

Speaking notes

Roundtable on: Consumer protection and the transition to clean energy at the 7th Session of the IGE Consumer

03 July 2023

11.30-13.00

Dear delegates, experts, members of the private sector, civil society, and academia,

The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection acknowledge the legitimate needs of consumers, including access to essential goods and services and the promotion of sustainable consumption. The Guidelines also refer to areas crucial to consumer health and well-being, such as energy. It is essential to consider the Guidelines' recommendations within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy.

The Bridgetown Covenant (2021), a declaration of the Fifteenth Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, identifies three major global challenges: inequality and vulnerability, climate change and environmental degradation, and the digital divide. Under the goal of

"Transforming to a more sustainable and resilient economy," the Bridgetown Covenant emphasizes the need to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, diversify towards sustainable energy, and support developing countries in building enabling infrastructure, human capital skills, and environment-friendly technologies. Additionally, it highlights the importance of medium-term rationalization and of phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption while providing targeted support for the poorest.

The recent global cost-of-living crisis has significantly impacted energy access and increased prices. It is recommended that governments identify and address challenges in renewable energy supply to foster clean energy and economic growth and facilitate a just transition.

Promoting public awareness and education is crucial to encourage greater participation in the global transition to clean and sustainable energy sources. Empowering consumers with information on clean energy can enable them to make more sustainable decisions.

This round table aims to reflect on the challenges and possibilities of addressing consumers' needs in the clean energy transition process.

The secretariat proposes the following questions to promote a lively roundtable discussion:

- (a) What are consumers' most pressing needs regarding the clean energy transition, and how can these needs be better measured and tracked?
- (b) How can policy and regulatory frameworks governing the energy system and its transition towards clean sources better align with consumers' legitimate needs?
- (c) How can UNCTAD support developing countries in addressing consumers' needs concerning the clean energy transition?

Thank you