



**Eighth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Multilaterally
Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business
Practices**

19 to 23 October 2020, Geneva, Switzerland

Strengthening consumer protection and competition in the digital economy

**Wednesday 21 October (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.)
Palais des Nations, Room XIX (Third Floor)**

The digital economy is bringing about significant changes worldwide. It is becoming increasingly relevant and indispensable for both consumers and businesses, offering opportunities such as accessing consumers online, finding the goods and services that one needs more easily and in a more convenient way. It also empowers small business to access vast consumer markets. The opportunities offered by the digital economy should be harnessed to contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic development. For the digital economy to contribute to inclusive development, there is an increasing need to strengthen consumer protection and competition in the digital economy, particularly in developing countries.

Digital platforms have been instrumental in coping with the lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic, for example by facilitating teleworking and home-schooling, where internet access was available. However, as the pandemic evolved from a health crisis to an economic one, competition authorities need to ensure digital markets remain competitive and accessible to new entrants. As consumer habits speed up the growth of online business-to-consumer electronic commerce, the need for vibrant competition and consumer protection online becomes more pressing to continuously ensure a level-playing field and the protection of consumer digital rights. Addressing the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers needs to be rekindled in the light of both digitalisation and COVID-19.

This session will discuss how to ensure effective consumer protection online and how to restore effective competition in digital markets, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also address how to mobilize the synergies between consumer and competition agencies towards strengthening consumer protection and competition in the digital economy, particularly for developing countries, as well as the role of UNCTAD and international cooperation in achieving this objective.

**Strengthening consumer protection and competition
in the digital economy**

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WORK PROGRAMME

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| 10:00 - 10:10 | Presentation by the UNCTAD secretariat |
| 10:10 - 11:00 | Effective consumer protection online Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Ms. Juliana Domingues, National Secretary for Consumers, Brazil• Mr. Andrey Puchkovskiy, Deputy Director, Consumer Rights Protection Department, Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing, Russian Federation• Ms. Marie-Paule Benassi, Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, European Commission• Ms. Rayanne Dandache, Economic Policy Coordinator, Ministry of Economy and Trade, Lebanon |
| 11:00 - 12:00 | Effective digital competition Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Chilufya Sampa, Chief Executive Officer, Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, Zambia• Ms. Margarida Matos Rosa, President, Portuguese Competition Authority• Ms. Payal Malik, Adviser (Economics) and Head, Economics Division, Competition Commission of India• Mr. Recep Gündüz, Head, Supervision and Enforcement Department, Turkish Competition Authority |
| 12:00 - 12:20 | Perspectives from the civil society Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Helena Leurent, Director General, Consumers International• Mr. Pradeep S. Mehta, Secretary General of Consumer Unity & Trust Society |
| 12:20 - 13:00 | Interactive debate |

Delegates wishing to speak during the session are invited to inform the UNCTAD secretariat accordingly by contacting Ms. Ebru Gökçe Dessemond (ebru.gokce@unctad.org) and Mr. Arnau Izaguerri Vila (arnau.izaguerri@unctad.org).