INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP OF EXPERTS ON Consumer protection law and policy
5 - 6 July 2021, Palais des Nations
Consumer protection needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers in connection with public utilities

Monday, 5 July 2021
11:00-12:00, Room XVIII
Identifying the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers

• UN Guidelines for consumer protection (5, 11a, 37, 42, 66h, 77)

• UNCTAD Working Group on vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers
  • Context-specific: belonging to certain groups or circumstantial considerations
  • In accordance with the economic, social and environmental circumstances of the country and the needs of its population, and bearing in mind the costs and benefits of proposed measures
Consumer protection and public utilities

• Access
• Special protection measures
• Information and education
• Dispute resolution and redress
Principles for the provision of public utilities

• Regularity
• Quality of service
• Affordability
• Good business practices
Specific measures in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

• Disconnection bans
• Energy bills deferral and payment extension plans
• Enhanced assistance programmes
• Energy bills reduction or cancellation
• Other measures
Policy recommendations

• Engage in public policy discussions with all relevant stakeholders
• Enact substantive legislation containing the rights of consumers of public utilities and the obligations of public utilities service providers
• Consider, review and evaluate supportive, protective and preventive measures with respect to public utilities, in light of the special needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers
• Coordinate policies across institutions and engage in dialogues with public authorities
• Engage with consumer groups and organizations, business and research institutions
• Regularly review and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of policy programmes
Thank you

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