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Key Principles of Promoting Sustainable Consumption
and the Role of Consumer Agencies

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KEY PRINCIPLES OF PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND THE ROLE OF CONSUMER AGENCIES
Sustainable consumption affects us all

It needs to become and be everybody’s business
Key Principles

It is fundamentally about our interconnectedness as consumers across the globe.
**Key Principles**

**Butterfly effect**

The flap of a butterfly's wings in South Africa sets off a tornado in Geneva.
Key Principles

Butterfly effect applied to sustainable consumption

Small events can have large, widespread consequences - seemingly insignificant actions can alter circumstances and shape destinies
Key Principles

We don’t have time

We need to act now and shift the centre of gravity

We need to adopt a future-sensitive posture and nurture sustainably-minded consumers
Key Principles: collective interaction
Quintuple Helix: collective role-player interaction to drive sustainable consumption

- Academia
- Government
- Business
- Civil society
- Environment
- Research & thinking
- Policy & institutional arrangements for provision of services
- Products & services to consumers
- Agency & mobilization
- Sustainability
Key Principles: transition from outputs to impacts

FULL product life-cycle
Inclusive of both sustainable production and sustainable consumption
Consider sustainability at every phase
raw material sourcing-design-usage-disposal
Considerations: developing and developed countries

[un]sustainable consumption by choice?
[un]sustainable consumption by circumstance?
Contextual complexities - uneven playing fields for consumers
Formal and informal markets - impact on consumer rights: choice; product information; disclosure
Paradigms of sustainability
Roles of Consumer Protection Agencies

- Develop & introduce specific sustainable consumption policy provisions
- Expanded definitions for unsustainable consumption practices
- Extend definition of product safety to sustainable production
- Set minimum standards on sustainability for sector self-regulation
- Consumer education, agency and advocacy for the incorporation of sustainability in consumer policy
New definitions?

Product safety
Hazardous products
Prohibited conduct
Unconscionable conduct
Consumer health
In closing

Sustainable production & sustainable consumption offer new opportunities for global solidarities
"We can change the world and make it a better place. It is in your hands to make a difference."

-Nelson Mandela
(1918-2013)