

Article 6 – Supply

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia submission

Article 6: “Supply” is to be deleted, and the reasoning is as follows:

- **Misalignment with the Treaty’s Mandate:** The treaty's primary focus is on addressing plastic pollution, particularly at stages where waste is generated (e.g., product design, consumption, and recycling). Supply-side restrictions extend beyond this scope and do not solve the issue at hand, plastic pollution.
Impact on Value Chain Security and Market Distortions: Restricting supply could destabilize global value chains, leading to economic disruptions and shortages of essential materials. Supply limitations could create artificial shortages, drive up costs, and lead to unintended economic consequences including conflict with WTO rules. Plastic products are affordable and play a vital role in food security, hygiene and healthcare. Market based distortion hinders progress towards achieving sustainability goals, where plastics play a key enabling role in economic prosperity and poverty eradication.
- **Impact on Emergency Preparedness:** Polymers are essential for producing medical supplies, protective equipment, and food packaging, which are critical during emergencies. Supply restrictions would hinder the global response to crises, including pandemics, natural disasters, and humanitarian emergencies involving refugees. Polymers are crucial for providing shelter, water storage, and sanitation solutions in refugee camps and disaster-stricken areas. Reducing supply could limit the ability to address basic needs for displaced populations, particularly in developing countries with minimum capacities, thereby exacerbating humanitarian challenges. The recent pandemic was an example of how distortions in global logistics created scarcity and panic.
- **Disproportionate Regional Impacts:** Blanket restrictions on supply could disproportionately affect developing countries with less capacity to adapt, especially those with economies that rely heavily on plastic production. Regional disparities in resources and infrastructure are not accounted for in such measures.
- **Over-Focus on Restrictive measures:** Shifting focus to supply distracts from solutions that create a practical impact such as improving product design, recycling infrastructure, and waste management. Poor waste management is an issue that will always lead to pollution regardless of the type of waste generated. Further, restricting supply penalizes industries without addressing the actual issue of plastic pollution. Such measures risk being perceived as punitive rather than fostering constructive solutions.

- **Stifling Innovation and Circular Economy:** Supply reductions and restrictions will hinder advancements in recycling, and circular-economy initiatives. These restrictions create uncertainty, forcing industries to focus on short-term survival instead of investing in circular economy infrastructure and innovation. This unpredictability disrupts collaboration between industries, governments, and researchers, fostering conflict rather than alignment on shared sustainability goals. Consequently, industries will not have the capacity to meet urgent and unexpected demands for emergencies. Free trade and a stable supply chain are essential to drive long-term, transformative solutions and innovation, leading to addressing plastic pollution.