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Minutes of 13th Meeting
Working Group on Consumer Product Safety, 8 April, 2021

The [Eighth United Nations Conference on Competition and Consumer Protection](#) held from 19 to 23 October 2020, decided to renew the mandate of the Working Group on Consumer Product Safety (WGCPS) “to continue the work on strengthening consumer product safety frameworks at the national, regional and international levels to protect consumers from hazards to their health and safety; and to recommend policy options for addressing challenges faced by consumer protection authorities in this area, and to report to the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts in July 2021.” The Working Group held its thirteenth teleconference on 8 April 2021 (at 8.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. Geneva time). The objective of the meeting was to discuss the latest developments of the [work plan for 2021 as adopted by the Group on 9 February 2021](#). These were the issues discussed:

1. **Webpage of the Working Group on Consumer Product Safety:** the UNCTAD secretariat set up a [webpage](#) to raise awareness on the work of the Group, displaying minutes, publications, main outputs and other relevant information.

The United States suggested this webpage could host the video from the consumer product safety event during the Eighth United Nations Conference on Competition and Consumer Protection. Mexico recalled that the video is available in UNTV. The secretariat will explore this possibility.

2. **Modalities for the prevention of cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products:** Colombia prepared a questionnaire, circulated on 12 March 2021, to gather experiences and ideas on the implementation of the recently adopted [recommendation on preventing cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products](#) from participants of the WGCPS. Inputs were received from:

1. Bulgaria
2. Czech Republic
3. Denmark
4. Ireland
5. Japan
6. Mexico
7. Slovenia
8. Sweden
9. The United States
10. Zambia

Participants of the WGCPS are invited to send their questionnaires to the UNCTAD secretariat as soon as possible.

The preliminary results of the questionnaires, possibly accompanied by a proposed table of contents, will be presented to the [fifth session of the Intergovernmental group of experts on](#)



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[consumer protection law and policy](#) (IGE), to serve as input for a report on the modalities for the implementation of the said recommendation to be developed in 2021-2022.

Colombia will prepare a document including this preliminary. Brazil expressed its intention to send the questionnaire next week. The United States informed that the draft should grow from an outline that is being developed by some member States and volunteered to edit the draft. The European Commission informed that EU member States were very interested and asked to allow an extension of the deadline so the questionnaire can be circulated again.

3. **Pre-IGE session on consumer product safety**: Colombia had requested the UNCTAD secretariat to include a session on consumer product safety in the agenda of the upcoming IGE. Unfortunately, the agenda, which was already decided by the [Eighth United Nations Conference on Competition and Consumer Protection](#) (available in page 28 of the [report of the meeting](#)), is particularly busy and it is difficult to allocate all agreed items within the only two days available. This is aggravated as the meeting is foreseen to be fully virtual and the available time for translation services is only from 10 a.m. to noon and 3 to 5 p.m. (thus losing four hours of meeting in total compared with in-person meetings). Also due to the virtual character of the meeting, UNCTAD is brought to cancel all planned side-meetings and instead allow for negotiation spaces for the Agreed Conclusions. However, the UNCTAD secretariat proposed to organize a special meeting/webinar on 9 June 2021 (WebEx, without interpretation) and to invite all the IGE registered participants.

Colombia proposed the title of: “***Consumer education and business awareness on consumer product safety***” and is consulting whether translation could be provided by a member State. The United States agreed with the date and title, offered to speak at the event and invited participants from jurisdictions who are less experienced to take the lead in the organization of the event as a way to ensure it is in tune with the real needs of developing countries. The European Commission welcomed choice of title for the event and offered to speak at the event. Consumers International proposed that this event be reported during the IGE meeting.

4. **Kick-starting consumer product safety**: following the joint [EC-UNCTAD workshop](#) on “Kick-starting consumer product safety: a worthwhile endeavour” in the margins of the [International Product Safety Week 2020](#), the European Commission expressed interest in pursuing this initiative with a follow-up event in November. The Commission and the UNCTAD secretariat will start preparations shortly and inform participants of the WGCPs.
5. **Voluntary peer reviews on consumer protection law and policy**: UNCTAD is open to receive expressions of interest from member States to volunteer for a peer review on consumer protection law and policy for 2022. Peer reviews aim to provide an expert assessment of the effectiveness of consumer protection law; to identify the challenges to be addressed and areas to be improved in the legal and institutional frameworks; to assess the consumer protection awareness of relevant stakeholders and their contributions in this area; to



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formulate and recommend appropriate measures; and to assist countries in implementing the recommendations by developing a technical cooperation and capacity-building programme.

More information on the framework for peer reviews is found in the UNCTAD [background note](#), in particular on their rationale (ownership, impact), methodology (selection criteria, peer reviewers, process, scope, funding of 40-50,000 USD) and modalities. Reports of past editions are also available: [Morocco](#) 2018, [Indonesia](#) 2019, and [Peru](#) 2020. Chile will be reviewed in 2021.

As the peer review process takes over a year since the reception of the of official request until the peer review session is held in Geneva, this is a good moment to start preparations with interested member States.

6. **Other issues:** Colombia invited all participants of the WGCPs to join the Informal Steering Committee, as a way to be more engaged in leading the WGCPs.

Consumers international informed that its report on online product safety should be ready shortly (early May) and will provide a checklist. It also asked the secretariat to circulate it to participants of the WGCPs once it is ready.

Brazil informed about market surveys and enforcement actions against online platforms to disclose the names and details of providers, although some platforms are still reluctant. Brazil expressed concern about the conduct of platforms who are not under Brazilian jurisdiction.

The next meeting of the WG on Consumer Product Safety is scheduled for next 9 June 2021 (dedicated to the webinar to product safety).



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Working Group on Consumer Product Safety		
13th Meeting – List of Participants		
Name	Organization	Country
Paola Rubin	Direction on Consumer Protection, DNDC	Argentina
Leonardo Albuquerque Marques, Louise de Melo	Secretaria Nacional do Consumidor, SENACON	Brazil
Karine Murad, Ruth Epsztejn	Instituto Nacional de Metrologia INMETRO	Brazil
Maria Carolina Corcione Nataly Rojas Cuellar Juan Barrera	Superintendence of Industry and Commerce - SIC	Colombia
Lidiya Osaulenko, Sergey Sinyakov	Eurasian Economic Commission	
Pinuccia Contino Eva Sinkovic Myriam Denieul	European Commission (DG JUST)	
Rafael Regla	Procuraduría Federal del Consumidor PROFECO	Mexico
Chaeun Shin	Korean Consumer Agency	Republic of Korea
Yvonne Stein	Ministry of Finance	Sweden
Matthias Gehrig	Federal Consumer Affairs Bureau	Switzerland
Richard O'Brien Tilven Salazar	Consumer Product Safety Commission	United States
Lontia Mutoleka, Joseph Kaumba	Competition and Consumer Protection Commission	Zambia
Antonino Serra Cambaceres	Consumers International	