



18 April 2024

(24-3226)

Page: 1/6

Original: English/anglais/inglés

**UNOFFICIAL ROOM DOCUMENT<sup>1</sup>**

**DIALOGUE ON PLASTIC POLLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTALLY  
SUSTAINABLE PLASTICS TRADE (DPP)**

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UN (FAO) PRESENTATION ON UPDATE ON  
FAO'S WORK: VOLUNTARY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE SUSTAINABLE USE AND MANAGEMENT  
OF PLASTICS IN AGRICULTURE

*Pre-Plenary Meeting – 12 April 2024*

**DOCUMENT DE SÉANCE NON OFFICIEL<sup>1</sup>**

**DIALOGUE ON PLASTIC POLLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTALLY  
SUSTAINABLE PLASTICS TRADE (DPP)**

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UN (FAO) PRESENTATION ON UPDATE ON  
FAO'S WORK: VOLUNTARY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE SUSTAINABLE USE AND MANAGEMENT  
OF PLASTICS IN AGRICULTURE

*Pre-Plenary Meeting – 12 April 2024*

**DOCUMENTO DE SALA NO OFICIAL<sup>1</sup>**

**DIALOGUE ON PLASTIC POLLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTALLY  
SUSTAINABLE PLASTICS TRADE (DPP)**

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UN (FAO) PRESENTATION ON UPDATE ON  
FAO'S WORK: VOLUNTARY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE SUSTAINABLE USE AND MANAGEMENT  
OF PLASTICS IN AGRICULTURE

*Pre-Plenary Meeting – 12 April 2024*

\* In Original language only/En langue originale seulement/En el idioma original solamente.

<sup>1</sup> Documents issued in the RD series are not official WTO documents. They usually appear in their language of submission and will not be translated systematically into the working languages of the WTO. They are intended for use in WTO meeting rooms and are attributed an unofficial symbol for archiving purposes only.

Les documents de la série RD ne sont pas des documents officiels de l'OMC. Ils ne paraissent généralement que dans la langue dans laquelle ils ont été communiqués et ne seront pas systématiquement traduits dans les langues de travail de l'OMC. Ils sont destinés aux salles de réunion de l'OMC et une cote non officielle leur est attribuée à des fins d'archivage.

Los documentos de la serie RD no son documentos oficiales de la OMC. Por lo general se distribuyen en el idioma en que han sido presentados y no se traducen sistemáticamente a los idiomas de trabajo de la Organización. Se distribuyen para su uso en las salas de reunión de la OMC y se les asigna una signatura no oficial a efectos de archivo únicamente.



## Update on FAO's work: Voluntary Code of Conduct for the sustainable use and management of plastics in agriculture

Giulia Carcasci, Agricultural Plastics and Sustainability Specialist  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN

[Giulia.Carcasci@fao.org](mailto:Giulia.Carcasci@fao.org)



WTO - Internal

## THE PROBLEM WITH PLASTICS USED [UNSUSTAINABLY] IN AGRICULTURE

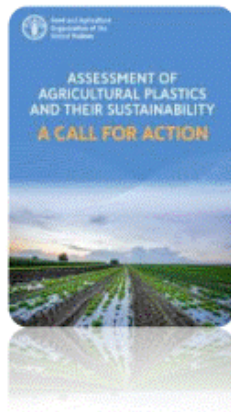


Figure 16: Estimated annual quantities of agricultural plastics used globally  
Source: Data summarized from Figure 10.



## 171<sup>st</sup> FAO COUNCIL, December 2022

- (k) Encouraged FAO to **undertake further scientific and evidence-based assessments** related to the distribution, benefits, trade-offs and risks of plastics for agricultural use and their alternatives, to **address knowledge gaps**;
- (l) Underscored **the need for improved intersectoral collaboration and governance** to address plastic use throughout agrifood systems, and subject to the evidence-based assessment referred to in subparagraph k) **to develop, within FAO's mandate, a Voluntary Code of Conduct on the sustainable use of plastics in agriculture**;
- (m) Encouraged FAO to support deliberations of the **intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC)** on plastic pollution to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.



## THE VOLUNTARY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE SUSTAINABLE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF PLASTICS IN AGRICULTURE

**VCoC objectives** are to present a set of science-based guiding principles for responsible practices; offer a framework for developing strategies, policies, and programmes; and foster cooperation among stakeholders; and facilitate knowledge dissemination, development of alternative practices, and research

The VCoC is **voluntary and non-legally-binding** and **global** in scope

The VCoC closely adheres to and complements other **FAO voluntary instruments**.

The VCoC focuses on **the sustainable use and management of plastics and their alternatives in primary agrifood production**, including crop, livestock, aquaculture, and fisheries operations

The VCoC addresses **the life cycle of plastic products used in agriculture**, from design and manufacturing to end of life management, but does not include recommendations for raw material extraction, processing, distribution, or retail packaging.

**VCoC is directed towards:** Governments (national and subnational), agrifood producers, stakeholders along the plastic value chain, and other non-governmental actors.

## TRADE PROVISIONS IN THE DRAFT VOLUNTARY CODE OF CONDUCT (UNDER CONSULTATIONS)

*While trade-related measures are not a major focus of the VCoC (Members are yet to agree on a specific trade article), six proposed actions in the MC13 Ministerial Statement are highly relevant to a number of articles in the Code, including transparency, monitoring and understanding of trade flows, promotion of cooperative and effective trade-related policies or measures to address the environmental, social and human health impacts and leakages of plastics, and trade-related measures relevant to plastic alternatives.*

## UPDATE ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT ON PLASTIC POLLUTION, INCLUDING IN THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT







THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR ATTENTION

[Agri-plastics@fao.org](mailto:Agri-plastics@fao.org)



## KEY MESSAGES: MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

Urgency of tackling unsustainable use of plastics in agriculture and its adverse effects on **the environment and soil health**

Recognition of both **benefits and trade-offs**, considering the environmental, social, and **economic** dimensions of sustainability

Importance of a holistic approach, including the whole **plastics life-cycle**, with both **upstream** and **downstream** measures

Biodegradable alternatives show **potential**, but **careful assessments** are needed

Engagement of **all relevant stakeholders**, including farmers, foresters and forest producers and workers, fisherfolk



## PLASTICS USED IN FISHERY

- **Fishery and aquaculture** gear made of plastic materials can be hazardous or problematic when they get lost, abandoned or discarded at sea.
- **Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG)** can cause negative impacts to the marine environment and its biodiversity, food security and livelihoods, safety at sea and contributes to plastic pollution.
- The **Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear**, are the only existing policy instrument and endorsed by the FAO Committee on Fisheries that provide guidance to fisheries authorities on how to prevent and reduce ALDFG and its impacts.