

A Special Focus on Plastics Pollution

Trade in Plastics and Plastics Substitute Materials in Commonwealth Countries

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1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the need for co-ordinated action to address the increasing health, environmental and economic costs of burgeoning plastics pollution and the role that trade can play as a solution. Annual global exports of plastics total about US\$1 trillion (or 333 million tonnes), almost 5 per cent of world merchandise trade (\$19 trillion, 2019-21 average). These trade flows have almost guadrupled over the last two decades, from an annual average of \$260 billion (or 94 million tonnes) during 1995–97. To help reduce plastics pollution, 127 countries have adopted legislation to regulate plastics bags. This includes restricting the manufacturing, imports, distribution and use of plastics as well as promoting the use of plastics substitutes and reducing single use plastics. (UNEP 2018).

Efforts at the multilateral level have also sought to address the problem of plastics pollution. In 2021, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) decided to initiate negotiations towards establishing an international agreement on plastics pollution and promote the sustainable production and consumption of plastics. In the same year, a few World Trade Organization (WTO) members, including the Commonwealth countries Australia, Barbados and Fiji, initiated an Informal Dialogue on Plastics Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (IDP) to intensify trade co-operation. The aim was to reduce plastics pollution and accelerate the transition to a more circular and environmentally sustainable global economy.

While trade can play a key role in mitigating plastics pollution, it is necessary to understand the global plastics market and its value chains to appreciate the scope for trade-based solutions (Li et al., 2022). It is also important to understand the global market for plastics substitutes and alternatives, as well as material inputs used for their production. Of particular relevance are patterns of trade in these products and trade-related measures and incentives that can help to increase their production and use in place of plastics.

To widen the discussion on the role that trade can play as a solution to plastics pollution, this first part of a two-part special edition of *Trade Hot Topics* takes a step back to get a better understanding of the significance of trade in materials that can be used as inputs in the production of plastics substitutes and alternatives. It analyses the trade-related challenges and opportunities for developing countries, including least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), to use trade to reduce plastics pollution.² It focuses on Commonwealth developing countries, which are key suppliers of a wide range of these plastics substitute materials.

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² The second paper in the two-part series will focus on trade-related challenges and opportunities for these countries to upscale production and trade in plastics substitutes and alternatives.

2. Plastics trade in Commonwealth countries

Plastics pollution is one of the most pressing global environmental challenges of modern times, affecting all countries, large and small, developed and developing. The problem of plastics pollution has become ubiquitous, as the use of plastics continues unabated. This is because plastics are versatile, convenient and cheap to produce. They can be used in various ways ranging from wrapping food, disposable bottles, microbeads in body washes and packaging of various products. This wide use of plastics products contributes considerably to the amount of plastics waste that enters the ocean, rivers and land areas, where it damages habitats and ecosystems and is harmful to marine life, wildlife on land and human health. Consequently, there have been increasing concerns about the environmental and health hazards due to global plastics usage, coupled with a growing need to tackle global plastics pollution on land and at sea.

Developing countries, including Commonwealth members, are key players in the production, consumption and trade of plastics products. About two in every three jobs in the manufacturing of plastics products are found in the Global South, generating approximately 7.7 million direct jobs in developing countries compared to 2.9 million jobs in developed countries and 500,000 in transition economies (WTO, 2020). During 2019–21, global exports of plastics totalled US\$1.03 trillion in value or 333 million tonnes, nearly equal to 17 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) or about 1,100 ships³ (Figure 1). The global per capita plastics trade (exports plus imports) in this period was 87kg. Primary forms and final manufactured plastics goods make up the bulk of trade in plastics – about 80 per cent. Developed countries are the major net exporters of plastics waste, most of which is destined for developing countries. As most developing countries have limited capacity to manage the waste in an environmentally sound manner, much of the global micro-plastics leakage is attributed to the constraints they face in managing waste (WTO, 2020).

2019–21, Commonwealth During countries' annual trade in plastics was worth US\$240 billion (Figure 2). This excludes hidden or embedded plastics flows that are not easily identifiable, such as plastics embedded in household electronics and consumer goods, and packaging of food products. Collectively, these 56 countries accounted for 9 per cent (or \$89 billion) of global plastics exports and about 15 per cent (or \$146 billion) of annual plastics imports. Their per capita plastics trade of 24kg was more than three times lower than the global average of 87kg. Commonwealth developing country members accounted for 55 per cent of these trade flows, worth \$54 billion in plastics exports and \$74 billion in imports. This constitutes about 4 and 6 per cent of their merchandise exports and



Figure 1. Global exports of plastics by type (2019–21 average)

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (using data from UNCTADstat).







Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (using data from WITS).

imports, respectively, during this period. It is also interesting to note that in value terms, the six developed countries in the Commonwealth import almost as much plastics as the remaining 50 developing members.

The 25 SIDS and 14 LDCs that are members of the Commonwealth have substantial trade in plastics. In fact, they import more plastics than they export. During 2019–21, the Commonwealth SIDS collectively imported plastics worth US\$2.3 billion annually, almost five times more than they exported (\$459 million). The bulk of these imports flow to Caribbean SIDS (\$1.143 billion), which are popular tourist destinations. The 14 Commonwealth LDCs also exhibit a similar trade pattern: they exported plastics worth \$3.5 billion and imported \$10 billion in plastics products during this period. Bangladesh alone accounted for about two-thirds of these trade flows.

The largest Commonwealth exporters are Canada, Malaysia, Singapore, India and the UK (in that order), accounting for about 90 per cent of Commonwealth countries' total plastics exports (Figure 3). The UK, Canada, India, Malaysia and Australia are also large importers of plastics (in that order). The UK and Canada rank as the sixth and seventh largest global importers of plastics. However, when looking at plastics trade as a share of total merchandise trade, Sri Lanka is the largest exporter (15.4 per cent) followed by Lesotho (14.7 per cent). Sri Lanka is also the largest importer according to this metric (12.1 per cent), while four other countries⁴ have shares of





Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (using data from WITS).

	Exports (US\$	million)			Imports (US\$ million)			
	2019	2020	2021	2019-2021 Average	2019	2020	2021	2019-2021 Average
All Commonwealth	12,037	11,685	14,550	12,757	18,999	19,117	23,075	20,397
LDCs (14)	56	49	61	55	712	626	823	720
SIDS (25)	766	690	798	751	1,805	1,875	2,085	1,922

Table 1. Commonwealth trade in plastics packaging (2019-21 average)

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (using data from WITS).

plastics in total merchandise imports that exceed 10 per cent.

Trade in plastics packaging⁵ accounts for about 13 per cent of Commonwealth members' total plastics trade, worth US\$33 billion (Table 1). This includes about \$13 billion of exports and \$20 billion of imports, of which nearly \$2 billion is absorbed by Commonwealth SIDS and about three-quarters of a billion by LDCs.

Alongside trade in plastics, Commonwealth countries export inputs used for plastics production. These include feedstocks and precursors such as oils and products of distillation, and cyclic and acyclic hydrocarbons. India, Singapore, Canada, Malaysia and the UK together export about US\$11 billion worth of plastics inputs annually (about 12 per cent of the Commonwealth's total plastics exports). A small share of these goods originates from Brunei Darussalam and South Africa.

Commonwealth countries also export US\$11 billion worth of plastics additives such as dyes, colouring agents, acids, lead and other chemicals. Plastics regulations, such as the European Union's (EU's) Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) could affect trade in ingredients required to manufacture various forms of plastics. Overall, plastics production is closely linked with the oil and chemical industries, which could also feel the impact of plastics regulations.

The two largest categories of Commonwealth countries' plastics exports are manufactured plastics goods (45 per cent) and primary forms (polymers, resins, rubber, etc.) of plastics (35 per cent) (Figure 4). These two forms of plastics account for more than three-quarters of total plastics exports. The other three forms — intermediate plastics (plastics sheets, fibre, yarn, etc; 14 per cent), intermediate plastics goods (pipes, fabric, etc; 6 per cent) and plastics waste (0.3 per cent) — altogether account for less than 25 per cent of total plastics exports.



Figure 4. Commonwealth trade in plastics by type (2019–21 average)

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (using data from WITS).

5 This includes empty plastics packaging only, excluding plastics that constitutes an essential part of goods such as packaged food or electronics, toys, etc.

3. Trade-related plastics policies in Commonwealth developing countries, LDCs and SIDS

3.1 The environmental impacts of plastics pollution

Plastics waste is discarded and deposited in landfills and becomes part of uncontrolled and mismanaged waste streams (UNCTAD, 2022). This has several negative impacts, including the contamination of soil and groundwater, the destruction of habitats and ecosystems, and the accumulation of toxic chemicals and micro-plastics in the environment (Wang et al., 2023). Soil and groundwater can become contaminated with toxic chemicals and microplastics from leaching plastics, which can then enter the food chain as they seep into crops and other edible plants. Plastics pollution on land can also lead to the destruction of wildlife, which may become entangled in discarded plastics and become injured or die as a result. Additionally, plastics pollution can block the air and sunlight from reaching plants, leading to the death of vegetation. Finally, the accumulation of plastics in the environment can lead to the build-up of toxic chemicals and microplastics, which can have adverse effects on both human and animal health.

Plastics pollution in seas poses a serious problem with a wide range of impacts on marine ecosystems and marine life. Plastics debris can lead to entanglement of and ingestion by marine animals, resulting in serious injury and death (Wang et al., 2023; Avery-Gomm et al., 2018). Plastics particles can also enter the food chain, with impacts on the health of wildlife and humans alike. Additionally, plastics pollution causes physical damage to habitats, such as coral reefs, which are important for marine life. The accumulation of plastics in the marine environment also has a negative impact on the beauty of seas, leading to the degradation of beaches and ocean areas (Pham et al., 2014). This can have significant adverse effects on ocean-based tourism, which is the lifeblood of many Commonwealth SIDS.

Furthermore, plastics pollution has far-reaching impacts on the atmosphere. Plastics release toxic chemicals, which can accumulate in the atmosphere and contribute to global warming (Wang et al., 2023). Micro-plastics can be carried by air and spread around the world, including in remote areas. Micro-plastics also contribute to air pollution, as they can contain toxic chemicals that may be inhaled when the particles are airborne. Additionally, plastics waste can be burned, releasing harmful chemicals such as carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide into the atmosphere. This can contribute to acid rain and climate change (Asma et al., 2021).

3.2 Trade-related measures to combat plastics pollution in the context of the WTO

Widespread plastics pollution and its plethora of negative impacts has compelled some countries to introduce trade-related measures to try and mitigate the problem. Countries have taken advantage of several WTO agreements that provide policy flexibilities and allow them to take action to protect their domestic markets and promote the use of sustainable materials and practices. Under the WTO, countries may impose import restrictions and tariffs on imported plastics products to protect their domestic industries from foreign competition and for developmental purposes.⁶ Furthermore, according to GATT 1947 Article VI, countries may impose anti-dumping measures on certain plastics products to protect their domestic industries from foreign competition. Countries may also suspend obligations or modify liberalising commitments if there are unforeseen developments under GATT Article XIX.

In addition, they may introduce technical barriers to trade (TBTs) on certain plastics products to protect their domestic markets, as well as to implement measures to achieve legitimate policy objectives, such as the protection of human health and safety, or protection of the environment. This is provided that such measures are non-discriminatory and do not create unnecessary barriers to trade, as outlined in the WTO's TBT Agreement.

Some developing countries, including Commonwealth members, have taken advantage of the above mentioned flexibilities and notified several

6 Under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1947, countries can only impose tariffs if they are necessary to protect domestic industries. The tariffs must also not be higher than the 'bound rate', which is the maximum tariff a country has agreed to charge in its WTO accession documents. The tariffs must be applied on a non-discriminatory basis, meaning they must not discriminate against the imports of one country compared to those of another. In addition, countries must ensure that any tariff imposed is consistent with the WTO's national treatment principle. This principle requires that imported goods receive no less favourable treatment than domestically produced goods. This means that the tariffs must be applied in a manner that does not give domestic producers an undue advantage. Finally, countries must also ensure that any tariffs imposed are not used as a means of disguising a trade barrier, such as a quota or subsidy. The WTO only allows tariffs to be used to protect a domestic industry, and not to encourage exports or discourage imports.

plastics trade and trade-related measures to the WTO.⁷ Most of these measures are intended to protect the domestic market and promote the use of sustainable materials and practices. Between 2020 and 2022, nine Commonwealth developing countries⁸ submitted 24 plastics trade-related notifications at the WTO, mainly under the TBT, Import Licence Procedures and Quantitative Restrictions Agreements. The measures adopted include import bans, import licencing requirements, conformity assessment procedures, and technical regulations or specifications (Annex 1). Some of the measures promote trade in biodegradable plastics substitutes and alternatives and, at the same time, restrict trade in plastics. Unlike developed countries, which tend to adopt measures aimed at regulating and supporting economic activities that contribute to encouraging green business models (WTO, 2020), these measures by Commonwealth developing countries are defensive policy measures that focus on imports (for example, bans on importing certain plastics products and waste). As such, Commonwealth developing countries are yet to use their trade-related policy space to support economic activities that encourage green businesses (an issue that will be discussed in the second series of this publication).

4. Recent multilateral developments on plastics pollution

Besides the adoption of unilateral measures by individual countries to mitigate plastics pollution, there have also been multilateral initiatives to do the same. Examples of such initiatives are discussed in this section.

4.1 UN initiatives on the Global Agreement on Plastics Pollution

The 14th Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention (COP14), held in 2019, adopted amendments to the Convention – Annexes II, VIII (the 'Ban Amendment') and IX – to ban the export of hazardous plastics waste from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and EU members and Lichtenstein to developing countries; regulate the transboundary movement of hazardous plastics waste and other plastics wastes between developing countries; and to strengthen the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure. However, plastics waste for recycling and which is free from contamination can be excluded from the PIC procedure. As such, the amendment makes it difficult to trade in hazardous plastics waste and other plastics waste unless it is for environmentally friendly recycling, thereby contributing to curbing flows of plastics waste.

At the fifth session of the UNEA, the governing body of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), held in Nairobi, Kenya in February 2021, ministers for the environment together with representatives of international organisations, major groups and other stakeholders expressed their readiness to end plastics pollution worldwide. They also welcomed the decisions by the Environment Assembly to initiate negotiations towards establishing an international agreement on plastics pollution (United Nations, 2021). On 2 March 2022, UNEP decided that the international agreement on plastics pollution should aim to promote the sustainable production and consumption of plastics and seek to promote domestic and international cooperation measures to reduce plastics pollution, among other objectives (United Nations, 2022).

4.2 WTO Informal Dialogue on Plastics Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade

Recognising the growing problem of plastics pollution and the need for co-ordinated action in addressing the increasing health, environmental and economic costs of this pollution, as well as the role that trade can play as a solution, some WTO members initiated the IDP in 2020. The discussions are intended to identify possibilities for intensifying trade co-operation within the context of the WTO rules and mechanisms to support domestic, regional and global efforts in reducing plastics pollution and transitioning to a more circular and environmentally sustainable global economy.

At the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12), IDP participants reached a common understanding to identify work on areas of shared interest and devise actions that countries can take collectively to support global efforts to reduce plastics pollution (WTO, 2021). They also expressed their commitment to reinforcing trade efforts to mitigate plastics pollution and listed several actions to be undertaken. These include identifying environmentally sustainable trade policies and mechanisms and sharing experiences and approaches to realise resource efficiency and environmentally sustainable plastics trade. Acknowledging the impact of plastics pollution on developing countries, LDCs

8 Five of these countries are SIDS and two are LDCs.

⁷ There is the possibility that some measures might not have been notified at the WTO.

Table 2. Commonwealth countries	' trade in plastics substitute materials (2019–21 average)
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	Exports (US\$ million)					Imports (US\$ million)						
Category	Developed	Africa	Asia	Caribbean	Pacific	Total	Developed	Africa	Asia	Caribbean	Pacific	Total
Mineral Products	25	2,705	8,422	159	9	11,320	25	123	5,327	9	1	5,484
Natural Fibres												
Dedicated crops	2,443	429	1,778	22	-	4,672	95	275	4,782	4	2	5,159
Agriculture By- products	1,165	14	144	-	-	1,323	-	5	765	0.5	0.1	771
Ocean-based products	-	12	2	0.6	0.2	15	-	2	4	0.1	-	6
Animal-based materials	381	336	7	-	-	724	-	9	286	0.1	-	295
Total	4,014	3,496	10,353	182	9	18,054	120	414	11,164	14	3	11,714

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (using data from WITS).

Note: HS codes for plastics substitutes identified in SMEP,¹ UNEP (2017) and WTO (2020).²

1 UNCTAD, 'Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution (SMEP)'. Available at: https://unctad.org/project/sustainablemanufacturing-and-environmental-pollution-smep

2 WTO (2020) 'Communication on trade in plastics, sustainability and development by UNCTAD to the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment'. Available at: https://unctad.org/system/files/information-document/wto_unctad_CTE2020_en.pdf

and vulnerable SIDS, participants committed to finding ways to address the trade-related capacity and technical assistance needs of these countries to support them in their efforts to reduce plastics pollution. Participants also agreed to consider plastics pollution and environmentally sustainable plastics trade in Aid for Trade with environmentally sustainable objectives.

To date, IDP discussions have focused on implementing the plan adopted at MC12. The plan defines the work to be undertaken under three related workstreams: (a) covering cross-cutting issues; (b) promoting trade to stop plastics pollution; and (c) circularity and reduction to stop plastics pollution (WTO, 2022). These discussions which involve relevant stakeholders including international organisations,⁹ the private sector, trade and environment authorities, academia, and civil society - are supported by evidence-based information and data. Of particular significance to this two-part Trade Hot Topics series is workstream (c), which covers topics on promoting trade to tackle pollution, including the use of environmentally sustainable and effective substitutes and alternatives. In addition, the workstream covers issues related to the interests of developing countries, LDCs and SIDS in technologies for environmentally sustainable and effective substitutes and alternatives due

to their vulnerability to plastics pollution (WTO, 2022; WTO, 2021).

5. Trade in plastics substitute materials in the Commonwealth

Trade in plastics substitutes and alternatives provides an opportunity to mitigate plastics pollution, as these substitutes and alternatives perform the same functions but with fewer environmental or health impacts. Commonwealth developing countries are key suppliers of a wide range of raw materials such as jute, cotton, natural rubber, and paper and cardboard, which are used to make plastics substitutes and alternatives.

Commonwealth countries trade many plastics substitute materials within the broad categories of mineral products, natural fibres, ocean-based products and animal-based materials (Table 2). During 2019–21, their collective exports and imports of these materials were worth US\$18 billion and \$11.7 billion, respectively.

Aluminium is the largest traded product in the mineral products group – most likely because of the high price this metal attracts – whereas cotton and jute dominate exports from the natural fibres group. Wool is the largest export category in animal-based products (Annex 2). Nevertheless, production and trade in these raw materials used to produce natural plastics substitutes are widely distributed across various Commonwealth regions. African and Asian members are leading exporters of mineral products, such as aluminium and glass. Asian members are also large exporters of natural fibres (such as cotton, jute, hemp). India and Bangladesh lead jute production globally, producing 2.1 million tonnes and 1.6 million tonnes, respectively – accounting for a combined 93 per cent share of global jute production in 2018.¹⁰ Alongside exports of these vital materials, Asian countries also import substantial quantities of mineral products and natural fibres. In addition, African members have substantial exports of ocean-based products (seaweed), while they also have a large share in the export of animal-based materials (silk, wool).

The fact that exports of these raw materials outweigh imports by Commonwealth countries suggests there is some potential to expand their trade in plastics substitute raw materials, as well as to scale up production and trade in plastics substitutes and alternatives.¹¹ Large Commonwealth exporters of paper and paperboard — Canada, the UK, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and South Africa — and several other small exporters — such as Kenya, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Ghana and Uganda could expand their production and export of plastics substitute materials. Some African countries, such as Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania, also have substantial potential to harvest seaweed (Msuya et al., 2022).

6. Priorities and way forward

Given their endowments of raw materials that can be used to make plastics substitutes and alternatives, most Commonwealth developing countries have the potential to expand production and trade in these materials and to scale up downstream production of plastics substitutes and alternatives. Trade-related co-operation could support efforts by these countries to play a meaningful role in reducing the production and use of plastics products by promoting the use of more sustainable materials.

Increased demand for these substitute materials could create trade and investment opportunities in both developed and developing countries, promoting sustainable development. Furthermore, this will help countries to transition to more circular economies, which requires prioritising policies, including those related to trade and investment, that enable reductions in the production, use and consumption of plastics.

However, to develop the necessary capacity to produce plastics substitutes and alternatives using their endowments of substitute raw materials, developing countries need investment to bolster their technology and skills. This requires them to work in collaboration with developed countries to facilitate access to technology and enable the adoption, adaptation and use of these technologies in developing-country contexts. For example, with assistance from the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), NotPla, a Londonbased company, is working with the environmental ministries in Chile and Ghana to test the feasibility of using seaweed takeaway boxes and edible packaging for liquids. Co-operation is also required to tackle barriers to trade in raw materials used as inputs for producing plastics substitutes, as well as those affecting trade in finished plastics substitutes and alternatives. It is equally important to co-operate in adopting regulatory and compliance frameworks to manage and mitigate the use of plastics. These issues will be discussed in detail in the second publication of this two-part series.

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11 Scaling production and trade in plastics substitutes will be explored in the second publication of this two-part series.

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Country	Harmonised type of Environment- related objective	Description of measure	Product coverage				
Technical barrier to trade							
Belize	Environmentally friendly consumption, waste management and recycling. To protect the environment by launching a certification scheme for biodegradable products.	All biodegradable products required be registered through a certification scheme (Certification Scheme for Biodegradable Products: As required by the amendment to the Environmental Protection [Pollution from Plastics] Regulation, 2019,) before application for permits.	Measures applied to biomaterials and single-use biodegradable or composta- ble products covering clamshells, food containers, soup containers, plates, cups and lids; plastics carrier bags, commonly referred to as shopping bags and/or T-shirt bags; cutlery and eating utensils: forks, knives, and spoons; drinking straws.				
	Sustainable and environmentally friendly production, waste manage- ment and recycling. To protect the environment by introducing standards to address specifications and labelling of biodegradable products imported, distributed, manufactured or sold in Belize.	Standard Specification for Biodegrad- able Products – Specification and Labelling: To address specification and labelling of imported biodegradable products.	The intention is to transition to environmentally friendly alternatives (i.e., biodegradable and compostable products) by banning single-use plastics products.				
Dominica	Waste management and recycling. To determine biodegradable and com- postable materials for the protection of the environment.	Specification of biodegradable prod- ucts, outlining requirements for the determination of biodegradable and compostable materials and labelling requirements of these products.	Biodegradable products: materials and products used in (a) single-use bags; (b) products used in food service, inclusive of packaging and tableware.				
Mauritius	Chemical, toxic and hazardous sub- stance management, waste manage- ment and recycling. To curb plastics pollution by controlling the volume of non-biodegradable single-use plastics products which most often end up as litter. The regulations also aim to promote biodegradable alternatives.	Environment Protection (Control of Single use Plastics Products) Regula- tions 2020.	Non-biodegradable single-use plastics products; biodegradable single-use products.				
	Chemical, toxic and hazardous substance management, waste management and recycling. To ban the possession, use, distribution, selling, exportation, importation, manufacture or supply of plastics bags with certain exemptions, as provided in First Schedule of the Regulations.	Government Notice No. 197 of 2020 Environment Protection (Banning of Plastics Bags) Regulations 2020.	Non-biodegradable plastics bag and biodegradable and compostable plastics bags.				
Tanzania	Waste management and recycling. To specify requirements and test methods for garbage bags made from thermoplastics materials containing a minimum of 10% of post-consumer recyclate.	Specification for garbage bags – outlines the general characteristics, requirements and test methods for garbage bags made from thermoplas- tics materials containing a minimum of 10% of post-consumer recyclate that ensures fitness for purpose and which can be handled without additional support when they are filled.	Films and sheets.				
Trinidad and Tobago	Environmentally friendly consumption, waste management and recycling. To protect the environment.	Compulsory requirements for biode- gradable materials – food-contact, single-use products and packaging.	Compostable and biodegradable food-contact, single-use tableware, packaging, products and materials, inclusive of cutlery, plates, straws, cups, and other disposable food and bever- age containers and associated lids.				

Annex 1. Trade measures involving plastics notified to the WTO by some Commonwealth developing countries (2020–22)

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Country	Harmonised type of Environment- related objective	Description of measure	Product coverage	
Uganda	Chemical, toxic and hazardous substance management. To protect the environment.	Plastics baby feeding bottles – Specification, First Edition: Introducing specific standards requirements, sampling and test methods for plastics feeding bottles used for nursing babies.	Plastics baby feeding bottles; carboys, bottles, flasks and similar articles for the conveyance or packaging of goods, of plastics.	
	Chemical, toxic and hazardous substance management. To protect the environment.	Cosmetic nail glue – Specification, First Edition: Outlining specific require- ments, sampling and test methods for cosmetic nail glue.	Cosmetic nail glue; articles of plastics and articles of other materials of head- ing 3901 to 3914, n.e.s (excl. goods of 9619) (HS 392690); cosmetics; toiletries (ICS 71.100.70).	
	Sustainable and environmentally friendly production for the protection of the environment.	Plastics closures – Specification, First Edition: Outlining geometrical and dimensional accuracy, physical proper- ties, storage and handling conditions, processing and application of plastics closures for sealing of still product, carbonated drinks and hot fill.	Plastics closures; stoppers, lids, caps and other closures.	
	Waste management and recycling. To protect the environment.	Non-woven bags – Specification, First Edition: Specifying requirements and test methods for non-woven bags used for packaging.	Non-woven bags; sacks and bags (including cones).	
Import licence pro	ocedures			
Malaysia	Waste management and recycling. To regulate imports of all waste, parings and scrap of plastics for the protection of the environment.	Import licence requirement to import waste, parings and scrap of plastics.	All imported waste, parings and scrap of plastics.	
Seychelles	Waste management and recycling. To protect the environment and reduce plastics use.	Import licence requirement to import utensils and polystyrene boxes, non- plastic straws, and plastics bags	Utensils and polystyrene boxes, non- plastic straws, and plastics bags.	
Quantitative rest	rictions			
India	Waste management and recycling. To protect the environment by regulating the import of polyethylene terephthal- ate (PET) under Article XX of GATT.	Import prohibition of PET bottles/ waste.	PET bottle waste/scrap/PET flakes made from used PET bottles etc.	
	Chemical, toxic and hazardous substance management. To protect the environment. To protect the environment by regulating the import of PET under Article XX of GATT.	Import prohibition of PET flake.	PET flake (chip); of polymerisation and copolymerisation products of polysty- rene and polymethyl methacrylate.	
Mauritius	Waste management and recycling. To protect the environment by banning plastics. Article XX(b) of GATT; Article XX(g) of GATT.	Prohibition on the import of plastics bags, including non-woven polypropyl- ene bags, with the exemption of a few categories of plastics bags, including biodegradable/ compostable bags.	Plastics bags, with or without handles or gussets, and irrespective of their size or type, including non-woven polypropylene bags.	
Seychelles	Waste management and recycling. To protect the environment by regulating plastics utensils and polystyrene boxes under Article XX (b) of GATT.	Restrictions on non-automatic certificates, for the import of plastics utensils and polystyrene boxes.	Import restrictions on plastics utensils and polystyrene boxes.	
	Sustainable and environmentally friendly production, waste manage- ment and recycling. To protect the environment by regulating plastics bags under Article XX (b) of GATT.	Restrictions on non-automatic certificates, for the import of plastics bags.	Restriction on manufacturing, importa- tion, distribution and sale of plastics bags.	
	Sustainable and environmentally friendly production, waste manage- ment and recycling. To protect the environment by regulating biodegrad- able plastics under Article XX (b) of GATT.	Restrictions on non-automatic certificates, for the import of biode- gradable plastics and other articles of biodegradable plastics.	Restrictions on manufacturing, importation, distribution and sale of biodegradable plastics and other articles of biodegradable plastics.	
	Waste management and recycling. To protect the environment by prohibit- ing plastics straws under Article XX (b) of GATT.	Prohibition on the import of plastics straws.	Plastics straws.	

Annex 2. Commonwealth developing countries' trade in plastics substitute materials (by product and region, 2019-21 average, US\$ million)

A: Exports							
Category	Material	HS code	Africa	Asia	Caribbean	Pacific	Total
Mineral products	Aluminium	7601.00	2,531.08	7,849.66	142.54	0.19	10,523.5
	Aluminium waste	7602.00	171.67	567.81	16.29	9.00	764.8
	Glass	7001.00	2.15	4.14	0.51	0.01	6.8
Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Coconut husks	5305.00	63.27	303.73	0.17	0.00	367.2
	Cotton	5201.00	346.37	930.29	1.07	0.00	1,277.7
	Hemp	5302.10	0.01	0.03	0.00	-	0.0
	Jute	5303.10	0.67	165.68	-	-	166.3
	Paper and cardboard	4811.90	3.15	190.89	0.05	0.01	194.1
	Sisal	5607.21	1.40	0.88	0.00	-	2.3
		5607.29	2.48	3.06	0.02	0.00	5.6
	Bamboos	1401.10	0.07	0.55			0.6
	Ramie	5311.00	0.09	9.24		0.00	9.3
	Rice husk	1006.10	11.44	174.02	20.27	0.00	205.7
Ocean products	Seaweeds	1212.29	11.82	2.10	0.57	0.17	14.7
Natural fibres- agricul- ture by-products	Arecaleaves	1401.90	0.59	1.24	0.00	0.00	1.8
	Banana leaves	1401.90	0.59	1.24	0.00	0.00	1.8
	Wheat husks	1213.00	1.15	47.60	0.00	-	48.8
	Natural rubber	4001.10	11.52	93.49		0.08	105.1
Animal based materials	Wool	5101.00	327.38	5.44	0.00		332.8
	Animal hair	5102.00	8.71	0.96			9.7
	Silk	5001-5002	0.05	0.72			0.8
Total			3,496	10.353	182	9.5	14.039
B: Imports							
B: Imports Mineral products	Aluminium	7601.00	106.40	2,644.31	2.71	0.11	2,753.54
B: Imports Mineral products	Aluminium Aluminium waste	7601.00 7602.00	106.40 13.85	2,644.31 2,667.88	2.71 4.06	0.11 0.55	2,753.54 2,686.34
B: Imports Mineral products	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00	106.40 13.85 2.48	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36	2.71 4.06 2.22	0.11 0.55 0.03	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.18	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00 5302.10	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.18 0.00	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00 5302.10 5303.10	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.18 0.00	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.18 0.00 - 3.40	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard Sisal	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90 5607.21	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76 2.03	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70 0.20	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.18 0.00 - 3.40 0.05	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92 0.01	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79 2.28
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard Sisal	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90 5607.21 5607.29	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76 2.03 9.03	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70 0.20 11.02	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.18 0.00 - 3.40 0.05 0.11	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92 0.01 0.07	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79 2.28 20.23
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard Sisal Bamboos	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90 5607.21 5607.29 1401.10	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76 2.03 9.03 0.12	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70 0.20 11.02 10.60	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.18 0.00 - 3.40 0.05 0.11 0.03	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92 0.01 0.07 0.00	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79 2.28 20.23 10.75
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard Sisal Bamboos Ramie	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90 5607.21 5607.29 1401.10 5311.00	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76 2.03 9.03 0.12 4.35	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70 0.20 11.02 10.60 13.94	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.18 0.00 - 3.40 0.05 0.11 0.03 0.03	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92 0.01 0.07 0.00 0.06	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79 2.28 20.23 10.75 18.39
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard Sisal Bamboos Ramie	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90 5607.21 5607.29 1401.10 5311.00 1006.10	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76 2.03 9.03 0.12 4.35 6.75	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70 0.20 11.02 10.60 13.94 49.28	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.00 - 3.40 0.05 0.11 0.03 0.03 0.28	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92 0.01 0.07 0.00 0.06 0.07	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79 2.28 20.23 10.75 18.39 56.39
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard Sisal Bamboos Ramie Rice husk Seaweeds	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90 5607.21 5607.29 1401.10 5311.00 1006.10 1212.29	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76 2.03 9.03 0.12 4.35 6.75 1.81	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70 0.20 11.02 10.60 13.94 49.28 3.61	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.18 0.00 - 3.40 0.05 0.11 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.28 0.09	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92 0.01 0.07 0.00 0.06 0.07 0.00	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79 2.28 20.23 10.75 18.39 56.39 5.51
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard Sisal Bamboos Ramie Rice husk Seaweeds Areca leaves	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90 5607.21 5607.29 1401.10 5311.00 1006.10 1212.29 1401.90	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76 2.03 9.03 0.12 4.35 6.75 1.81 0.18	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70 0.20 11.02 10.60 13.94 49.28 3.61 1.68	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.00 - 3.40 0.05 0.11 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.28 0.09 0.14	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92 0.01 0.07 0.00 0.06 0.07 0.00 0.01	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79 2.28 20.23 10.75 18.39 56.39 5.51 2.00
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard Sisal Bamboos Ramie Rice husk Seaweeds Areca leaves	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90 5607.21 5607.29 1401.10 5311.00 1006.10 1212.29 1401.90	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76 2.03 9.03 0.12 4.35 6.75 1.81 0.18	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70 0.20 11.02 10.60 13.94 49.28 3.61 1.68	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.00 - 3.40 0.05 0.11 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.28 0.09 0.14	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92 0.01 0.07 0.00 0.06 0.07 0.00 0.01	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79 2.28 20.23 10.75 18.39 56.39 5.51 2.00
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops Ocean products Natural fibres- agricul- ture by-products	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard Sisal Bamboos Ramie Rice husk Seaweeds Areca leaves Wheat husks	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90 5607.21 5607.29 1401.10 5311.00 1006.10 1212.29 1401.90 1401.90 1213.00	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76 2.03 9.03 0.12 4.35 6.75 1.81 0.18 0.18 0.18	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70 0.20 11.02 10.60 13.94 49.28 3.61 1.68 2.12	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.00 - 3.40 0.05 0.11 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.28 0.09 0.14 0.14 0.02	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92 0.01 0.07 0.00 0.06 0.07 0.00 0.01 -	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79 2.28 20.23 10.75 18.39 56.39 5.51 2.00 2.00
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard Sisal Bamboos Ramie Rice husk Seaweeds Areca leaves Wheat husks Natural rubber	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90 5607.21 5607.29 1401.10 5311.00 1006.10 1212.29 1401.90 1401.90 1213.00 4001.10	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76 2.03 9.03 0.12 4.35 6.75 1.81 0.18 0.18 0.18 1.08 3.64	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70 0.20 11.02 10.60 13.94 49.28 3.61 1.68 2.12 759.95	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.00 - 3.40 0.05 0.11 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.28 0.09 0.14 0.14 0.02 0.24	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92 0.01 0.07 0.00 0.06 0.07 0.00 0.01 - - 0.01	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79 2.28 20.23 10.75 18.39 56.39 5.51 2.00 2.00 2.00 3.21
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops Ocean products Natural fibres- agricul- ture by-products Animal based materials	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard Sisal Bamboos Ramie Rice husk Seaweeds Areca leaves Wheat husks Natural rubber Wool	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90 5607.21 5607.29 1401.10 5311.00 1006.10 1212.29 1401.90 1401.90 1213.00 4001.10 5101.00	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76 2.03 9.03 0.12 4.35 6.75 1.81 0.18 0.18 0.18 1.08 3.64 4.91	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70 0.20 11.02 10.60 13.94 49.28 3.61 1.68 2.12 759.95 162.60	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.00 - 3.40 0.05 0.11 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.28 0.09 0.14 0.14 0.02 0.24 0.01	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92 0.01 0.07 0.00 0.06 0.07 0.00 0.01 - 0.01 - 0.01	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79 2.28 20.23 10.75 18.39 56.39 5.51 2.00 2.00 3.21 763.93 167.58
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops Ocean products Natural fibres- agricul- ture by-products Animal based materials	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard Sisal Bamboos Ramie Rice husk Seaweeds Areca leaves Banana leaves Wheat husks Natural rubber Wool	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90 5607.21 5607.29 1401.10 5311.00 1006.10 1212.29 1401.90 1401.90 1213.00 4001.10 5101.00	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76 2.03 9.03 0.12 4.35 6.75 1.81 0.18 0.18 0.18 1.08 3.64 4.91	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70 0.20 11.02 10.60 13.94 49.28 3.61 1.68 2.12 759.95 162.60	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.00 - 3.40 0.05 0.11 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.28 0.09 0.14 0.14 0.14 0.02 0.24 0.01	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92 0.01 0.07 0.00 0.06 0.07 0.00 0.01 0.01 - 0.10 0.07	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79 2.28 20.23 10.75 18.39 56.39 5.51 2.00 2.00 3.21 763.93 167.58
B: Imports Mineral products Natural fibres- dedicated crops Ocean products Natural fibres- agricul- ture by-products Animal based materials	Aluminium Aluminium waste Glass Coconut husks Cotton Hemp Jute Paper and cardboard Sisal Bamboos Ramie Rice husk Seaweeds Areca leaves Banana leaves Wheat husks Natural rubber Wool Animal hair	7601.00 7602.00 7001.00 5305.00 5201.00 5302.10 5303.10 4811.90 5607.21 5607.29 1401.10 5311.00 1006.10 1212.29 1401.90 1213.00 4001.10 5101.00 5102.00	106.40 13.85 2.48 21.43 120.99 0.04 2.29 107.76 2.03 9.03 0.12 4.35 6.75 1.81 0.18 0.18 0.18 1.08 3.64 4.91 4.56 0.02	2,644.31 2,667.88 14.36 9.37 4,407.04 0.01 1.21 279.70 0.20 11.02 10.60 13.94 49.28 3.61 1.68 2.12 759.95 162.60 1.62 1.62	2.71 4.06 2.22 0.18 0.00 - 3.40 0.05 0.11 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.28 0.09 0.14 0.14 0.14 0.02 0.24 0.01	0.11 0.55 0.03 0.08 0.01 - 0.01 1.92 0.01 0.07 0.00 0.06 0.07 0.00 0.01 0.01 - 0.10 0.07	2,753.54 2,686.34 19.10 31.07 4,528.23 0.05 3.50 392.79 2.28 20.23 10.75 18.39 5.639 5.51 2.00 2.00 3.21 763.93 167.58 6.24 121.50

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat using data from WITS

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International Trade Policy Section at the Commonwealth Secretariat

This *Trade Hot Topic* is brought out by the International Trade Policy (ITP) Section of the Trade Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat, which is the main intergovernmental agency of the Commonwealth – an association of 56 independent countries, comprising large and small, developed and developing, landlocked and island economies – facilitating consultation and co-operation among member governments and countries in the common interest of their peoples and in the promotion of international consensus-building.

ITP is entrusted with the responsibilities of undertaking policy-oriented research and advocacy on trade and development issues and providing informed inputs into the related discourses involving Commonwealth members. The ITP approach is to scan the trade and development landscape for areas where orthodox approaches are ineffective or where there are public policy failures or gaps, and to seek heterodox approaches to address those. Its work plan is flexible to enable quick response to emerging issues in the international trading environment that impact particularly on highly vulnerable Commonwealth constituencies – least developed countries (LDCs), small states and sub-Saharan Africa.

Scope of ITP Work

ITP undertakes activities principally in three broad areas:

- It supports Commonwealth developing members in their negotiation of multilateral and regional trade agreements that promote development friendly outcomes, notably their economic growth through expanded trade.
- It conducts policy research, consultations and advocacy to increase understanding of the changing international trading environment and of policy options for successful adaptation.
- It contributes to the processes involving the multilateral and bilateral trade regimes that advance more beneficial participation of Commonwealth developing country members, particularly, small states and LDCs and sub-Saharan Africa.

ITP Recent Activities

ITP's most recent activities focus on assisting member countries in their negotiations in the World Trade Organization and various regional trading arrangements, undertaking analytical research on a range of trade policy, emerging trade-related development issues, and supporting workshops/dialogues for facilitating exchange of ideas, Commonwealth members.

Selected Recent Meetings/Workshops Supported by ITP

21 March 2023: Public event on Assessing the Business and Trade Dimensions of the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games, in partnership with the UK's Department for Business and Trade. The event reflected on the legacy of the Commonwealth Games and explored how businesses can capitalise on the trade and investment relationships established during the Games.

16 November 2022: Public event on Enabling Climate Smart Trade and Investment: From Policies to Actions, organised for the ICC's Make Climate Action Everyone's Business Forum. The event examined how trade and trade policies can support climate action and how countries can integrate environmental and social considerations into trade agreements to achieve the SDGs.

2 November 2022: Public event on Maximising the Gains from Digital Trade: Solutions and Priorities for Developing Countries and LDCs, organised jointly with the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and hosted at the WTO in Geneva. The event reflected on lessons from country experiences and EIF projects, explored the concept of Aid for Digital Trade and identified innovative new ways to support LDCs, and particularly their MSMEs, to build capacity for digital trade.

31 October 2022: Joint Commonwealth Secretariat-UNCTAD workshop on Understanding the IPRrelated Landscape for Graduating LDCs: Issues and Challenges. The workshop, hosted at the United Nations in Geneva, was attended by technical experts from the Centre for Policy Dialogue, United Nations Committee for Development Policy, ODI, South Centre, UNCTAD, WIPO and WTO, who discussed issues, challenges and opportunities related to intellectual property rights for graduating LDCs.



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