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***Agenda item 3: Report on the implementation of the United Nations
guidelines for consumer protection by member States and relevant
stakeholders***

Statement

Portugal

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Speech by Mr Jorge Seguro Sanches – Director-General, Directorate-General for Consumers – Portugal, at Session 3, “Report on the implementation of the United Nations Guidelines for consumer protection by member States and relevant stakeholders” - 6 July 2026

Mr. President,

Dear Colleagues,

Let me start by thanking UNCTAD for the organization of this 9th session and the consistent work done for the promotion, development and discussion on consumers protection at global level.

This is one of the most challenging mission in modern societies.

In this context, United Nations Guidelines for consumer protection are still a fundamental reference for the definition and consolidation of public policies, as it contributes to make markets fairer, more transparent and inclusive and to strengthen consumers’ trust.

In Portugal, we fully recognise the value of those Guidelines, and its principles are always taken into consideration when implementing new rules or measures in areas such as information to consumer, product safety, alternative consumer dispute resolution and the protection of vulnerable consumers, especially in the increasingly central context of digital economy.

We have also invested in the modernization of enforcement tools. I will highlight, for instance, the reinforcement of the national electronic complaints book, the development of more efficient systems for supervision and the preparation of initiatives that use AI, namely for the supervision of advertising and digital commercial practices.

In the energy sector, we have adopted several measures to promote more transparency, which allow consumers to compare prices and to know the source of the energy they use, which in turn reinforce their capacity to make more informed choices and support the transition to more sustainable options.

Nevertheless, we face significant challenges, ever more global by nature, in particular, due to the demanding characteristics of the digital markets, the increasingly sophistication of commercial practices, the need to ensure the safety of products sold online and offline, and the effective protection of vulnerable consumers, including minors.

In this respect, I would like to share a concrete example of our concerns. In Portugal, we have recently launched a national awareness campaign against advertisement of illegal platforms for online gambling — “Nem tudo o que vês é jogo seguro” (not everything you see is a reliable game) —, specially designed to reach younger consumers and to alert them to the risks associated with misleading practices and non-authorized platforms.

This initiative was planned in a time where situations like the use of fake identification, digital manipulation and fraudulent practices associated with online environment have been increasing, exposing consumers – especially the younger ones – to significant risks.

Therefore, it is essential to act preventively, reinforcing the information, the supervision and the cooperation between authorities, including at international level.

Those challenges require a coordinated response and the guarantee that the authorities have the adequate means to ensure an effective application of the consumer protection rules.

Consumers protection in the digital environment will be a decisive test for our public policies.

Allow me, in this context, to highlight one essential point.

In a world of fast digital transformation, one of our main concerns and responsibilities should be the strengthening of consumers literacy, not only at national level, but also as a true global goal.

Human dignity should remain at the centre of public policies – it is not negotiable. Technology should be an instrument to strengthen consumers rights and never to undermine them.

Considering the impact of AI, the neutrality of the systems and the protection of consumers choices against manipulative practices should be guaranteed.

In this regard, the role of international organizations, especially the United Nations, is even more relevant, whether it is in the definition of common principles, in the promotion of cooperation or in the reinforcement of the States' capability.

Portugal believes, in fact, in the great value of multilateralism and cooperation. Initiatives such as the PALOP- Timor-Leste project shows how it is important to work together in the capacity-building of strong institutions, in the exchange of experiences and in the development of more robust legal frameworks.

To conclude, I would like to highlight that the current challenges – from digitalisation to AI, and sustainability – requires coordinated ambitious and future-oriented solutions.

We live in a time of continuous change and face many challenges to ensure the fulfilment of our mission to protect consumers.

In this regard, United Nations Guidelines are still fully relevant in this era.

Their true impact will depend on the continuous adaptation to the new realities and on the collective commitment of all.

You can count on Portugal for this purpose.

Thank you