



**Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer law
and Policy, Sixth Session
Videorecording
UNCTAD Secretary-General
Ms. Rebeca Grynspan**

18 July 2022

Su excelencia, Ms. Francisca Elizabeth Méndez Escobar, Embajadora de Mexico – and Chair of this Intergovernmental Group of Experts session

Vice-chairperson: Ms. Ana Catarina Fonseca, Director General for Consumer Protection, Portugal

Distinguished delegates, Dear friends:

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this important session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Law and Policy. It is an honour to have you all here.

This IGE meeting could not be more timely.

A world of cascading crises – the COVID pandemic, which is still not over, climate change, which is hitting us harder every year, and now the war in Ukraine – means that global consumer welfare is currently under threat to an extreme degree.

As the United Nations reports in its latest Global Crisis Response Group brief, we are on the brink of the most severe global cost-of-living crisis in a generation. Rising consumer prices in the most basic staples such as food and energy are shrinking household budgets, especially in the poorest and vulnerable segments of society.

As a result, families are being forced to decide how to allocate shrinking household incomes. Perhaps choosing whether to skip a meal, keep children in school, buy less nutritious food, keep a family business open or pay medical bills.

To respond to this dramatic situation, governments must stabilize global markets, bolster social protection safety, and call for decisive action from international financial institutions.

But, while all these macroeconomic responses are being implemented, governments must also strive to continue and succeed in their long-term mission of protecting their consumers, a mission of renewed relevance today.

Dear friends:

UNCTAD, as mandated by the General Assembly in 2015, is the focal point within the UN system on consumer protection, and we stand ready to support member states in their mission.

This sixth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on consumer protection is an essential part of our work in this area.

In this session, we will:

Hear on the Implementation of the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection from policymakers who are doing it;

Learn about recent developments in UNCTAD's World Consumer Protection Map, which displays information on legal and institutional frameworks for consumer protection in over one hundred countries;

Hear the reports of our Working Groups on consumer protection in e-commerce, consumer product safety, and modalities for UNCTAD's peer reviews;

Undertake the Voluntary Peer Review on Consumer Protection Law and Policy of Thailand, which is our fifth Peer Reviewed country.

Discuss financial consumer protection, addressing emerging areas of priority for member States, including financial inclusion, education and literacy, remittances, over indebtedness and digitalization; and

Review capacity-building and technical assistance on consumer protection law.

This complements the research work we have done since our fifth IGE session, and about which I would highlight:

a publication on Competition and Consumer Protection Policies for Inclusive Development in the Digital Era;

a research paper on Consumer trust in the digital economy: the case for online dispute resolution;

and a report on Access by consumers to essential services: Energy, water and sanitation;

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends:

Thank you all for joining us at the IGE this year. Special thanks to speakers who came in person to support our work.

I wish you all a very successful meeting – much depends on it.
Thank you.

Check against delivery