

Webinar on empowering women as consumers: Bridging trade, gender and consumer protection

8 March 2024, 14:00 hrs. (Geneva time)

Concept Note

Understanding the specific challenges faced by women as consumers and entrepreneurs is crucial to empower women in the market.

Vulnerabilities arise from insufficient knowledge or resources to navigate complex regulatory environments, often placing businesswomen at a disadvantage. Technical gaps due to lack of understanding for or access to the latest technologies can hinder the ability of women-led SMEs to compete effectively.

Disadvantages in bargaining power are illustrated by the often-limited negotiating capacity of women against larger suppliers or customers, impacting their ability to secure favorable terms as businesses and consumers.

As consumers women often face gender biases, discriminatory and unfair marketing practices, and stereotypes. This may happen in financial services, rendering access to credit difficult, involving higher interest rates, due to assumptions about women's financial knowledge or investment preferences. Sometimes women are not informed about products and services, especially in traditionally male-dominated areas like finance, automotive, and technology. This can hinder their ability to make informed decisions adjusted to their needs and means.

The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP), initially adopted in 1985 and lastly expanded in 2015, established recommendations to protect consumer rights and promote fair business practices. The guidelines cover a wide range of issues relevant to consumer protection and are particularly useful in addressing the disadvantages faced by women both as consumers and empower them.

Empowering women as consumers and entrepreneurs requires conscious efforts of policymakers and the society to recognize and mitigate gender biases encountered in the marketplace.

This webinar aims to explore the synergies between trade, gender, and consumer protection, offering insights into how to leverage consumer rights and improve women business resilience and growth.

Objectives:

- Highlight the importance of gender in the context of trade and consumer protection.
- Share practical knowledge on how women-led SMEs can use consumer rights to protect and empower their businesses.
- Explore the impact of strong B2C relations on economic inclusion and the broader economy.

Target Audience:

- Consumer experts, consumer rights advocates
- Women entrepreneurs
- Policy makers and government officials in trade, gender, and consumer protection
- Academics and students interested in gender studies, trade, and consumer rights.
- NGOs and international organizations working on women's economic empowerment and consumer protection.

Registration:

- Zoom Meeting