

Working Group on Consumer Protection in E-Commerce

Minutes final meeting 2024 – 2025

5th July 2025

The final meeting of the UNCTAD informal Working Group on Consumer Protection in E-Commerce (WGE) was held virtually on 5th July 2025, with 23 participants from member States, civil society, and academia. The meeting aimed to review the group's past activities, discuss the renewal of its mandate, and consider proposals for the 2025–2026 work cycle.

Valentina Rivas, Programme Management Officer at UNCTAD, opened the meeting by welcoming participants and outlining the agenda.

Presentations by Member States

Cecilia Norlander, Senior Legal Officer at the Swedish Consumer Agency, presented the outcomes of the group's work on vulnerable consumers. Sweden led the organization of a webinar held on 15 May 2025, focusing on [*"Protecting Children Against Pressuring Techniques in Digital Media."*](#)

The event featured academic, enforcement, and national perspectives, highlighting issues such as manipulative in-game purchases, the influence of social media on children, and the importance of education and regulation. With over 70 participants, the webinar underscored the need for cross-sector collaboration to ensure safer digital environments for young consumers.

Next, Emil Szerszeń from Poland's Office of Competition and Consumer Protection introduced the *Checklist for Consumer Protection Agencies Deploying AI*, co-developed with El Salvador. He explained that the checklist was created as a practical tool to help agencies adopt AI in a responsible and ethical way. The draft was informed by input from a dedicated webinar held earlier this year. The final version will be shared in summer 2025.

Summary of the Work Cycle by the Secretariat

Following the presentations, Valentina Rivas summarized the Working Group's progress during the 2024–2025 cycle. She noted that the group focused on two main topics: the use of AI in consumer protection agencies and the impact of digital technologies on vulnerable consumers. The group organized two webinars, one in February 2025 on AI deployment, led by Poland and El Salvador, and another in May 2025 on children and digital media, led by Sweden.

These activities contributed to two main outputs: a draft checklist on AI use by consumer protection agencies, and a report on the webinar about children and digital media. The secretariat then presented the proposed areas of work for the 2025–2026 cycle as outlined in the draft report, which also included a recommendation to renew the mandate of the informal Working Group.

Discussion

Following the Secretariat's presentation, working group members were invited to share their views on the proposed areas of work and to express their positions on the renewal of the Working Group's mandate.

Sweden strongly supported the renewal of the Working Group's mandate. The delegation emphasized the value of webinars as an efficient and low-effort tool to facilitate dialogue and knowledge exchange. While expressing willingness to continue focusing on children as vulnerable consumers, Sweden remained open to expanding the focus to include other vulnerable groups, such as the elderly.

El Salvador also expressed strong support for renewing the mandate. The delegation underscored the importance of the work on protecting children in digital environments and highlighted the need to continue disseminating the findings from this work. El Salvador also recognized the relevance of ongoing discussions on artificial intelligence and expressed interest in continuing work in both thematic areas in the next cycle.

Kenya supported the renewal of the mandate and shared key challenges facing its e-commerce sector, particularly in relation to consumer trust. Issues such as non-delivery of paid goods and the prevalence of fake websites were noted as barriers to e-commerce growth. Kenya is currently developing a national e-commerce policy and hopes to continue exchanging best practices through the Working Group. Kenya also submitted a written proposal outlining ten suggested focus areas for the next phase of the Working Group. These include: strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks; enhancing consumer rights in digital markets; clarifying the responsibilities of digital platforms; addressing data protection and cybersecurity; improving dispute resolution mechanisms; promoting digital literacy; safeguarding vulnerable groups; fostering international cooperation; enhancing the role of regulators; and preparing for future challenges such as the metaverse and algorithmic marketing.

Colombia also supported the report and the extension of the mandate. While not in a position to lead specific topics, the delegation emphasized the importance of emerging technologies and expressed interest in learning from more experienced member States.

Uruguay expressed agreement with the draft report and confirmed its intention to continue active participation in the Working Group.

Luxembourg confirmed its support for the Working Group's report and commended the webinars as highly useful and informative. The delegation suggested that future work could delve deeper into the implications of AI in e-commerce, beyond enforcement, by exploring how AI influences consumer behavior, market structures, and regulatory risks. It was noted that decisions on topic leadership would depend on the final selection of themes.

Portugal expressed support for the continuation of the Working Group and indicated that any suggestions on future work topics would be submitted via email.

Consumers International (CI) expressed appreciation for the work carried out by the Working Group and endorsed the renewal of its mandate. CI reaffirmed its commitment to close collaboration with governments, highlighting its global network of over 200 consumer protection organizations. CI

emphasized its ability to contribute to cross-jurisdictional cooperation, share best practices, and support discussions on topics such as artificial intelligence and stakeholder engagement.

MGP India contributed by emphasizing the importance of Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) mechanisms for addressing e-commerce disputes. A technical note prepared by MGP India was referenced, which could support discussions during the upcoming United Nations Conference in July.

In response, the Secretariat reaffirmed that the proposed work plan is designed to be broad and flexible, allowing for the inclusion of emerging issues. She confirmed that leadership on specific topics would be decided at the first meeting of the new cycle, based on finalized priorities and the willingness of member States to take on leadership roles according to their capacities and interests. The meeting will be held in September 2025.

List of meeting participants

Name	Organization	Country
Aleksandra Mrozowska-Sroka, Emil Szerszeń, Martyna Derszniak-Noirjean	Office of Competition and Consumer Protection	Poland
Cecilia Norlander	Swedish Consumer Agency	Sweden
Christina Schurr, Michel da Silva	Directorate for Consumer Protection	Luxembourg
Emma Fernández, Ricardo Salazar	Consumer Protection Agency	El Salvador
Francisco Exposito Bader	Agència Catalana del Consum	Spain
Francisco Freitas	Directorate-General for the Consumer	Portugal
Heasung Youn, Soosan Kim, Yoonkyung Na	Korea Consumer Agency	Republic of Korea
John Kiria	Ministry of ICT and the Digital Economy	Kenya
Laura Dacosta	Unit of Consumer Defense	Uruguay
Nataly Rojas Cuellar	Superintendency of Industry and Commerce	Colombia
Rosa Stephany Patricia Moran Sullon	National Institute for the Defense of Competition and	Peru

	the Protection of Intellectual Property	
Vész Márton Ferenc	Department for Consumer Protection Strategy Ministry for National Economy	Hungary
Antonino Serra	Expert	
Dagobert Rugwiro	Former Rwanda central bank officer, now independent consultant	
Érico de Melo	Consumers International	
Javier Wajntraub	University of Buenos Aires	
Shirish Deshpande	MGP India	