

**Seventh Intergovernmental Group of Experts on
Consumer Law and Policy
Room XVII, Palais des Nations, Geneva
3-4 July 2023**

**Review of Capacity-building in and Technical Assistance on Consumer
Protection Law and Policy**

Presentation

*Dr. Mohamad Abou Haidar,
General Director of Ministry of Economy and Trade
and*

*Mr. Tarek Younes
Consumer Protection Director
Lebanon*

This material has been reproduced in the language and form as it was provided. The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.



REPUBLIC OF LEBANON
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY & TRADE
General Directorate Of Economy & Trade

“Review of Capacity-building and Technical Assistance on Consumer Protection Law and Policy”

Dr. Mohamad Abou Haidar,

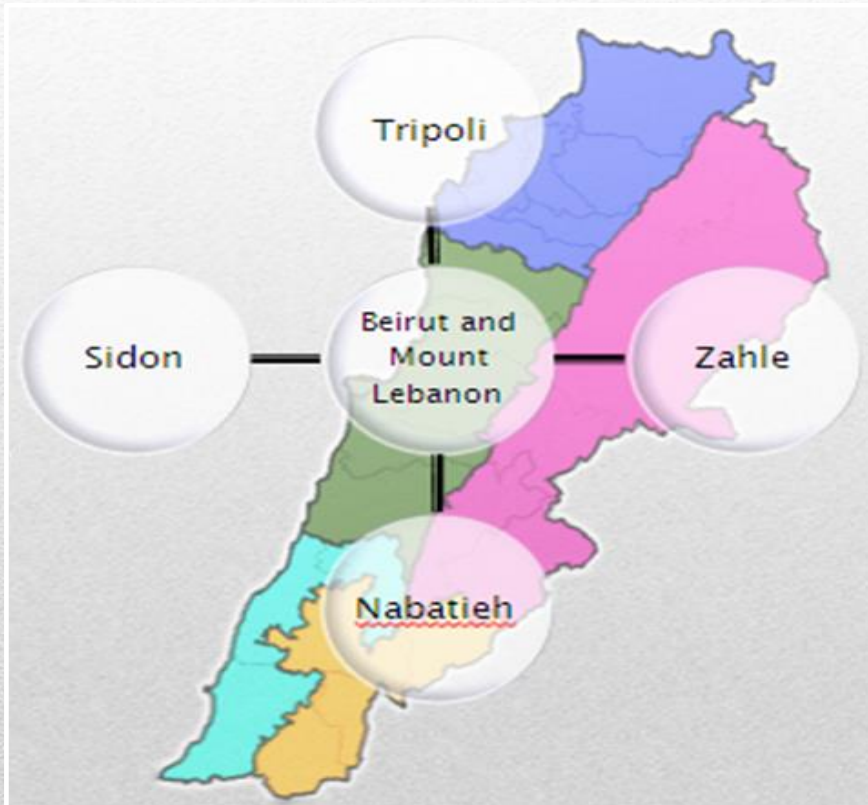
General Director of Ministry of Economy and Trade, Lebanon

Tarek Younes

Consumer Protection Director

GENEVA, 2023

Introduction



The importance of the Ministry of Economy and Trade (MoET) in Lebanon lies in the fact that it assists in developing and applying economic and social strategies directly related to consumers.

Planning

Developing a
National
Consumer
Protection Policy

Developing
effective strategic
plan for consumer
protection

Identifying and
analyzing
consumer market
problems

Evaluation of
implemented
consumer protection
programs

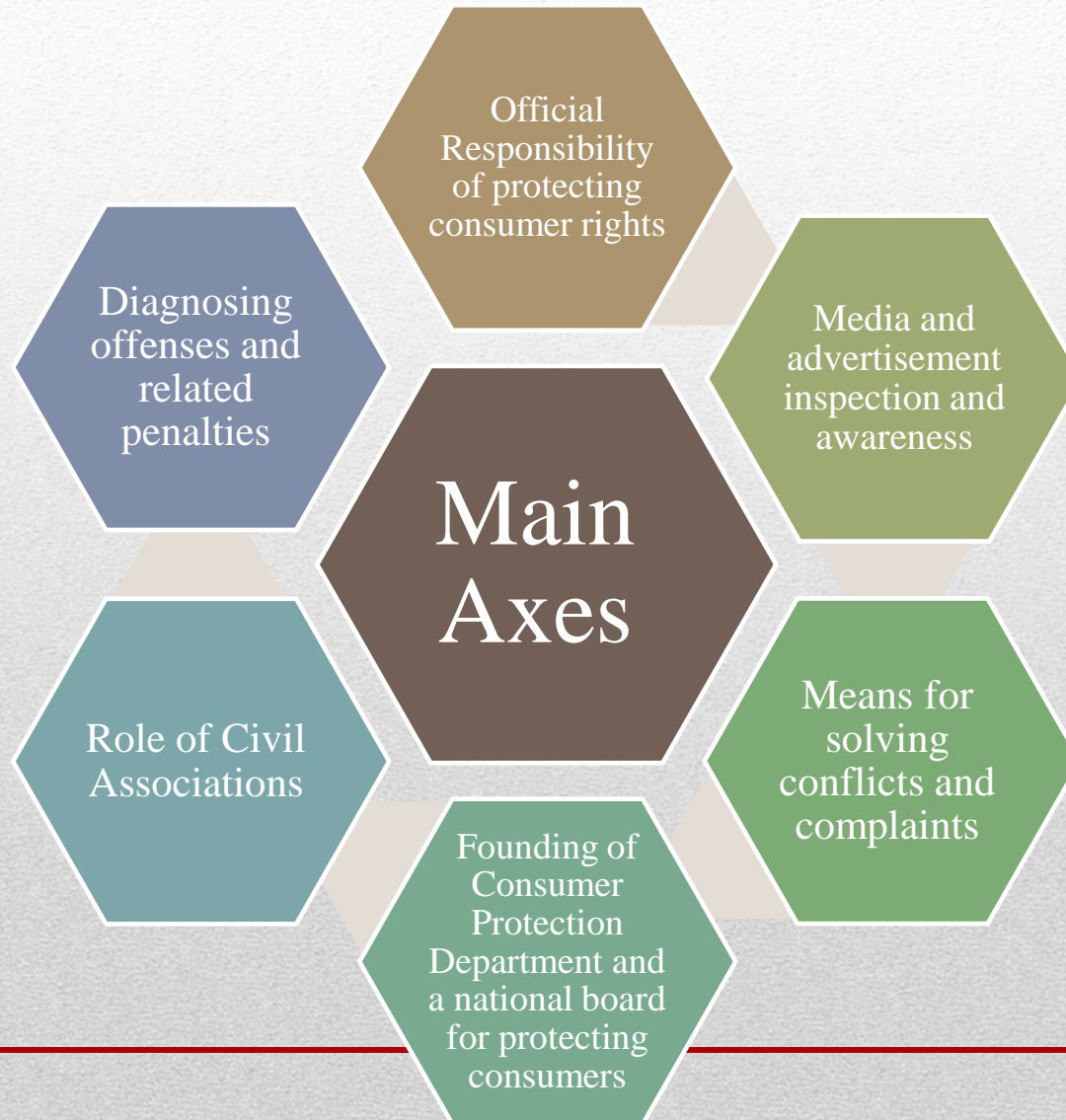
Awareness and
educational
programs for
consumers

Consumer Protection Law

Law no. 659 issued on 4/2/2005 and applied starting 10/5/2005



Main Axes of Consumer Protection Law



Consumer Rights

**Health and
safety protection**

Fair treatment

**Acquiring valid
information**

**Substituting or
fixing goods or
price refunding**

**Compensating
damage resulting
from
consumption**

**Founding
consumer
protection
associations**

National Consumer Protection Council

Article 61

The “National Consumer Protection Council” shall propose suggestions aimed at realizing the following goals:

- To promote the role of the consumer in the national economy.
 - To safeguard the consumer safety and health and protect his rights.
 - To ensure the safety of goods and services and improve their quality.
 - **To inform and educate the consumer and to encourage him to adopt permanent consumption methods and to use environment friendly products.**
 - To suggest the definition of the procedures of implementation of the provisions of this Law.
-



Sanctions

Violations

Sanctions

Deceptive advertisements	Imprisonment between 1 - 3 months for a fine of 10 to 50 million LL or either of them.
Dealing with contaminated or expired food products	Imprisonment between 3 months to 1 year for a fine of 25 to 50 million LL.
Using illegal or non-calibrated weight tools	Imprisonment between 3 months to 2 years for a fine of 30 to 50 million LL.
Copying a trademark	Imprisonment between 3 months to 3 years for a fine of 40 to 75 million LL.
Non-announcement of prices	Fine of 5 to 20 million LL.

Consumer protection Law weaknesses

- MoET is currently working with the Parliament to **update the Consumer Protection Law (CPL)** in order to make it more effective
- Because of the current economic situation and the degradation of the LBP, the sanctions value mentioned in the law became obsolete, so we are discussing with the concerned parliamentary committee different forms to **update the sanctions**
- After 20 years of CPL implementation, several issues and problems were experienced and needs to be modified in CPL, for example court procedure are very slow and awards are being delivered after several years from ticket issuing.



What previously being done?

Review and
simplification of
Procedure
process



Consumer
Complaints, Single
Window, ...

Development of
awareness guides



Citizen Guide,
Business Guide,
Inspector Guide

Activation of the
Consumer Court
and mediation
within the
ministry





Capacity building

SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES

Capacity building

SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES



Awareness Campaigns in schools and universities

Youth integration in consumer protection activities through internships (1)

Technical Cooperation with Local Authorities / Municipalities

Periodic E-Magazine on consumer protection topics

Using New technology in consumer protection complaints handling: CP application- social media etc..



Youth integration through internships



1- Increase awareness on consumer rights

2- Raise the sense of responsibility for the new generation

3- Strengthen confidence in the Consumer Protection Directorate's work through the transparency



U N
D P



الجمهورية اللبنانية
وزارة الاقتصاد والتجارة

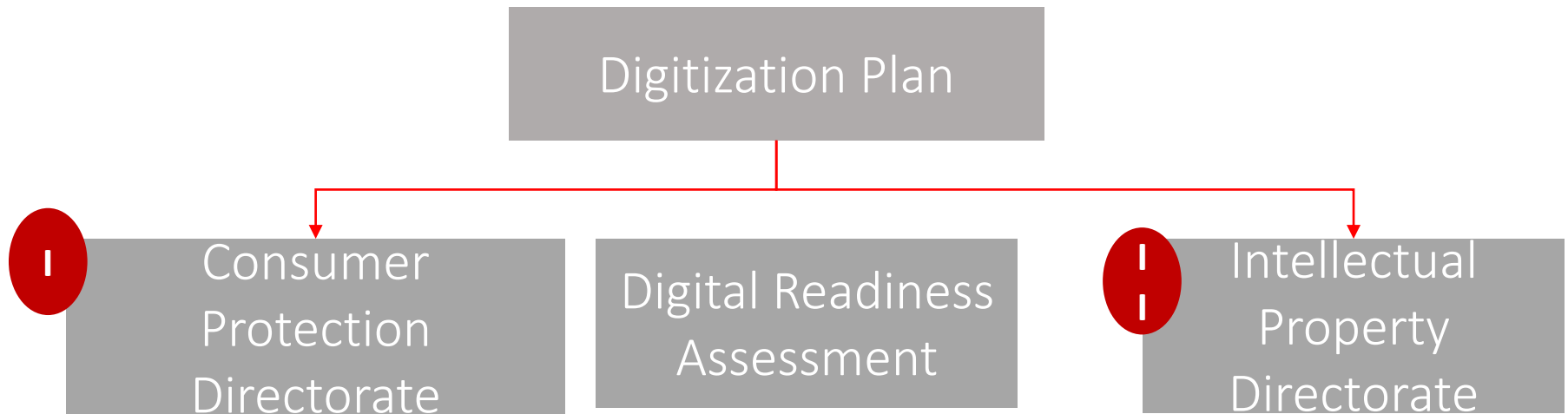


What is currently being done?



**Digitization
and full automation of CPD**

Our Vision – A fully Digitized Ministry

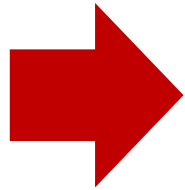


- One of the key directorate of the ministry in charge of protecting consumer rights but also facilitating business procedures
- 20 functions will be automated by Jan 2024
- The 1st ministry to have a fully digitized platform

- Digital readiness assessment conducted with our partner UNDP to assess IT infrastructure readiness

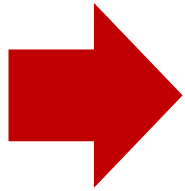
- Our upcoming plan is to work on the automation of the IP department which will also support the ministry in further transparency

At the Ministry of Economy and Trade we are taking the lead in moving towards full digitization



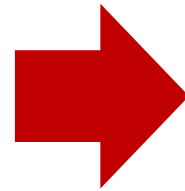
Fight Corruption

▶ By focusing all interaction with the automated tool, we will be reducing all room for corruption



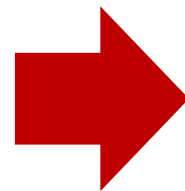
Ensure Consumer's Right

▶ By providing consumers with a faster and more streamlined tool to submit their complaints, we are making sure that consumers especially vulnerable consumers including women are protected



Move to Full Digitization

▶ We will be the first ministry pionnering the move to full digitization, paving the way for a leaner government



Front Lead in Government Restructuring

▶ By moving towards digitization we are paving the way for full fledge reforms and showing the donor community that we are taking reform seriously

Past experiences with UNCTAD



**Capacity
building needs:**

UNCTAD's potential role

Legislation

Training and Equipment Needed



- 1- Consumer Protection issues (e.g. identification of fraud, counterfeit products, fair trade laws, price fixing, E-commerce etc.)
- 2- Management and Leadership skills

- 1- Manuals
- 2- Toolkit



In addition UNCTAD can help in:



Development of Info
exchange system in
MENA region

Development of a rapid
alert system for the
MENA region

Exchange of expertise
through trainings,
seminars, and field visits

As a summary

Technical Assistance

- Review and update of CPL
- Support in the digitization of CPD work and inspection
- Inspection Equipment and Tools needed for CPD especially in the following sectors: Food safety, Metrology, e-commerce, ...
- Training for new updates in Consumer Protection especially in e-business



REPUBLIC OF LEBANON
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY & TRADE
General Directorate Of Economy & Trade

THANK YOU

GENEVA, 2023