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Minutes of 12th Meeting
Working Group on Consumer Product Safety, February 9, 2021

The [Eighth United Nations Conference on Competition and Consumer Protection](#) held from 19 to 23 October 2020, decided to renew the mandate of the Working Group on Consumer Product Safety “to continue the work on strengthening consumer product safety frameworks at the national, regional and international levels to protect consumers from hazards to their health and safety; and to recommend policy options for addressing challenges faced by consumer protection authorities in this area, and to report to the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts in July 2021.”

Regarding *product safety*, and as contained in its same Resolution, , the [Eighth United Nations Conference on Competition and Consumer Protection](#), also decided the following:

24. *Emphasizes* the importance of strengthening consumer product safety frameworks at national, regional and international levels to protect consumers from hazards to their health and safety, recognizing that collecting and processing key injury data and assessing risks is necessary to improve consumer product safety around the world;
25. *Decides to adopt* the [recommendation on preventing cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products](#);
26. *Requests* the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD to take note of the recommendation on preventing cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products;

In addition, the Conference also adopted the **items related to product safety** to be included in the provisional agenda for the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy:

Report of the working group on:

- a) consumer product safety - modalities for the prevention of cross-border distribution of unsafe consumer products;

Considering this background and based on the work carried out in the past by the Working Group on Consumer Product Safety (WGCPs), and the mandate renewal received by the Conference, the UNCTAD secretariat proposed a work plan for the WGCPs for 2021 until the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy (IGE), to be held in the week of 5 to 9 July 2021, as follows:

Workplan 2021



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Based on the work carried out in the past by the Working Group on Consumer Product Safety (WGCPs), and the fresh mandate received by the Conference, the UNCTAD secretariat proposes the following work plan for the WGCPs for 2021 until the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy (IGE), to be held in the week of 5 to 9 July 2021.

1. **Modalities for the prevention of cross-border distribution of unsafe consumer products:** the WGCPs could discuss and gather the experiences, interest, challenges and concerns regarding the implementation of the recently adopted recommendation. This discussion could be combined with the collection and processing of written questionnaires and consideration of existing instruments and literature. One or various participating Member States may wish to lead this effort.

Required action from WGCPs members: volunteers to lead this collecting information regarding the implementation of the recommendation

2. **Kick-starting consumer product safety:** following the joint [EC-UNCTAD workshop](#) on “Kick-starting consumer product safety: a worthwhile endeavour” in the margins of the [International Product Safety Week 2020](#), the WGCPs could discuss policy options on how to strengthen and/or start implementing consumer product safety frameworks at the national level, which could lead to a policy document and/or recommendation. This discussion could be combined with the collection and processing of written questionnaires and consideration of existing instruments and literature. One or various participating Member States may wish to lead this effort.

Required action from WGCPs members: volunteers to lead this collecting information regarding the implementation of this item.

3. Other activities: participants of the WGCPs are invited to propose other activities to be included in the workplan

Required action from WGCPs members: volunteers to lead this collecting information regarding the implementation of this item.

Regularity of meetings

On the regularity of the meetings, the UNCTAD secretariat has proposed that the Working Group should meet approximately every 2 months until the fifth session of the IGE (in the week of 5 to 9 July 2021). The calendar could be as follows:

9 February
8 April
9 June



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It was clarified that more meetings may be called, if needed, upon request from participating member States. Parallel meetings may be called by participants to coordinate activities, although without the secretariat support.

On the possible outcomes, the UNCTAD secretariat informed that the discussions of the Working Group will be reported orally by the secretariat to the fifth session of the IGE and that if the Working Group reaches consensus on some recommendation/instrument/proposal, it will be as well submitted for consideration of the IGE.

Following the presentation of the workplan, the UNCTAD secretariat opened the floor for suggestions and comments from member States. There were no objections to the proposals.

Australia expressed interest in participating in the two proposed items and suggested that the Working Group may explore methodologies to evaluate the economic impact of inaction in the field of consumer product safety as means to raise political awareness. Australia encouraged the use of the recent OECD recommendation on product safety in the WGCPs.

The European Commission DG JUST also expressed the interest in participating in the two proposed items. It was also mentioned that the session held last year (2020) during the International Product Safety Week, dedicated to the fundamental elements for product safety can be developed into more specific webinars if there is interest. Finally, the EC informed that Ms. Eva Sinkovic is Deputy Head of Unit and Ms. Myriam Denieul, Policy Officer, will serve as desk officer for UNCTAD matters.

The United States of America CPSC expressed appreciation on the continuity of the WGCPs and the fact that Colombia will continue leading the informal steering committee, volunteering for proposed item 1. As for item 2, Kick-starting consumer safety, the United States asked that UNCTAD host a dedicated website to display contributions from member States and building the WGCPs own resources.

Colombia, as one of the sponsors of the Recommendation, volunteered to participate in proposed item 1 and underlined availability on sharing experiences and continue supporting the WG. Colombia also invited delegations to participate in meetings of the informal steering committee. Colombia shared the contact email address of the Superintendent delegate for consumer protection Ms. Maria Carolina Corcione Morales mcorcione@sic.gov.co.

The UNCTAD secretariat informed of being in contact with the communications department for a webpage on the Recommendation to be available in a friendlier format, being a WG page helping raising awareness and sharing information. The secretariat also mentioned the possibility of further cooperation with others organizations such as the ASEAN secretariat, networking the networks being as well an aim of the WG. The UNCTAD secretariat invited participants to inform of any upcoming activities that would be interesting for this WG, so information may be circulated, such as the EC Safety Gate event to be held next 2nd of March.

Mexico also agreed with the working plan and added that the information of the [UNCTAD WCPM](#) could be used as a reference as well as the research carried out by Consumers International (CI).



Peru highlighted the importance of sharing experience and informed on the recent actions carried out by INDECOPI in cooperation with different authorities and areas such as the customs office and intellectual property in identifying counterfeit products, maintaining a product safety approach.

Lastly UNCTAD secretariat concluded that items 1 and 2 of the proposed working-plan were the ones of most interested to member states, and the work plan was thus adopted. The UNCTAD secretariat aims to improve communication and outreach of the WGCPs via a dedicated UNCTAD webpage and circulating related events and activities.

The UNCTAD secretariat informed that on the next 15th March the European Union Summit will be held under the Portuguese presidency, with UNCTAD's participation at Acting Secretary General level.

The next meeting of the WG on Consumer Product Safety is scheduled for next 8th of April.



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Working Group on Consumer Product Safety		
12th Meeting – List of Participants		
Name	Organization	Country
Neville Matthew	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	Australia
Paola Rubin	Direction on Consumer Protection	Argentina
Maria Carolina Corcione Natalia Alarcón Juan Barrera	Superintendence of Industry and Commerce - SIC	Colombia
Sergey Sinyakov	Eurasian Economic Commission	
Pinuccia Contino Eva Sinkovic Myriam Denieul	European Commission (DG JUST)	
Hookoomdev Tacoorsing	Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection	Mauritius
Rafael Regla	Procuraduría Federal del Consumidor PROFECO	Mexico
Wendy Ledesma	Instituto Nacional de Defensa de la Competencia y de la Protección de la Propiedad Intelectual - INDECOPI	Peru
Chaeun Shin	Korean Consumer Agency	Republic of Korea
Matthias Gehrig	Federal Consumer Affairs Bureau	Switzerland
Richard O'Brien Tilven Salazar	Consumer Product Safety Commission	United States