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**Minutes of 2nd Meeting**  
**Working Group on Consumer Protection and Gender**  
**November 17, 2022**

The Working Group on Consumer Protection and Gender held its second online meeting on 17 November 2022 (at 2 p.m. Geneva time). The objective of the meeting was to discuss the answers to the questions identifying actions on consumer protection and gender in member States and decide on the outcome of the WG's activities, which will be presented at the seventh session of the Intergovernmental group of experts on consumer protection law and policy (July 2023).

Before discussing the questions received, the UNCTAD secretariat invited Ms. Simonetta Zarrilli, the Head of the Trade, Gender and Development Programme at UNCTAD to present the trade and gender activities and aims in the ambit of UNCTAD.

Following the Head of UNCTAD's Trade, Gender and Development Programme, the secretariat informed about the upcoming [WTO Congress on Trade and Gender scheduled at the WTO on 5-7 December](#), under the theme *Building recovery through inclusive trade*.

The UNCTAD secretariat informed of receiving answers from 9 member States (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Kingdom of Eswatini, Peru, Rwanda, Spain, Sweden, Zambia) and one academic institution (Federal University of South Brazil UFRGS).

The secretariat made a summary of the most common points raised in member States answers:

- Abusive (sexist) and misleading advertisement
- Tax and information on products and services
- Gender gap impacting consumers: education gap, wage gap, information gap, access to justice
- Gender vulnerability
- Vulnerable consumers: children, elderly, rural consumers
- Lack of sex-disaggregated data<sup>1</sup>
- Unconscious bias within science-based programs: consumer product safety
- Women are consumers of primary products (head of households)
- Financial issues, access to financial services and overindebtedness

Following the summary, the secretariat opened the floor for comments and suggestions. Several member states mentioned the challenge of obtaining data on consumer protection and gender issues. Australia shared that it has considered issues related to vulnerable consumers and will look into collection and use of data at the Australian Competition and Consumer commission. Colombia also mentioned the challenge of obtaining information and suggested contacting other agencies/authorities like the National Advertisement Association. Mexico also mentioned challenges

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics\\_ext\\_content/ifc\\_external\\_corporate\\_site/gender+at+ifc/resources/women-and-ecommerce-africa](https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/gender+at+ifc/resources/women-and-ecommerce-africa)



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related to data collection and how to make policies more responsive. Sweden referred to the authorities' work integrating the gender perspective into legal work.

Dr. Laura Best (South Africa) suggested allowing members who could not submit answers to the questionnaire to do so. Apart from that, she also suggested integrating indicators and making use of the [UNCTAD World Consumer Protection map](#) (WCPM).

The secretariat informed of the status of the UNCTAD WCPM, inviting members to join the initiative. The secretariat also highlighted that following the inclusion of new members, the map would be updated, focusing on specific topics such as financial issues, consumer health and safety, vulnerability and the digital economy. In addition, the suggestion is to include gender among the issues to be addressed by future UNCTAD WCPM updates.

The secretariat suggested that member states consider creating a list of recommendations to be implemented by member States and businesses.

The secretariat invited participants to inform of all actions, and publications, to create a WG library and events related to consumer protection and gender so that these can be disseminated within the working group. The working group participants were also invited to answer the questions circulated during the first meeting.

**The next meeting is scheduled for 15 February 2023**

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<b>Working Group on Consumer Protection and Gender</b>		
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting – List of Participants</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Country</b>
Vanina Ríos, Paola Rubín	Undersecretary for Actions for the Defense of Consumers	Argentina
Nadia Vassos	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	Australia
Leonardo Bernardo Soares	National Secretariat for Consumer Affairs	Brazil
Caroline Landry	Health Canada	Canada
Nataly Rojas Cuellar Juan David Rico	Superintendence of Industry and Commerce - SIC	Colombia
Ximena Galicia	Federal Attorney for Consumers – PROFECO	Mexico
Susana Gallo Grace Aguillar	National Institute for the Defence of Free Competition and the Protection of Intellectual Property – INDECOPI	Peru
Caroline Hammarstedt, Emy Gustavsson	Swedish Consumer Agency	Sweden
Josephine Chanda Katoma Buumba Munyandi	Competition and Consumer Protection Commission	Zambia
Marta Thinnes	European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers	EU
Diógenes Carvalho	Federal University of Viçosa	Brazil
Dr. Laura Best		South Africa
Sergey Sinyakov	Eurasian Economic Commission	
Simonetta Zarrilli	UNCTAD	
Yves Kenfack	UNCTAD	
John Mwesige		