



Workshop on international trade and consumer product safety

18 April 2023, Geneva, Switzerland (CEST)

1 – 2 p.m. on Zoom (English only)

The [United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection](#) recognize consumers' legitimate need to be protected from hazards to their health and safety. The 2020 UNCTAD [Recommendation on preventing cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products](#) recommends that Member States pursue policies, consistent with World Trade Organization rules, aimed at preventing cross-border distribution of consumer products known in their own jurisdictions to be unsafe.

Article 20 of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) allows governments to act on trade in order to protect human, animal or plant life or health, provided they do not discriminate or use this as disguised protectionism. In addition, there are two specific WTO agreements dealing with food safety and animal and plant health and safety, and with product standards in general. Both try to identify how to meet the need to apply standards and at the same time avoid protectionism in disguise.

The Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement (TBT) tries to ensure that regulations, standards, testing and certification procedures do not create unnecessary obstacles. The agreement says the procedures used to decide whether a product conforms with relevant standards have to be fair and equitable. It discourages any methods that would give domestically produced goods an unfair advantage. The agreement also encourages countries to recognize each other's procedures for assessing whether a product conforms. Without recognition, products might have to be tested twice, first by the exporting country and then by the importing country.

So how does the recent UNCTAD recommendation interact with the wider international trading system? This workshop will feature a presentation by an UNCTAD expert on Non-tariff measures in international trade. A free discussion will follow on the interaction between product safety and trade policies to identify synergies and possible way forward for the Working group

This event is organized within the framework of UNCTAD's [Working Group on Consumer Product Safety](#).

Note: *This event is only open to Government participants of UNCTAD's Working Group on Consumer Product Safety. Interpretation will not be provided for this meeting.*

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PROGRAMME

Geneva time (CEST):

13:00 – 13:05

Opening and moderator: Mr. Arnau Izaguerri, Legal Officer, UNCTAD

13:05 – 13:20

Presentation: Mr. Christian Knebel, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Analysis Branch, UNCTAD

13:20 – 13:55

General discussion

13:55 – 14:00

Conclusions by the moderator

Delegates wishing to speak during the session are invited to inform the UNCTAD secretariat accordingly by contacting Mr Arnau Izaguerri (arnau.izaguerri@un.org).

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