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| Minutes of 24th Meeting Working Group on Consumer Product Safety, February 2nd 2024 |
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The UNCTAD Working Group on Consumer Product Safety (WGCPS) held its twenty fourth teleconference on 2 February 2024 (at 8.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. Geneva time). The objective of the meeting was to discuss developments in the work plan for the period 2023-2024 until the eighth session of the Intergovernmental group of experts on consumer protection law and policy (IGE, 1-2 July 2024).

Adopted workplan 2023-2024

1. **Recommendation on general consumer product safety:** the European Commission, as lead of the activity with South Africa, informed that the first two meetings of the drafting committee already took place. Currently the drafting committee produced a document containing the building blocks of the recommendation. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 29 February at 2 p.m. Geneva time to discuss a first draft of the recommendation. The European Commission circulated invitations to the meeting.

The agreed workplan is as follows:

| | ACTIVITY | OUTPUT |
|-------------------|--|---|
| 11 January | Group meeting- Discussion A. Proposed workplan out B. First idea of the building blocks of the future recommendation C. "institutional machinery" | a) Work plan b) "V 0" Draft – Recommendation c) Proposals on implementation mechanism |
| 13/15 February | A. Input on "V 0" Draft – Recommendation B. Further discussion on proposed implementation mechanism | a) V 1" Draft – Recommendation b) Recommended implementation mechanism |
| March 2024 | A. Amplification of V 1" Draft – Recommendation B. Presentation of Draft Note on the implementation mechanism | a) V 2" Draft – Recommendation b) Recommended note - implementation mechanism |
| April 2024 | A. Discussion of the Sub-WG report for the IGE and technical notes to the IGE 2024 | |
| May 2024 | A. Deadline for comments on the WGE report to the IGE 2024 | |
| June 2024 | A. Report to the IGE 2024 | |
| 1 and 2 July 2024 | IGE 2024 | |

2. **Model law for the implementation of the recommendation on preventing the cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products:**¹ an agreement (MOU) with the American University is currently being negotiated. The American University designed a syllabus for students to support consultations on the model law. The course was launched on 22 January. The United States reported that students are currently reading supporting documents (UN instruments) and by the beginning of March they may be able to provide a table of contents to the drafting committee. Colombia, the United Kingdom, and the European Commission expressed interest in participating in the drafting. A rough draft may then be presented to the IGE meeting.

The United States proposed the following table of contents:

CONTENTS

NOTE

Introduction

Acknowledgement

PART I SUBSTANTIVE POSSIBLE ELEMENTS FOR A PRODUCT SAFETY LAW RESTRICTING CROSS-BORDER DISTRIBUTION OF KNOWN UNSAFE CONSUMER PRODUCTS

TITLE OF THE LAW: Restrictions on cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products

CHAPTER I Objectives or purpose of the law

CHAPTER II Definitions and scope of application

CHAPTER III Responsibilities of manufacturers and distributors

CHAPTER IV Adoption of appropriate measures related to consumer product safety by the Administering Authority

CHAPTER V Acts or behaviours constituting cross-border distribution of known unsafe products

CHAPTER VI Exemptions

CHAPTER VII Possible methods for restricting the distribution of unsafe products abroad

CHAPTER VIII Functions and powers of the Administering Authority

ANNEXES

3. **Fourth Joint EC-UNCTAD workshop on consumer product safety:** was held on 12 December from 2 to 3.30 p.m. in Brussels (in-person and online), Experts and participants brainstormed on how to maximize the potential of research in advancing product safety, as it is an area

¹ See [Recommendation on preventing the cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products](#), 10 October 2023.

which has not been widely researched yet. The event featured an initial discussion with researchers and an interactive part with all participants. Speakers at the workshop included:

- Ms. Pinuccia Contino, Deputy to the Director for Consumers, Head of Unite Product Safety and Rapid Alert System, European Commission
- Prof. Elizabeth Keith, Professor of Legal Rhetoric, American University Washington College of Law in the United States
- Prof. Sebastián Barocelli, Professor at the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina
- Dr. Laura Best, Policy specialist in consumer protection and sustainability in South Africa
- Dr. Eduard Fosch-Villaronga, Associate Professor on Law, Robots, and AI, eLaw Center for Law and Digital Technologies, Leiden University in the Netherlands

The European Commission reported that the topic and the format of breakout session were well received and may lead to future work in this area.

The fifth workshop will be held at the International Product Safety Week from 14 to 17 October in Brussels.

4. **UNCTAD e-Commerce Week: Shaping the Future of the Digital Economy**: UNCTAD-COMESA-EC hosted an online session on “Regional cooperation for safer online consumer markets” on 4 December from 1 to 2 p.m. Geneva time. The session discussed the current regional policy frameworks in pursuit of a common agenda to enhance consumer information and data sharing on product safety in online markets, to help digital markets to be more trustful, transparent and fair. Speakers in the session were:
 - Dr. Willard Mwemba, CEO, COMESA Competition Commission;
 - Ms. Isabelle Pérignon, Director for Consumers, DG Justice and Consumers, European Commission; and
 - Mr. Khalid Al-Siyabi, Market Regulation and Market Monitoring Manager, Oman Consumer Protection Authority

See AI-generated report of the session [here](#).

5. **Workshop on consumer product safety in online platforms (17 April 2024)**: following the discussions at the IGE, the WGCPS will host a workshop dedicated to consumer product safety in online platform markets.² Mexico and Korea supported this initiative. The UNCTAD secretariat asks volunteering countries to submit a concept note before 29 February 2024.
6. **Publication on product safety**:
The UNCTAD secretariat circulated a short concept note for its first publication on product safety, as a collection of essays from jurisdiction around the world.

Contributors will be asked to submit 2,500 word essays on the emerging trends and challenges in their jurisdictions and the way forward for international product safety. Contributors will be selected between January and February 2024 and contributions will be

² See [Building trust in digital markets through enhanced consumer protection on online platforms](#), 21 April 2023, pages 10-11.

received until 1 May 2024. This publication is expected to be presented at the Ninth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices in 2025.

The secretariat received expressions of interest from: Argentina, France, Peru, the European Commission, and two academics (Akshay Yadav and Eduard Fosch). Expressions of interest from Africa and Asia are encouraged.

7. **Other activities:**

As a reminder, there is an Informal Steering Committee that is open for all WGCPs participants. Interested colleagues should write to rreglaa@profeco.gob.mx and xgaliciap@profeco.gob.mx.

The UNCTAD secretariat informed participants that it hosted an in-person side-event to [Consumers International Global Congress](#) on 8 December from noon to 1 p.m. EAT (Nairobi time) on means to enhance the consumer movement, as preparation for the dedicated session at the IGE meeting.

The next meeting of the WGCPs will take place on 17 April 2024 (for the workshop on consumer product safety in online platforms.)

| Working Group on Consumer Product Safety | | |
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| 24th Meeting – List of Participants | | |
| Name | Organization | Country |
| Trish Heffernan | Health Canada | Canada |
| Nataly Rojas | Superintendence of Industry and Commerce - SIC | Colombia |
| Eva Sinkovic, Myriam Denieul | European Commission | |
| Tamer Mohamed | Egypt Consumer Protection Agency | Egypt |
| Dra. Diana Burgos, Emiliano Arevalo and Emma Fernández | Defensoría del Consumidor | El Salvador |
| Rosa Moran Sullon | National Institute for the Defence of Free Competition and the Protection of Intellectual Property - INDECOPI | Peru |
| Jisook Yang | Korea Consumer Agency | Republic of Korea |
| Ewa Sikorska | Office of Competition and Consumer Protection - UOKiK | Poland |
| Thezi Mabuza | National Consumer Commission | South Africa |
| Felicia Fara, Bulent Ismail | Office for Product Safety and Standards | United Kingdom |
| Tilven Salazar | Consumer Product Safety Commission | United States |
| Antonino Serra | Expert and on behalf FIAGC | |
| Josep Tous | Independent expert | |
| Tica Bosch | Observatorio del Consumo SL | |