
**Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Law and Policy
(IGE Consumer)**

4th SESSION

8-9 July 2019

Room XVII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Monday, 8 July 2019

Country Statement - URBC General Statement

Protection Law and Policy

Undersecretary Ruth B. Castelo

The Republic of the Philippines

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UNDERSECRETARY RUTH B. CASTELO

Country Statement

**4th Session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGE) on
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- Ms. Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Distinguished delegates, speakers, and panelists
- Ladies and gentlemen

- It is with great honor that I speak before the members of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGE) on Consumer Protection Law and Policy.
- Firstly, let me express the Philippines' utmost support in the endeavors of the IGE that hugely benefit the welfare and interests of the global consumers.
- Since the adoption of the revised United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection (UNGCP), the Philippines laid out and implemented several initiatives to align with this.

- The inclusion of privacy and E-Commerce statements in the UNGCP inspired our ongoing effort to amend the Consumer Act of the Philippines.
- Although our primary consumer protection law does not distinguish between traditional and online B2C transactions, in our proposed amendment, we have explicitly included all forms of online transactions in the coverage of the law to provide stronger protection for today's digital consumers.
- In conjunction with this, data privacy is also treated with equal importance as our National Privacy Commission aggressively implements the provisions of the law to ensure that private and sensitive information being collected by any entity are protected at all times.

- The section on principles for good business practices was used in the enhancement of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) *Bagwis Awards*—a recognition program for business establishments that uphold the rights and welfare of consumers.

- The six (6) principles on fair and equitable treatment, commercial behavior, disclosure and transparency, education and awareness-raising, protection of privacy, and consumer complaints and disputes are all included in the criteria of *Bagwis* to ensure that business establishments are not just recognized locally, but globally.
- On consumer redress, the Philippines is currently in the process of establishing a National Online Alternative Dispute Resolution (OADR) System which will automate the complaints-handling procedures of the government.
- This project is aligned with the ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection's agenda to address cross-border consumer concerns within the ASEAN, providing speedy redress in a platform beginning with the ASEAN Member States.
- Our vision is to provide redress anywhere you are in the world.
- For this year, the Philippines will be subjected to a voluntary peer review process in ASEAN.
- By undergoing a peer review, our existing consumer protection regime will be assessed and recommendations to improve the current mechanisms will be formulated.
- We intend to make use of the results of the peer review in pushing forward the amendment of our consumer protection law.
- We are also hosting the ASEAN Regional Forum on Sustainable Consumption in the ASEAN. We strongly advocate this goal in the Philippines with the hope that we can be at least half of developed countries like Japan in sustainable and ethical consumption and production by 2022.