



**QUNO**

Quaker United Nations Office



Instituto 17

# Package-less and reuse systems through policy intervention: rethinking packaging in international trade

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## Current trends that will shape regulations in the years to come

- 1. Consumers are highly aware of sustainability issues, with their concerns accelerating and growing, and governments are designing increasingly ambitious regulations for packaging and plastic waste, influencing beyond their national borders.**
- 2. Across regions, there are critical gaps around waste collection, recycling systems, and technology, limiting significant changes in the packaging value chain over the near term.**
- 3. Leading fast-moving consumer goods companies and retailers remain committed to transforming their portfolios, but large-scale market adoption of innovations remains slow and niche oriented.**
- 4. There are technical limits to “circularity”. The most efficient recycling chain for plastic packaging is still far from an optimal material circularity, implying continued use of virgin plastic feedstocks.**

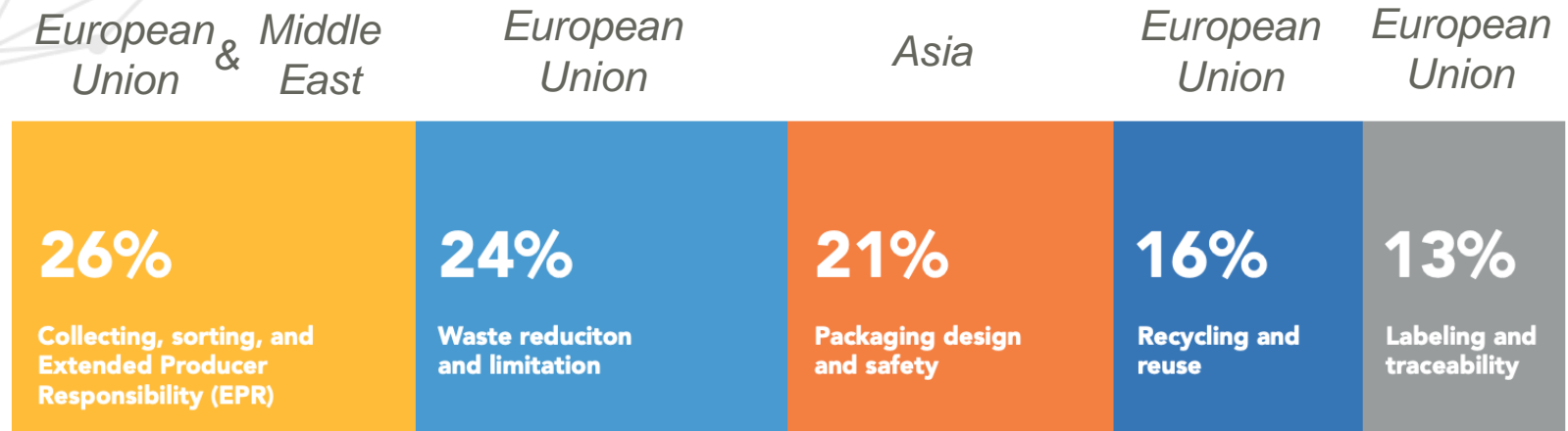
## Focusing on which are the popular measures



Number of countries per type of adopted measure

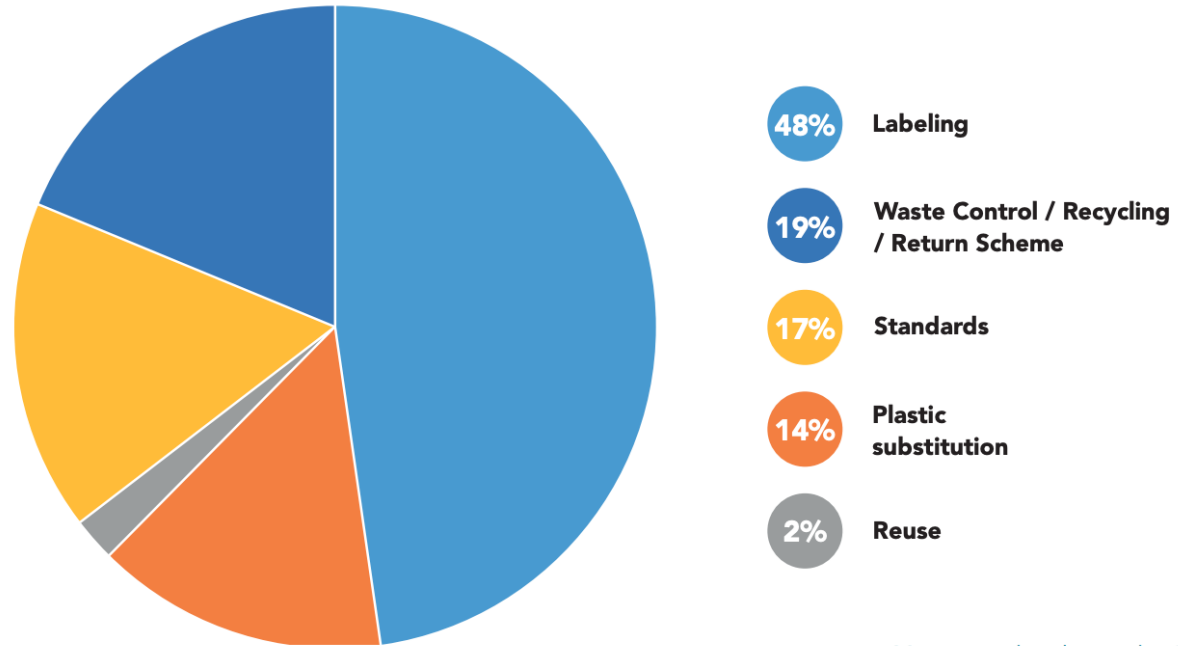
Fonte: ChereI-Bonnemaison, C., et al., Sustainability in packaging: Global regulatory development across 30 countries. 2022, McKinsey Company: Chicago, USA. p. 1-9.

## Focusing on where the measures are happening



Measures related to sustainable packaging (2019-2021) in 30 selected countries

**Fonte:** Cherel-Bonnemaison, C., et al., *Sustainability in packaging: Global regulatory development across 30 countries*. 2022, McKinsey Company: Chicago, USA. p. 1-9.



Measures related to packaging and reuse strategies notified to the WTO (2009-2022)

Fonte: WTO, WTO Environmental Database. 2022, World Trade Organization (WTO).

COMPANY	PLASTIC PACKAGING WEIGHT (METRIC TONS/YEAR)	PERCENTAGE OF CIRCULAR STRATEGIES (E.G., REUSABLE, RECYCLABLE AND COMPOSTABLE)	PERCENTAGE OF REUSABLES
<b>The Coca-Cola Company</b>	2,961,000	99.0%	1.7%
<b>PepsiCo</b>	2,350,000	77.0%	0.0%
<b>Nestlé</b>	1,267,000	61.0%	1.0%
<b>Danone</b>	717,000	67.0%	4.8%
<b>Unilever</b>	690,000	52.0%	Not reported
<b>Mondelez International</b>	189,500	5.0%	0.0%
<b>Mars, Incorporated</b>	179,382	22.0%	0.0%
<b>L'Oréal</b>	138,000	41.7%	1.0%
<b>FrieslandCampina</b>	68,676	28.0%	0.4%
<b>Kellog</b>	64,806	14.0%	0.0%

Table 1: Recycling versus reusing based on figures from 2020

## A. *Recycling, reuse and reduction of plastic production:*

- *Approaches that focused on diversion from landfill have also meant focusing primarily on recycling, which in turn **enabled a thriving and ever-expanding environment for disposable products.***
- ***Developing countries are no strangers to reusing models,** and uptake of such systems can be accelerated with policies incentivising their adoption while mandating a reduction of plastic production and use.*
- ***Reuse strategies should have the potential to create jobs at local level.** Therefore, the informal waste sector should be involved in the process of developing an efficient and well-managed packaging reuse systems, ensuring a fair and inclusive transition.*

## **A. Recycling, reuse and reduction of plastic production:**

- *Reuse strategies should decrease public administration spending on waste management.*
- *Standardisation of reusing packaging in B2B (i.e., pallets, crates, dunnage, drums, intermediate bulk containers, and big bags) allows for automatisisation and cost reduction.*
- *Products that are trading internationally should be designed to be reused and to use fewer raw materials in their life cycle. In this sense, eco-design and LCA are tools that can assess raw materials use and evaluate product environmental impacts.*



## **B. Circular economy versus recycling economy:**

- *Package-less and reuse systems must be designed with the local context in mind. They must **guarantee affordability and accessibility for low-income communities.***
- *Package-less and reuse strategies need to be scalable. Thus, **reuse models must consider consumer behaviour and address their needs.***
- *The absence of definitional precision, in combination with specific weaknesses in the formulation of targets, leads to a problem in which **companies talk about a circular economy while implementing a recycling economy, and have begun prioritising recyclable packaging over package-less or reusable products, especially in the food sector.***

## ***Regulations are a vehicle for change***

***Companies must follow the constant evolution of regulations to keep track of changes and remain compliant. However, an established or aligned terminology needs to be improved regarding new delivery systems.***

***For example, the term reuse can have different meanings, leading to a variable intensity of impact on the industry.***

## ***A starting point for a common terminology for reuse***

- *The Environmental Investigation Agency defines reuse as “any operation by which a product or packaging is used again for the same purpose for which it was conceived and is an important measure to reduce resource and energy consumption as well as waste generation.”*
- *The Basel Convention also has a short definition on reuse. While they can be clear, **these definitions are not measurable.***

*Hence, they are too subjective to serve as standards*

## WTO Members Can:

- *Through the DPP, establish targets and objectives aimed at promoting reuse/refill systems as alternatives to current plastic production and consumption patterns.*
- *Coordinate closely with UNEP-INC counterparts to support the refinement of the re-use terminology and find pathways to regulate its labelling within the INC process.*
- *In coordination with the INC membership and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), push for the establishment and use of standard measuring tools (e.g. Lifecycle Analysis – ISO 14040:2006 ) recognised globally.*
- *Members can also work with stakeholders to establish better criteria to differentiate plastic products, and their intended utilization purposes along the lifecycle to enhance categorization, and hopefully advance proposals for the inclusion of more granular characterization of plastics in the next HS amendment cycle of the World Customs Organization.*





## Thank you!

- *The study was prepared by the Instituto 17 (i17) under the guidance of the Quakers United Nations Office (QUNO) and direct supervision of Nozizwe Madlala Routledge and Andrés Naranjo Jijon.*
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