

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting</b> <b>Working Group on Consumer Product Safety, September 20, 2023</b></p>
--

The UNCTAD Working Group on Consumer Product Safety (WGCPS) held its twenty second teleconference on 20 September 2023 (at 8.30 a.m. and 3.40 p.m. Geneva time). The objective of the meeting was to discuss and adopt the work plan for the period 2023-2024 until the eighth session of the Intergovernmental group of experts on consumer protection law and policy (1-2 July 2024).

## **Background**

As contained in its Agreed Conclusions, the seventh session of the Intergovernmental group of experts on consumer protection law and policy (IGE) (TD/B/C.I/CPLP/37, forthcoming), held on 3 and 4 July 2023, decided the following regarding product safety and the mandate of this working group:

*Recognizing* the important contribution of UNCTAD, serving as the focal point on consumer protection within the United Nations system, in improving consumer protection at the global level and advancing policy discussions, in particular on consumer product safety, sustainable consumption, electronic commerce (e-commerce) and online dispute resolution,

[...]

5. Encourages member States to enhance consumer protection on online platforms through market monitoring, regulation, enforcement, consumer education and business guidance and the engagement of online platforms, prioritizing the areas of consumer information and education, advertising, product safety, data protection, dispute resolution and enforcement;

[...]

8. *Emphasizes* the importance of regional cooperation in the enforcement of consumer protection law and policy; invites consumer protection authorities to strengthen their national legislative frameworks for international, regional and bilateral cooperation, in the light of guidelines 79 to 94; and requests the UNCTAD secretariat to continue to explore, gather and promote best practices for international cooperation;

[...]

11. *Decides* to renew the mandate of the working group on consumer product safety until 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, to continue work on strengthening consumer product safety frameworks at the regional and national levels and improving international cooperation to protect consumers from hazards to their health and safety, to propose a recommendation on general consumer product safety, to explore the viability and potentially the development of a model law for the

implementation of the recommendation on preventing the cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products and to report on its continued work to the eighth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy;

[...]

### Adopted workplan 2023-2024

Based on the work carried out in the past by the Working Group on Consumer Product Safety (WGCPs),<sup>1</sup> and the recent mandate received by the IGE, the UNCTAD secretariat circulated a work plan for the WGCPs for 2022 and 2023 on 28 August 2023. The UNCTAD secretariat presented the workplan followed by comments from participants, which was adopted as follows:

1. **Recommendation on general consumer product safety**: considering the concept note prepared by the European Commission (EC), the WGCPs could: (i) decide the issues to be considered in the recommendation such as powers of product safety authorities, risk assessment and market surveillance; (ii) propose a detailed workplan with schedule and deliverables; and (iii) set up a drafting committee to pursue work and report progress in WGCPs meetings.

Required action from WGCPs participants: volunteers to participate in planning and drafting committee.
--

The European Commission, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and the United States volunteered to take part in the planning and drafting committee. The UNCTAD secretariat will contact the volunteers to schedule a meeting after which volunteers will meet without secretariat support.

2. **Model law for the implementation of the recommendation on preventing the cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products**: considering the concept note prepared by the United States, the WGCPs will explore the viability and potentially the development of a model law for the implementation of the 2020 recommendation.<sup>2</sup>

The WGCPs could: (i) pursue contacts with research institutions, such as the American University, Washington D.C.; (ii) propose a detailed workplan with schedule and deliverables; and (iii) set up a drafting committee to pursue work and report progress in WGCPs meetings.

Required action from WGCPs participants: volunteers to participate in planning and drafting committee.
--

Colombia, Korea, and the United States volunteered to participate in the planning and drafting committee. The United States reported that the American University, Washington D.C. is

---

<sup>1</sup> See [Report of the WGCPs to the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection](#), June 2023.

<sup>2</sup> See [Recommendation on preventing the cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products](#), 10 October 2023.

interested in pursuing this cooperation, creating a curriculum for a class starting in February-May 2024. Korea expressed interest in learning more about the new digital passport for consumer products in the EU. The United States will schedule a meeting with volunteers, the American University and the secretariat to agree on next steps. Volunteers will propose a table of contents to the American University.

3. **Fourth Joint EC-UNCTAD workshop on consumer product safety**: following the three successful previous events, the EC and UNCTAD will hold an in-person and online workshop in December 2023 (back-to-back with EU product safety awards).

Required action from WGCPS participants: for information and volunteers as speakers.
--

The European Commission confirmed the date of 12 December, the topic is open for discussion. Korea would be interested in addressing the EU digital passport for consumer goods. The UNCTAD secretariat will send a save-the-date with the registration link as soon as possible.

4. **UNCTAD e-Commerce Week: Shaping the Future of the Digital Economy (4-8 December 2023)**: UNCTAD-COMESA-EC will organize a session on “Regional cooperation for safer online consumer markets.”

Required action from WGCPS participants: for information and volunteers as speakers.
--

5. **Workshop on consumer product safety in online platforms (17 April 2024)**: following the discussions at the IGE, the WGCPS could host a workshop dedicated to consumer product safety in online platform markets.<sup>3</sup>

Mexico and Korea supported this initiative. Korea will be able to contribute as speaker as KCA concluded 2 types of pledges with: (i) ordinary B2C online marketplaces and (ii) on P2P online marketplaces regarding issues sustainability and second-hand goods which can be unsafe (or require prescription). This has already yielded results with online marketplaces. The European Commission suggested to approaching local online marketplaces who may have joined the pledge.

6. **Other activities**: participants of the WGCPS are invited to propose other activities to be included in the workplan.

The United States drafted a table of contents for the toolkit on the implementation of the 2020 recommendation on preventing the cross-border distribution on known unsafe consumer products.

---

<sup>3</sup> See [Building trust in digital markets through enhanced consumer protection on online platforms](#), 21 April 2023, pages 10-11.

Mexico reminder WGCPS participants that there is an Informal Steering Committee that is open for all WGCPS participants (rreglaa@profeco.gob.mx and [xgaliciap@profeco.gob.mx](mailto:xgaliciap@profeco.gob.mx)).

The secretariat proposed to produce the first publication on product safety at UNCTAD as a collection of essays from jurisdiction around the world. The secretariat will circulate terms of reference and ensure geographical balance and high-level participation. This UNCTAD publication can serve as reference: [Competition and Consumer Protection Policies for Inclusive Development in the Digital Era](#).

### **Regularity of meetings**

The Working Group will meet every 2 months until the eighth session of the IGE (first week July 2024), which could be as follows:

20 September 2023

22 November 2023

14 February 2024

17 April 2024 – workshop on consumer product safety in online platforms

29 May 2024

More meetings may be called, if needed, upon request from participating member States.

These dates do not include meetings of the drafting committees for activities 1 and 2.

### **Outcomes**

The secretariat will report orally the discussions of the WGCPS to the eighth session of the IGE.

Any recommendation/instrument/proposal/handbook/toolkit developed and agreed by WGCPS participants will be submitted for consideration of the IGE.

The next meeting of the WGCPS will take place on 22 November.

\*\*\*

<b>Working Group on Consumer Product Safety</b>		
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting – List of Participants</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Country</b>
Patricia Heffernan	Health Canada	Canada
Nataly Rojas	Superintendence of Industry and Commerce - SIC	Colombia
Eva Sinkovic, Ilaria Bergami	European Commission	
Jisook Yang	Korean Consumer Agency	Republic of Korea
Juris Bulans	Ministry of Economics	Latvia
Rafael Regla	Federal Attorney for Consumers – PROFECO	Mexico
Rosa Moran	National Institute for the Defence of Free Competition and the Protection of Intellectual Property - INDECOPI	Peru
Ewa Sikorska	Office of Competition and Consumer Protection - UOKiK	Poland
Tilven Salazar	Consumer Product Safety Commission	United States
Antonino Serra		
Ilaria Bergami		
Josep Tous		
Tica Bosch		