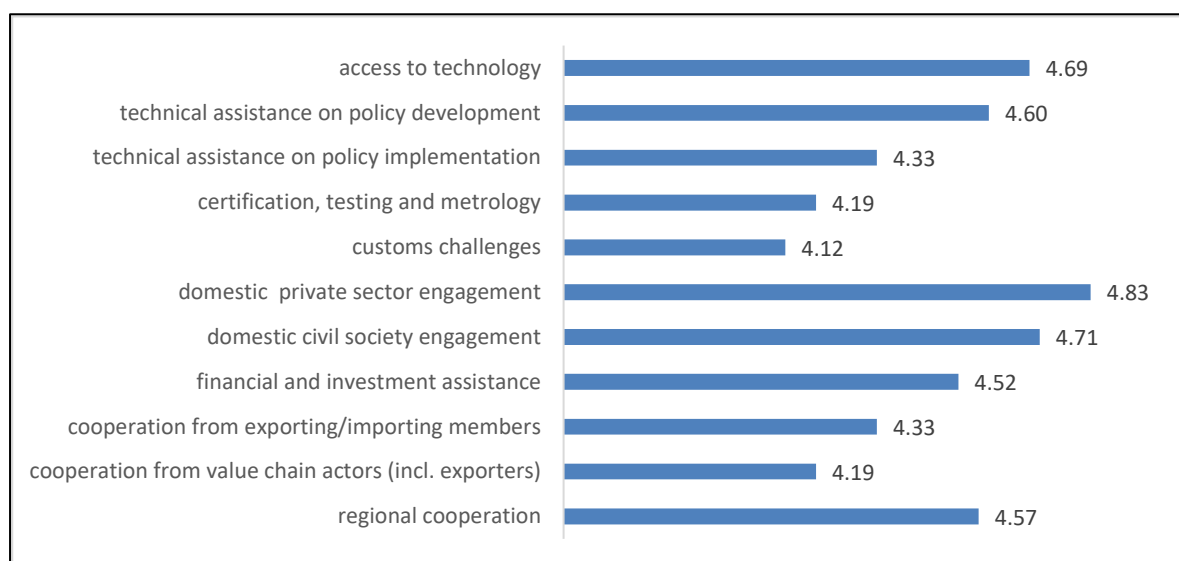
1.3.2 Specific needs underscored by recipient partners to address trade-related aspects of plastic pollution

45. The survey identified 11 harmonized needs that respondents could indicate (and score 1 to 5 in order of priorities) in relation to each of the objectives highlighted above, namely:

- access to technology;
- technical assistance on policy development;
- technical assistance on policy implementation (e.g. market surveillance);
- certification, testing and metrology;
- customs challenges;
- financial and investment assistance;
- domestic private sector engagement and partnerships;
- civil society engagement, including local and domestic stakeholders;
- cooperation from exporting and importing Members;
- cooperation from value chain actors (incl. exporters); and
- regional cooperation.

46. Five recipient partners and one regional organization working on plastics weighed in on the specific support needed to achieve each of the eight objectives identified in the 2021 Ministerial Statement.⁶ As can be seen in graph 3, all needs were highly rated by respondents, with their average scores for all objectives being at least 4.12.

Graph 3. Average score of specific needs for all objectives combined



47. Domestic private sector engagement was the highest scored need by participants of the survey on average for all objectives (4.83), followed by domestic civil society engagement (4.71) and access to technology (4.69). It is interesting to note that these topline results mirror the incidence of the same needs mentioned by respondents to the TrPM survey with regards to the implementation of specific TrPMs captured in that survey. In that case, domestic private sector engagement, civil

⁵ See Dialogue, Factual Report of the TrPMs Survey (INF/TE/IDP/W/11).

⁶ One recipient partner, with respect to an "Other" objective (not expressly listed in the eight identified in the survey), emphasised the support needed specifically on: access to technology; technical assistance for policy implementation; and certification, testing and metrology (see Table 6).

society engagement and access to technology were also among the top four results in the TrPMs survey (1st, 4th and 2nd most often identified needs respectively).

48. Respondents to the AfT survey also provided individual grades for each need with respect to each specific objective. Table 6 below provides the breakdown of the highest and lowest scored needs for each objective captured by the survey.

Table 6: Specific support needed to achieve each of the objectives

| Objective | Specific Support Needed (average scores) | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Most | Least |
| Move towards more circular economies of plastics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to technology (4.83) Domestic private sector engagement (4.83) Civil society engagement (4.83) Regional cooperation (4.83) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification, testing and metrology (4.17) Customs challenges (4.17) |
| Improve the environmentally sound management, recovery and recycling of plastics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic private sector engagement (4.83) Civil society engagement (4.83) Technical assistance on policy implementation (4.6) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification, testing and metrology (4) Access to technology (4) Customs challenges (4) |
| Facilitate access to key technologies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to technology (5) Domestic private sector engagement (4.83) Civil society engagement (4.83) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification, testing and metrology (4) Customs challenges (4) |
| Expand trade in environmentally sustainable and effective substitutes and alternatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to technology (4.83) Domestic private sector engagement (4.83) Civil society engagement (4.83) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification, testing and metrology (4) Customs challenges (4.17) Cooperation from value chain actors (incl. Exporters) (4.17) |
| Encourage collaboration with the relevant stakeholders through, <i>inter alia</i> , the exchange of knowledge and experience relating to the development of and access to environmentally sustainable and effective (including cost and functionally effective) substitutes and alternatives to single-use plastics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic private sector engagement (4.83) Civil society engagement (4.83) Cooperation from exporting Members (4.67) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical assistance on policy implementation (4.17) Certification, testing and metrology (4.17) Customs challenges (4.17) |
| Develop and strengthen local capacities to produce environmentally sustainable and effective substitutes and alternatives to single-use plastics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to technology (4.83) Domestic private sector engagement (4.83) Certification, testing and metrology (4.5) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical assistance on policy implementation (3.33) Civil society engagement (4) |
| Design and implement trade policies to address plastic pollution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical assistance on policy development (4.83) Domestic private sector engagement (4.83) Civil society engagement (4.83) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation from value chain actors (incl. Exporters) (3.83) Cooperation from exporting Members (4) |
| For other objectives, what specific support do you require | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Custom training on transboundary movement of hazardous waste including toxic plastics. | |

| Objective | Specific Support Needed (average scores) | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| | Most | Least |
| to efficiently implement trade-related policies and actions addressing plastic pollution? (Two free text answers reproduced here) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Policy that would mandate the banning of non-environmentally acceptable products (NEAP) and regional policy on the mandatory shifting to alternatives. In addition to the policy, support is needed in establishing sustainable supply and market of alternatives to plastics. Assistance on certification, testing and metrology for biodegradable goods, as well as technical assistance on policy implementation (e.g. on post-consumer plastics control). | |

49. Respondents could also freely indicate other needs not originally listed that they had in order to implement trade actions to achieve each objective. Only one recipient partner indicated a non-harmonized need, specifically with regards the first objective of moving towards more circular economies for plastics. They highlighted the support needed in global collaboration, including with technology owners for waste and carbon removal technologies.

1.4 Assistance already received to address plastic pollution, in particular to support trade-related actions

50. Recipient partners were asked the following questions:

What assistance do you already receive in your efforts to address plastic pollution? Does any of this assistance directly address trade-related actions to address plastic pollution? What is your experience with regional Aft programs to address plastic pollution? How do they compare to non-regional programs?

51. Three recipient partners⁷ shared a total of six experiences with Aft programmes and assistance more broadly received to support efforts to address plastic pollution. Of these, technical assistance for the development of legislation, regulations and policies was the most prevalent type of assistance received by the responding Members.

52. The Philippines shared its experience with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on actions to address plastic pollution. The UNDP had assisted the Philippine Government in developing their National Plan of Action for the Prevention, Management and Reduction of Marine litter, and was also assisting in developing the Implementing Rules and Regulations and the Framework of the EPR Act of 2022 (RA 11898).

53. Recognizing that it would be opportune to have greater access to specific assistance addressing plastic pollution, Paraguay shared that some of its programmes, which focused on promotion of a circular economy, indirectly promoted the recycling of plastic packaging and other materials such as paper and aluminium. For example, the AC + Circular Economy Project, implemented by the Moisés Bertoni Foundation with the technical and financial support of the Innovation Laboratory of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB Lab), sought to encourage a model that leverages the innovation and technology capacity of urban cities and the innovation ecosystem to promote circular business models. MIPYME COMPITE, a programme by Paraguay's Ministry of Industry and Trade, the World Bank, the Federation of Production Cooperatives (FECOPROD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Paraguayan Industrial Union (UIP) and the European Union, aimed to contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth and job creation through better developed and more competitive MSMEs in an improved business environment.

54. Finally, Tonga shared that it currently received financial support and technical assistance to develop single-use plastic roadmap, sustainable finance schemes, marine litter management, coastal clean ups, domestic training on transboundary movement of hazardous waste, domestic training on chemicals, and a domestic action plan on plastic pollution. It also noted it had received some technical assistance for the development of necessary legislations and policies, and capacity building trainings for government officials and waste management authorities. It also added that a lot more

⁷ Paraguay, the Philippines, and Tonga.

AfT or official development assistance programmes were usually targeted at addressing plastic pollution at the regional level.

55. For the Pacific, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) oversaw the implementation of some of such programmes, through efforts to build the capacity of government officials to address environmental issues, understand and implement multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and participate in the negotiations of a global agreement to address plastic pollution covering the entire life cycle of plastics, as well as other initiatives to reduce marine plastic litter through the development of member-specific policies and regulatory frameworks. In terms of member-specific programmes, these varied according to the demands and needs of the pertinent member, and assistance range from the development of policies and regulations, attainment of the necessary technology and establishment of the relevant infrastructure, as well as raising of public awareness.

1.5 Assistance already provided to address plastic pollution, in particular to support trade-related actions

56. Donor members and South-South partners were asked the following questions:

What assistance do you already provide to address plastic pollution? Does any of this assistance directly address trade-related actions to address plastic pollution? What information is needed to help guide the development of your AfT strategy to include a goal of actions to implement trade-related actions to address plastic pollution? What is your experience with regional AfT programs to address plastic pollution? How do they compare to non-regional programs?

57. Regional and international donor institutions and organizations working on plastics were asked the following questions:

What assistance do you provide to address plastic pollution? Does any of this assistance directly address trade-related actions to address plastic pollution?

58. In total, the survey identified over 30 assistance programmes (see Table 7 below) provided by six donor Members to recipients across all regions and one regional organization working on plastics and plastic pollution, addressing topics such as: marine plastic litter; environmentally sound waste management of plastics; circular economy for plastics; pollution mitigation solutions (e.g. alternatives and substitutes, including biodegradable materials); waste management and disposal infrastructure; plastic waste trade, including trafficking of hazardous plastic waste; and plastic packaging value chain.

Table 7: Non-exhaustive list of assistance programmes and actions to address plastic pollution

| Member/Institution | Programme/Initiative | Example projects |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Australia | Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) | |
| | SPREP funding to build capacity and support Pacific Island Members | |
| | ANZPAC Plastics Pact | |
| | Pacific Ocean Litter Project (POLP) | |
| | CSIRO: Ending Plastic Waste Mission (with several Members) | Australia-Indonesia Plastics Innovation Hub |
| | | Plastic Innovation Hub Vietnam |
| | | Mekong Plastics Innovation Alliance (Thailand) |
| | CSIRO: Reducing Plastic Waste in India (+ plastics research project) | |
| European Union | SWITCH to Circular Value Chains (with UNIDO, EIB) | Improve practices by MSMEs in developing Members in the plastic packaging value chain |
| | Pac Waste + project | Waste management projects in the Pacific |
| | Rethinking Plastic | Seven economies in East and South-East Asia |
| Japan | MARINE Initiative (Osaka Blue Ocean Vision) | Various waste management assistance programmes in developing Members |

| Member/Institution | Programme/Initiative | Example projects |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Asia-Pacific Plastic Waste Border Management Project (with WCO) | Capacity building support to customs officers to deal with illicit cross-border shipments of plastic waste in South-East Asia and neighbouring economies |
| Norway | Norwegian Development Programme to Combat Marine Litter and Microplastics (~50 programs) | No Plastic in Nature (WWF) |
| | | PROBLUE (World Bank) |
| | | GloLitter Partnership Project (IMO and FAO) |
| | Strengthening capacity of Members to implement the Basel Convention, including the Basel Convention Plastic Waste Amendments of 2019 (administered by the BRS Secretariat) | Pilot projects in over 35 economies |
| | | BRS Plastic Waste Inventory Toolkit |
| | Marine Pollution Enforcement Project Phase II (with INTERPOL) | |
| | UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme | |
| United Kingdom | Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP), through Blue Plante Fund, with the World Economic Forum (WEF) and others | Partnerships in Indonesia, Ghana, Vietnam, Pakistan, Nigeria, India and South Africa e.g. National Plastic Action Plan (NPAP) in Ghana on a study on the role of trade policy in addressing plastic pollution |
| | Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution (SMEP) (in partnership with UNCTAD) | Targeted projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, including Ghana, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nepal |
| | ODA Environmental Quality Pollution | |
| | Projects under the Basel Convention | Updating (and implementation) of the Technical guidelines for the identification and environmentally sound management (ESM) of plastic wastes and for their disposal |
| | | Plastic Waste Partnership (established under the Basel Convention) |
| United States | US Agency for International Development (USAID): Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (CCBO) | Enhancing circularity in rapidly urbanizing areas of developing economies (aim to reduce mated 11 million metric tons of plastic that flow into the ocean each year) |
| | USAID-Circulate Capital Agreement, backed by multinational corporations | Leveraging more than USD 100 million in private-sector investment strategy to incubate and finance companies and infrastructure that prevent ocean plastic pollution in South and Southeast Asia |
| SPREP | PacWaste Plus | |
| | Pacific Ocean Litter Project (POLP) | |
| IUCN | Close the Plastic Tap Programme | |
| | MARPLASTICCs Circular Economy Grants in Eastern and Southern Africa | |

59. As can be seen, the AfT survey has generated a wealth of information regarding dozens of specific programmes seeking to address plastic pollution through trade-related cooperation and/or actions. While the data does not easily lend itself for a particularly structured analysis and comparison, it does point to an important opportunity to further increase transparency and identify opportunities for broader cooperation and coordination on the topic, as suggested by many participants in reaction to the first two questions of the survey and summarized above.

60. During discussions on the topic prompted by preliminary results presented by the Secretariat, a few delegations pointed to the value of the exercise itself of collecting such information which had already prompted internal cooperation efforts and better understanding of the trade elements of existing aid programs seeking to address plastic pollution.

61. Finally, the survey also queried what information was needed by donor Members to guide the development of their AfT strategy to include a goal of actions to implement trade-related actions to address plastic pollution. In general, respondents reiterated the need for greater information on the link between trade and development assistance related to plastic pollution, as well as further details on the specific trade needs of recipient partners in addressing plastic pollution so that strategies and programmes could be tailored to the pertinent motivations for action on plastics in each recipient's context.

62. One donor member remarked that while some of its support to combat plastic pollution had trade-related elements, its specific trade-related support was not currently focused on plastic pollution. Moreover, most of its AfT was channelled through multilateral organizations and mechanisms such as the WTO, EIF, ITC and World Bank, and any increased focus on plastic pollution through its AfT would have to pass through these multilateral channels, to the extent relevant for their respective mandates.

63. Another donor Member called for Members to not lose sight of the full life cycle of plastics while tackling specific aspects of the plastics value chain. It added that any information on the needs of LDCs to address plastic pollution would be useful and such information would not need to be limited to trade-related actions and policies. Other donor Members pointed to the usefulness of disseminating within the Dialogue resources published by international organizations, such as on the monitoring of AfT flows, and for the aggregation of more information on relevant AfT and broader ODA programmes across the donor community.
