

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. WANG SHOUWEN, VICE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND DEPUTY  
CHINA INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPRESENTATIVE AT THE JOINT LAUNCH EVENT OF  
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS - TRADE, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

15 DECEMBER 2021

DG Iweala,

Doctor Birkbeck,

Colleagues,

Good morning.

First of all, I am pleased to participate in today's meeting on behalf of Minister Wang Wentao and share my views and observations on the Informal Dialogue on Plastics Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (IDP) Ministerial Statement.

The rising environmental, health and economic costs related to plastic pollution have increasingly become a common concern for the international community. The pandemic has shown how vulnerable the world is before natural disasters. It has also highlighted the urgency to tackle global environmental issues, and the importance of achieving sustainable development.

Plastic pollution causes environmental pollution and health risks, which, if not properly managed, will spread with international trade. China used to bear a heavy burden. Before 2019, China imported some 50 million tons of solid waste annually, putting our environment under grave pressure.

President Xi Jinping has stressed on many occasions, that the environment is crucial for the well-being of the people, and he has also stressed that clear waters and green mountains are as valuable as mountains of gold and silver. In recent years, the government of China has adopted a series of measures to gradually reduce, restrict and prohibit the use of disposable plastics, fully ban the importation of solid waste. China has also promoted recyclable and degradable alternatives, and has turned more plastic wastes into useful resources and energy.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period between 2021 and 2025, China will redouble its efforts in preventing and addressing plastic pollution. Our target is a notable decline of unreasonable disposable plastics consumption by 2022 and effective control of plastic pollution by 2025.

China organized the first Workshop on Plastic Pollution together with Morocco and Sri Lanka in Geneva in November 2019. On 17 November, 2020, China and Fiji held the first Informal Dialogue on Plastics Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade. Today, it's really heartening to see that the IDP Ministerial Statement has been launched officially.

China believes that the significance of the IDP initiative lies in its relevance.

First, trade policies are a key area for tackling plastic pollution and promoting recycling of sustainable plastics. The IDP represents the WTO's concrete action on the trade policy front to respond to the environmental challenges of global concern.

Second, the IDP is committed to responding effectively to the concerns of developing members, and in particular, LDCs and small island members, which suffer the most from environmental degradation. Of the over 100 measures targeting trade in plastics for environmental reasons notified by WTO members, 80 percent are taken by developing members or LDC members.

Third, the IDP embodies the concept of trade for people. The poorest and most vulnerable benefit the most from environmental improvement. This is one of the things that China has learned from its environmental governance experience.

The IDP initiative, which was initiated by eight co-sponsors, now has 67 co-sponsoring members from different regions and at various development stages. We should try to get more members on board for more extensive cooperation and more substantive outcomes.

To this end, the IDP should try to bring more members joining in our discussion. The IDP should cooperate closely with other international organizations such as the UNEP, UNCTAD, OECD and the World Economic Forum, in a bid to carry out more discussions about trade and plastic pollution reduction. The IDP should focus on best practices in trade policy, work to deliver specific outcomes on trade policies contributing to plastic pollution prevention and control. The IDP also needs to strengthen support for developing members in capacity building and technical assistance.

To conclude, we expect the WTO to play its unique role in helping members to come up with more coordinated, consistent and effective trade measures and foster bonds between trade, environment and development, for addressing today's environmental challenges, and for a sustainable future of the world.

Thank you for your attention.