

11 July 2025, 10:00 - 12:00 (CEST)**Geneva, Switzerland****Venue: Room XIX, E-Building, Palais des Nations**

Safeguarding and empowering consumers in the age of AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the global marketplace, reshaping economies, societies, and the daily lives of millions of consumers at an unprecedented pace. While AI development is largely driven by a few private sector actors and a limited number of States, its impact is far-reaching, bringing both risks and opportunities to consumers worldwide.

The rapid deployment of AI technologies raises significant challenges. Consumers face increasing risks including deception through misleading information, manipulation of consumer choices, privacy violations through unchecked data collection, bias and discrimination, and heightened environmental concerns. These risks highlight the urgent need for global cooperation to ensure that AI development does not undermine consumer welfare.

At the same time, AI also presents transformative opportunities to protect consumer rights efficiently. Member States are successfully implementing AI tools to support consumers in decision-making, identify harmful practices, process complaints, and streamline enforcement actions. These applications demonstrate AI's potential to make consumer protection systems more agile and responsive.

However, the digital divide between developed and developing countries limits the equitable use of AI in consumer protection. Gaps in infrastructure, data management, technical expertise, and financial resources hinder many developing countries from fully harnessing the benefits of AI, widening disparities in consumer protection outcomes.

As AI continues to evolve, effective governance—based on shared values and inclusive participation—will be key to maximizing its benefits and minimizing its risks for consumers everywhere.

In response to these challenges, international cooperation is essential. Since late 2023, the UNCTAD informal working group on consumer protection in e-commerce has been addressing the implications of AI for consumers, fostering knowledge exchange and promoting dialogue among stakeholders.

This roundtable will reflect on the risks consumers face in the AI era and the solutions, highlighting the opportunities for leveraging AI to enhance consumer protection while bridging the digital divide between developed and developing countries.



Issues to consider for discussions

To facilitate this interactive discussion, the secretariat proposes the following questions:

- (i) What are the primary concerns regarding the misuse of AI in the consumer protection sector?
- (ii) How can regulatory frameworks improve to address these risks while ensuring that AI continues to enhance convenience and consumer welfare?
- (iii) How can we bridge the digital divide between developed and developing countries to ensure AI technologies are effectively used for consumer protection globally?

Programme

10:00 - 10:10 **Presentation by the UNCTAD secretariat**

10:10 - 11:30 **Speakers**

- Mr. Ricardo Salazar, President, Consumer Protection Agency, El Salvador
- Ms. Martyna Derszniak, Director, International Cooperation Office, Office of Competition and Consumer Protection, Poland
- Ms. Wimonrat Teriyapirom, Director, International Cooperation, Office of Consumer Protection Board, Thailand
- Ms. Youlia Lozanova, Senior Programme Officer, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
- Ms. Eunsook Moon, Chair, Committee on Consumer Policy (COPOLCO), International Organization for Standardization (ISO)
- Ms. Helena Leurent, Director General, Consumers International

11:30 - 12:00 **Interactive debate**

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