
Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Law and Policy

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Sustainable Consumption and Consumer Protection

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP OF EXPERTS ON
**CONSUMER PROTECTION
LAW AND POLICY**





SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION



SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

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- Interplay (1): sustainable consumption and the UN Agenda 2030 sustainable development goals (SDGs)
- Interplay (2): with United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP)
- Consumer protection laws : may lack specific provisions on sustainable consumption, but Consumer agencies are developing actions
- Policy Focus
- Some policy recommendations and areas for further discussion.



SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (1)

- Agenda 21: Sustainable consumption entered the international policy discourse in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit and its Agenda 21 action plan.
- UNGCP first revision, 1999: a new section on Sustainable Consumption (Section H of the 2015 version).



Goal 12 of 2030 Agenda (SDGs): *aims at “doing more and better with less”.*

*This includes **educating consumers** on sustainable consumption and lifestyles, providing them with adequate information through standards and labels and engaging in sustainable public procurement, among others.*

***Businesses** can also design solutions that can both enable and inspire individuals to lead more sustainable lifestyles, reducing impacts and improving well-being.*



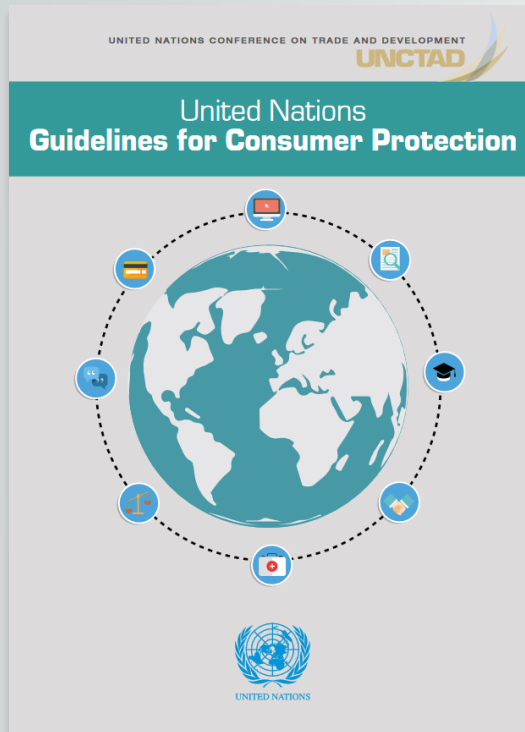
SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (2)



- Guidelines 49 to 62 (UNGCP): seek to address the impact of consumption habits to the environment and their negative effect on existing resources.
- "**Sustainable consumption** includes meeting the needs of present and future generations for goods and services in ways that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable" (GL 49).
- Subject of **shared responsibility** between **member States, businesses, consumer associations, environmental organizations. Consumers' right** to be informed.
- **Policy-making in partnership with all relevant stakeholders**: a mix of measures and tools is necessary; **national and international standards are encouraged.**



SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (3)



- Need for **appropriate regulatory mechanisms.**
- Product and services **safety-related concerns.**
- **Business** are encouraged to **develop new environmentally sound products and services and new technologies.**
- Need for **indicators, methodologies and databases for measuring progress towards sustainable consumption.**
- Leading example of **sustainable practices by member States and international organizations in procurement policies.**
- Need for **member States and relevant stakeholders' research on consumer behavior related to environmental damage**



POLICY OPTIONS (1)

- Consumer protection policy:

- Legal framework:

- i) Specific provisions to inform and empower consumers;
 - ii) Engagement with relevant stakeholders in policy-making and awareness-raising and education initiatives;
 - iii) Encouragement of business action, namely through self-regulatory initiatives;
 - iv) Promotion of standards for increased safety and environmentally sounder products and services.



POLICY OPTIONS (2)

- Consumer Protection policy - 2 important avenues to promote sustainable consumption are:
 - Consumer education
 - Business guidance
- Use of existing consumer protection provisions to promote sustainable consumption: tackling environmental marketing claims in the context of the advertising framework



EXPERIENCES OF MEMBER STATES AND QUESTIONS

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- Examples of promoting sustainable consumption through consumer policy
 - Food loss and waste
 - Recycling
 - Environmental claims.
- Areas for discussion and further work:
- Part H of UNGCP on sustainable consumption; making it live in national laws of member States. Readiness?
- International cooperation; coordination of UN agencies and other international organizations to better sustainable consumption
- Best practices in this area from Governments, NGOs and the private sector





THANK YOU

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