

**8th United Nations Review Conference on Competition and Consumer Protection**

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**Monday, 19 October 2020**

**Implementation of the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection and the  
Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of  
Restrictive Business Practices**

*Contribution of the Consumer Protection Secretariat*

*PROCON - Florianopolis – SC*

*BRASIL - MERCOSUR*

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**Eighth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the  
Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for  
the Control of Restrictive Business Practices**

**Eighth United Nations Conference on Competition and  
Consumer Protection**

*Monday, 19 October 2020 - Friday, 23 October 2020*

*Room XVII - Palais des Nations - Geneva, Switzerland*

**Implementation of the United Nations guidelines for consumer  
protection and the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable  
Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business  
Practices**

**Written contribution**

*Submission by Consumer Protection Secretariat*

*PROCON – Florianópolis – SC*

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**“Nothing will be lost,  
While we are on search.”**

Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

This manifestation is being written in a climate of political, economic and social effervescence; of fears and deaths.

A time of living that does not involve living together. Hugs and kisses suddenly turned into weapons.

The post-Covid-19 world will be different from the one experienced and will demand the rescue of a new humanity, capable of coexisting and caring more for the common interest, tracing new routes, considering the evidence of all the interconnections present between the dimensions "political, economic, social, spiritual and cultural ", under penalty of serious international consequences.

We meet at the Eighth United Nations Conference for the Review of All Aspects of the Multilaterally Agreed Set of Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices as well as the Eighth United Nations Conference on Competition and Consumer Protection, with high purposes of find possible ways out to the horizon that is envisioned, given the effects on a large number of businesses and people around the planet, especially in countries where chronic poverty is evident.

We must be connected with the purposes of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its objectives, especially to, in union with the 193 countries, implement and seek new paths, if it can be said so, for global economic policy, this time the first also turning our eyes to consumer protection, a reason in particular that brings me here and awakens my will and even the compulsory nature of my manifestation.

As recently discussed in the SDG-12 Webinar, on 8/26/2020 *“Will the pandemic slow progress towards meeting goals?: The report on sustainable development goals for 2020 gathers the latest data and shows us that, before the pandemic of COVID-19, progress remained uneven and we were not on track to meet the targets until 2030. Now, due to the pandemic, an unprecedented health, economic and social crisis is threatening lives and livelihoods, making meeting targets even more challenging. However, the*

*COVID-19 pandemic offers countries the opportunity to build recovery plans that will reverse current trends and change our consumption and production patterns towards a more sustainable future”.*

As a result of the pandemic in 2020, the global Gross Domestic Product is expected to fall 4.9%. Although the advanced economies have implemented an unprecedented response to face the crisis, the reaction in developing countries has been weaker and debt is a problem that complicates the response in low-income countries.

The challenge faced by member states requires financing the response to the pandemic and also avoiding a major debt crisis, otherwise it will delay progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs for many years.

As stated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, it is necessary to join efforts to accelerate the global response and concrete solutions that consider the health, social and economic fields of the crisis, for what he called “the first development emergency the world, where there is a long way to reach full international collaboration and solidarity in the fight against the pandemic.

We can look for inspiration in the purposes of another significant event that the current year provides next November and that aims at common interests in favor of humanity. I refer to the “Economy of Francisco”, an initiative in which young economists, researchers and entrepreneurs from all over the world are invited to participate, invited to rethink the economy.

Both in that meeting and in this one, opportunities are glimpsed to seek solutions for a better world in which integral human development can only be promoted through the sustainability of ecological, economic, social and political systems.

Therefore, we must be imbued with the best purposes, awareness and the development of our capacities in terms of knowledge, will, freedom, responsibility and courage, otherwise we cannot expect others to feel responsible for the world in which we live and without problems are perpetuated that this body has been discussing for decades without finding an effective solution.

We have to disarm each other in many ways, especially those who historically have greater power of decision and persuasion,

so that our minds thus devoid of any conceptions that we think immutable, can perceive new horizons.

The two great world wars that occurred in the 20th century were driving significant changes for the world in which we live, from geography to the economy. Now humanity is facing a new conflict and must be prepared to fight the common enemy in a united way.

The world economy, affected by these events of conflict and so many other catastrophes throughout history, needed to reinvent itself to overcome the crises arising, changing not only work relations, consumption and production habits, but also ways of thinking and acting.

Thus, it is an opportunity to rethink, to overcome, to realize how deeply we are all equal human beings and that we deserve to live in a world in which there is more equality, in which law and laws prevail without a look of distinction and without that the balance tip over to the side of whoever it may be, except for the realization of justice.

In moments like this, the State must show its capacity to seek solutions to shape the course according to the new reality, which will certainly accentuate old problems and bring new ones.

It is the cyclical dynamics of the world economy again influencing significantly in economic globalization and in the capital markets, where we are called to collaborate to restore order, seeking to find and show the best way.

There are many highly privileged minds at this meeting, with the power to bring ideas that can define new directions and can even be said to save the world economy.

Specifically, in the area of consumer protection, where it is may daily, I prefer to believe that there will be a transformation in the way of consuming, perhaps a different perception of the consumer and care about the accumulation of goods and compulsive consumption, the perception of the importance of sustainable consumption, thus defining new directions for the globalized economy.

It is important to highlight that the development involves consumer protection, which in turn is born with economic protection.

This body has a primordial foundation that must never be neglected and should serve as a source of inspiration for its directions and decisions, including this significant assembly, which is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, published by the same United Nations in 1948. We have always to remember the recognition that consumer rights are fundamental to mankind.

More than ever, the world urgently needs to be globalized, be it in economic and technological aspects and in matters of humanitarian interest, where if the spirit of solidarity and of providing the opportunity does not prevail, there will be no use in endless discussions.

We must understand that many problems that affect us as nations, if we look for the root, the origins, the causes of a certain situation, we can actually be complicit, either by act or omission, because they originated from a lack of perception of thought turned to a whole, behold, we are all connected.

Let us remember the “butterfly effect” theory (Edward Lorenz - 1917/2008) and the need to think more and more globally, to think about the common universe, about people, about the environment, so that we can act accordingly more consciously, with less negative impact on the lives of others and on the systems in which we operate.

In this sense, it is essential that before we speak out in this assembly or decide on something, we make a deep analysis of the effects that our choices will bring in general and that, if at first some selfish thinking and self-thinking pass through our minds, that certain side effects do not seem to reach us, in the future if we look for explanations, we will be able to realize that we were the ones who sowed the seed.

May we then grow good seeds here and only the truly good ones prevail. May we, at the same time, send a good instruction manual to the governors and the population in general, to all who will take “good” care of these seeds, because the effective creation of a beautiful universal garden will also depend on those who are effectively responsible for its maintenance.

The gap between rich and poor nations has increased significantly and tends to worsen, requiring firm and strong action,

whether it be the direction of the United Nations decisions in favor of the salvation of the global economy, or the responses and the steadfast hand of the State.

Satisfying the needs of a consumer society without surrendering to the paradigm of purely economic growth, free from environmental and social concerns, emerged in the 1980s the concept of sustainable development.

Now, at this crucial moment in our existence, we must seek to align development not only through a sustainable economy, but also through a solidarity economy, where there is a greater commitment to the most vulnerable economies, reviewing concepts of economic models until then considered untouchable.

The future of the planet depends on a new unanimous awareness that maintaining a strong global economy must pay more attention than ever to environmental and human factors.

Economic development and financial capital growth can and should be inclusive, thus creating a new paradigm to respond to the emerging demand caused by the Coronavirus / Covid-19 pandemic and the respective global crisis.

What is happening may be an opportunity to build a new world based on a commitment to humanism, to solidarity; help as opposed to accumulate, to waste.

At this time when the pandemic shows numerous challenges, be it in health, public policies, marked inequalities, economics, consumption and so many other aspects, it is necessary to discuss universal solutions to overcome this time of sadness and uncertainty, although COVID-19 will probably have a different impact on country inequalities.

We are all, each of us, called to take responsibility for the new world that we must build.

Less anxiety, more wisdom, patience and confidence will be necessary for a readjustment of the economy to post-pandemic times, while requiring an innovation in mentality to allow a reorganization of things, of business.

Many businesses cultivated for generations were closed and failed to survive the imposed quarantines and lockdowns.

There was a need for learning, change and readaptation in deadlines never before thought to enable the activities to survive.

After this complex and challenging period, it is assumed that the human being will observe with more careful issues of hygiene, safety, health, establishing new forms of consumption, work and even family life.

And that is what makes human nature so incredible. The possibility of overcoming, of reinventing itself in the difficulties that are imposed on it.

In this sense, the joint search for the discovery of this new path, of the essence of how business will be rebuilt, is a fundamental question for us to seek and find answers.

The Coronavirus pandemic highlighted our vulnerability and showed how connected we are.

Undoubtedly, virtual business and remote work are the basis of an economy that was already modernizing and now more than ever imposes a wide adaptation to the digital system, which includes production, supply, transactions and profits.

This behavior requires investments in projects on the online economy and long-term development in digital tools, focused on improving the lives of people and companies.

Even before the pandemic, it was already necessary to think and develop strategies so that any company could guarantee its maintenance in the market, according to the trends for the future.

What is happening can be seen as an accelerator of the process. Companies that postponed the "home office" and other actions related to digital transformation, realized that there is no alternative but to adapt to the new times.

We must make it possible to share and disseminate the tools that make survival in this digital world possible for those who are not yet integrated, which is the case in countries in the greatest conditions of vulnerability, allowing for a true globalization of the economy and consumption processes, enabling the benefits that a strong economic system provides its population, reflecting in a whole system that allows a better quality of life.

Many of the habits incorporated into daily life with the advent of the pandemic will remain in the future and it is up to



companies to be attentive, first to this adaptation process and then to the new routine to ensure continuity in the market.

The lack of connectivity is a death sentence for those who remain distant from the digital world, hence the need for international cooperation to make this inclusion possible.

In this sense, access to the Internet is a way to combat inequalities. Therefore, it is necessary to improve and seek solutions to this problem that brings injustices and social inequalities if we seek a globalized prosperity.

This year, in particular, Brazil celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Consumer Protection and Defense Code, known as CDC, a revolutionary law and considered exemplary worldwide, which has become one of the pillars of the country's economic modernization, guiding the development of a society consumption and exercising a civilizing role in the market, through the possibility of fair competition and leading companies to adopt a culture of relationship with the consumer.

Faced with three decades of existence of this compendium of consumer protection rules, Brazil seeks to draw a current picture and projects, through the drafting of new laws, the future of consumer relations, even more in the context of accelerated transformations and the impact of the pandemic, expanding debates and productive dialogues with state agencies, businessmen, specialists, ombudsmen and regulatory agencies.

One of the topics that requires more attention is the subsistence of consumers as participants in the consumer market. The problem of over-indebtedness generates legal, economic, psychological, social impacts, among others. It affects millions of consumers and their families and becomes even more dramatic and unpredictable with the Covid-19 crisis and its effects, such as the loss of jobs or the usual sources of income. Thus, the vulnerability of the over-indebted consumer is even more complicated in the context of the pandemic.

On the other hand, there is also a concern with the business sector, such as the reform of the Corporate Recovery Law, a debate that gained greater relevance with the economic crisis

resulting from the pandemic, seeking to provide more security to the market.

The law must regulate this different time differently, since everyone is, in a way, more vulnerable, more susceptible, showing sensitivity and being subject to adjustments.

At the time of drafting, the Consumer Protection and Defense Code came to be heavily criticized by the productive sector, but over time the entrepreneurs themselves realized that it was a law that actually brought benefits to the sector. The space gained by the Code has become broad and beneficial for the economy.

We still need to make progress in terms of consumer representation and real defense of their interests through regulatory agencies, in view of the evident and greater capacity of companies to see their interests satisfied.

I make a special record of recognition for the important work developed by the Municipal PROCONS that work on the front line of Brazilian consumer service, surpassing the act of receiving and passing on complaints, denunciations and requests only, covering those who work in these bodies of a real work, pedagogical and constructivist involved in the act of welcoming, listening and informing with transparency regarding the rights and duties of the consumer, especially the most vulnerable, stimulating and providing the construction of solutions of mutual benefit. That said, the strengthening of these bodies must be inherent and an example to be followed by other countries in consumer protection, representing a look towards the future.

It is necessary to break old concepts that still prevail in consumer relations globally, in order to expand production, competitiveness and protection.

There is a need for rules to accompany the transformations the world is going through and I do not see a set of norms in which the word solidarity is not present, as previously stated, in this new economy.

The current situation should lead us to seek within us feelings that seek to provide for the rebirth of those who have been most affected, thus creating a favorable environment in consumer relations so that consumers have offers after the pandemic.

It is essential to fill any gaps in the pre-existing referrals coming from this body, instructing member countries to regulate, if possible, in a balanced and coherent way to solve this problem, aiming at the recovery of the consumer market, with positive repercussions on the economy itself and on world economy, especially in the context of overcoming the negative impacts of the pandemic.

Returning to the context of a more connected world and the respective protection of the consumer as a user of goods that provide technological interactivity, there is also a subject that is frequent in all the most recent discussions, that is, the internet of things, especially regarding privacy risks in this scenario.

Standards that compel manufacturers and manufacturers to improve security programs for their devices should be on the agenda of government authorities, as the collection of information and personal data increases significantly, causing potential risks to data security.

The development of technology is causing significant reflexes in social development, in the acceptance of new behaviors provided by it, where practically everything is done through connection, be it digital events, medical consultations, from basic courses to specializations, even parties where it is possible to interact with the other participants without leaving the house. All of this has been exacerbated, especially in the context of the ongoing pandemic.

Faced with a new mentality directly linked to mobility and freedom, Smart Working emerged, which is transforming people's relationship with work based on technology and intelligence, making more sense of current human behavior. Another example of the importance of combating inequality in Internet access.

To the extent that digital life has become part of our social, professional and even affective life (we have come days when a relationship is born, maintained and ended without people touching), it is necessary to increase security user (consumer) through investments and research compatible with the risks involved, including with regard to artificial intelligence, machine learning and quantum computing.

The market must be alert to scammers who are using the new coronavirus crisis as an advantage for their attempts to compromise the integrity of users and companies in the world. "Globally, a total of 5.6 billion cyber threats were blocked in last May. Among the main ones are "spam", "ransomware" and "malware" messages, among others.

It is important that the population be educated in order to avoid falling into possible frauds, with constant updates of this information, since criminal practices evolve rapidly.

In the area of technology, Brazil has been discussing the construction of a law to protect personal data for a decade, a movement that has also happened and is happening worldwide.

Recently, the General Law for the Protection of Personal Data (LGPD) was approved by the Federal Senate, which should soon be coming into force in Brazil.

This new law will deal with the treatment of personal data of Brazilians, including those accessed and shared on the internet.

The Network Rights Coalition, a movement that encompasses 42 organizations, argued that the LGPD, once in force, will serve to "harmonize sectoral laws, constitutional rules and other legal understandings about the practices of using and sharing personal data".

In any case, the punishments to the new law (up to 2% of company revenues, up to a limit of up to R\$ 50 million) will not be valid at first, having been postponed until August 2021, that is, a deadline for companies comply with the example of the European Union Data Law.

Certainly, the General Data Protection Law (LGPD) will cause profound changes in the consumer service sector, but will bring positive and extremely necessary impacts to the activity. It will be necessary to treat the personal data used in the contacts in a transparent, clear, reasonable manner and that includes only what is necessary for the attendance.

E-commerce accelerated commercial activity, emerging as an exponent in the resumption and maintenance of the economy, especially with digital habits driven by social distance, yielding a huge,

valuable and unprecedented volume of consumer data, as never seen in history.

With the spread of the internet and the digitalization of our personal and consumer relationships, the collection and processing of personal data occurs incessantly, generating valuable information for companies and governments, reflecting not only on the illegal possibility of personifications of prices, but on major transformations capable to shape the behavior of people, populations and the economic and political direction of a nation.

According to a recent survey (Ebit / Nielsen) within Brazil, 7.3 million Brazilians made their first purchase online during the first half of 2020, representing a growth of 40%.

Also, according to the Brazilian Electronic Commerce Association (ABComm), 150,000 new online stores were created from March to July in Brazil.

With this data, Brazil reaches the mark of 41 million active users in e-commerce.

In 2019, about 1.9 billion consumers of online products handled \$ 3.5 trillion all around the world.

Thus, the discussion on protection of personal data is a continuous and relevant topic, with exceptions in special circumstances, such as the current pandemic, in which certain personal data related to medical information underwent different handling possibilities in different circumstances. greater collective security. The General Data Protection Law of Brazil deals with this issue in the case of a clearly identified public interest, respecting individual freedom and dignity.

The accountability of agents who were once considered mere intermediaries in business, but who today are the true guarantors of the realization of business, behold, controllers of the virtual world, cannot be left aside.

One aspect that deserves attention in the new era that will arise concerns the need for economic development to aim not only at maximizing profits, but also at growing society. That is, to focus beyond the goods, but also on the good that can be done; an economy that produces social value.

Consider the challenge of replacing the plastic obtained from petrol oil. Brazil, as a major producer of sugarcane, which proves to be a valuable raw material in the production of biodegradable plastics, has a fundamental role in helping the world in this challenge in which it is necessary for all nations to legislate on the use of plastic.

The Alliance for the End of Plastic Waste (AEPW) brings together large companies in the world to end plastic waste, seeking to develop policies, practices and management that reduce plastic waste in the world.

It is worth mentioning the partnership between one of the largest companies operating in the luxury fashion sector and a Swiss bank when they created an investment fund that provides research into sustainable practices (fund for sustainable fashion) focused on sugarcane extraction technologies that can replace other materials used in clothing, shoes and accessories, such as plastic and non-organic rubber.

The effort to unite fashion and sustainability makes sense, since the sector is the second most polluting in the world. According to an article published in a renowned journal in the last month of April, 20% of water pollution by the industrial sector is concentrated in the production of textiles, which accounts for 35% of the plastic microparticles that end up on the seabed every year.

I remember that in Brazil, about two decades ago, a company started a sustainable orientation from the organic cotton plantation, evolving since then its productive chain to work with a variety of raw materials and alternative processes - like fabric made from recycled PET bottles, fish scale "leather" and the development of natural dyes - and received several international accolades for his work.

It is important to note, still in the field of an economy focused on sustainability, that in Brazil is located one of the largest underground water reservoirs in the world, the Guarani Aquifer, named in honor of one of the most representative indigenous ethnic groups in the Americas, the "people guarani", which until the arrival of the colonizers of European origin, in the 16th century, occupied a large part of the aquifer territory.

With the support of the National Bank for Economic and Social Development - BNDS, partnerships between local civil society

organizations and public institutions, the Giant Guarani Project aims at the reforestation of regions in aquifer recharge areas, as well as economic alternatives for rural producers to carry out the environmental adequacy aiming at the protection of this natural heritage and the implantation of agroforestry systems for the generation of income.

An example of meeting the three main pillars of sustainability: environmental, economic and social, directing to results that will influence public policies to guarantee sustainable development in the region and consequently bringing gains to the population's quality of life.

These are practices that can be adopted in other sectors such as impact on better urban mobility, less pollution and better air quality, aiming at the development of countless other possibilities for sustainable solutions.

According to the most recent projections, the global population could grow to about 8.5 billion in 2030 and 9.7 billion in 2050. The equivalent of nearly three planets may be needed to provide the natural resources needed to sustain the style of current life.

I take as a brief example what is happening in the city where I was born and still live today, Florianopolis - SC, Brazil. There is a lagoon (Lagoa do Peri) that has been used for many years to supply the resident population in the south of the island.

With the withdrawal of water by the supply company, the annual decrease in rainfall levels and the increase in population, the lagoon is drying up.

On September 7, 2020, 198<sup>o</sup> year of the Independence of Brazil, a good part of the population marched towards the lagoon to charge the government because alternative measures of supply were not taken before a very worrying situation was reached.

So, there must be a government awareness of the importance of guiding the population well and this in turn will start to review their consumption habits if we all want to effectively preserve the planet for the next generations.

There is an urgent need to reconcile the views and actions of public authorities, the productive sector and society in order to guarantee what is essential.

Still opening a parenthesis about Florianópolis, I record that in a recent study (Urban Systems - Necta) that mapped all 673 Brazilian municipalities with more than 50 thousand inhabitants, with the objective of presenting the most intelligent and connected cities, as well as with greater development potential in the country, was ranked second in the ranking, only behind São Paulo.

The study takes into account 70 indicators from the 11 main sectors, with Florianópolis highlighted in economics, technology and innovation, education and health.

Business models have evolved over time, just as we are constantly evolving to keep up with changes.

Nowadays, there is recognition, including by the highest courts of justice, that practically everything is related to consumption, which is why a global market needs to take a more attentive look at international consumer protection; we must advance the discussions in this regard. JFK already claimed that consumers are all of us.

If our minds are not open to change and breaking down barriers, there will be no substantial advance that effectively transforms the world for the better, in a broad aspect, economically, politically, socially and sustainably.

It is also necessary to be vigilant against another virus that is responsible for the impossibility of many economies to develop or rebuild; causing more deaths than those caused by the Covid-19 virus. I am referring to the corruption virus.

If it is not contained, the economic impacts on the poorest economies will be even more devastating and the result will be a completely ungoverned economy, making them even more dependent on foreign aid.

In Brazil, the Chamber of Deputies approved in August last bill (PL 1485/20) that increases the penalties for various types of crimes against public administration committed during the state of public calamity due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

It was found through studies carried out by the International Monetary Fund - IMF that the Covid crisis - 19 reflected in cases of increased corruption, which is why it is necessary for Member States to be attentive to adopting effective policies in relation



to good governance and identification existing vulnerabilities that facilitate the practice of this crime.

International guidelines, especially those from the United Nations, must show effective plans for the eradication of corruption, with the implementation of strict laws, also focused on worker protection.

The Director-General of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in retweeting Pope Francis's recently published message said: "We must find a cure for a small virus, which brings the whole world to its knees, and we have to cure a large virus, that of social injustice".

In this sense, it is necessary to educate for true values, where all violence disappears, so that a new generation can grow in the spirit of human fraternity, which presupposes to remain rooted in its own identity, but, at the same time, venturing to know the other, to respect the other, because through this sincerity of intentions, one can collaborate in the construction of a new, more peaceful, solidary, honest, in short, more fraternal world.

We have had numerous examples from around the world in the consumer-supplier relationship in the current crisis arising from the Coronavirus. The logic of the market, in spite of being capitalist, of pursuing profitability, became attached to the development of human commercial strategies in the sense of building customer loyalty through social, environmental and human responsibility, which seems to us to be the key to the future of consumer relations in the world.

In this scenario, it is necessary to have different horizons for a new way of looking at the world: perspectives that may present results that will come in the medium or long term, although urgent measures are required.

Dealing with uncertainties is part of a new challenge and in this body we need to constantly think about the next challenge that we need to help humanity to face.

I transcribe here a phrase said by one of the directors of the Ayrton Senna Institute, a great Brazilian of sports world importance who left us early: "*The first thing we have to understand is that there is no happiness alone, there is no society in which few*

*enjoy and most do not. We are inside a network, an ecosystem. Just looking at the small surroundings helps you find a problem. You can promote change within what you live”.*

Changing our outlook and returning our commitment to the need for a change in perception, then we can face the challenge of how to make them a reality.

Let us take this opportunity that we have to build a different world. It is a mission that must be joint and the United Nations is the right forum to kick-start.

May we be infected, not by the Covid-19 virus that contaminates the world, but by the virus of inspiration and attunement, so that working together like this, forgetting certain barriers and borders, alternatives may arise that enable the growth of a strong global economy and move away from simple continuous assistance without the prospect of change.

*“Right now the whole world has to address a big question. It is not about how to get the economy running again. Luckily we know the answer. Our past experiences have helped us to develop a general prescription to revive the economy. The big question that we have to answer is: Do we take the world back to where it was before Coronavirus came? Or, do we redesign the world? Decision is entirely ours.”* (extract from the essay by Muhammad Yunus published on La Repubblica of April 16, 2020).

Let us assume the thought that the responsibility for evolution is in our hands, and no one better than the participants of this Conference to bring new solutions, who are the ones who really work with these challenges on a daily basis and if they are here, it is because they do and can make a difference. We must constantly ask ourselves how we can best perform our role.

I would like to bring some Pope Francis' words to reflection again, not wanting to mix the works developed here with any religious tendency or personal belief, not least because the search for a better world does not belong to any church but it is a common intention to every human being and in as shows the example of the head of the catholic church having met with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, representing the Muslims of the East and the West, in February 4, 2019, in Abu Dabhi, where a joint

document entitled “human fraternity for world peace and common living” was issued, which I recommend reading to all.

So, the words I transcribe that has been said by Pope Francis are connected with the present moment:

*“Some may work from home, while for many others this is impossible. Some children, despite the difficulties, can continue to receive a school education, while for many others there was a sudden interruption. Some powerful nations can issue currency to meet the emergency, while for others it would mean mortgaging the future.*

*Homo sapiens deforms and becomes a kind of homo economicus - in a lesser sense - individualistic, calculating and dominating.*

*When the obsession to own and dominate excludes millions of people from primary goods; when economic and technological inequality is such that it tears the social fabric; and when dependence on unlimited material progress threatens the common home, then we cannot sit back and watch. No, this is heartbreaking.”*

I want to greet Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary General of UNCTAD. Also, everyone involved in the organization of this high conference, especially Dr. Teresa Moreira - Head, Competition and Consumer Policies Branch, Mrs. Jacqueline Bouvier, Mrs. Maria T. Bovey and Dr. Arnau Izaguerry Vila, always open to new ideas, making room for error as a learning process, stimulating debate and collaboration, ensuring the formation of a diverse and complementary team, defining objectives and criteria that help to adjust the route and at the same time maintaining motivation, and mainly making itself available constantly with the awareness that this is a process that is forever under construction in which ideas must be put on the table, as it is through dialogue, even with divergences, that we will grow.

Without these people, who show us the best strategy to “fight this good fight”, the realization of this meeting and the achievement of their goals would never be achieved.

I would like to pay tribute in the area of Consumer Protection and Consumer Law to Professors Ricardo Morishita and Cláudia Lima Marques, Brazilians whose lessons cross the borders of our country and are a constant source of inspiration.

A special greeting to Ms. Juliana Oliveira Domingues, National Consumer Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, ahead of the constant development of effective politics for consumers and the important work carried out by the governing body.

It is worth mentioning that long before the current pandemic made access to services through the digital medium practically compulsory, the National Consumer Secretariat implemented and made available the platform “consumer.gov.br”, providing public and free direct dialogue between consumers and companies for the agile and unbureaucratic solution of conflicts.

Highlights to the achievement by Brazil, on last August 20th, when was invited by the Organization for Cooperation and Development (OECD) to become a "Participating" member of the Consumer Policy Committee (CCP). An honor and responsibility for the country that will be able to share and contribute globally in the priority issues involving consumer protection and consumer relations.

Also of note is the work developed by the National School for Consumer Protection, linked to the National Consumer Secretariat of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, where through partnerships such as the University of Brasília - DF and the Central Bank of Brazil, it reinforces the National Policy on Consumer Relations by updating members' access to education for consumption and finance for all Brazilians.

There are those who are not here physically but have left marks and teachings that are perennial, being represented through works of art installed around this noble headquarters.

We can mirror them in the search for a better world; I mean personalities like Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Gandhi and Pope John Paul II among others.

2020 marks the 110 th year of birth of Anjeze Gonxhe Bojaxhiu, who in 1979 received the Nobel Peace Prize and in 1985 spoke at the United Nations headquarters in New York on the occasion of its 40 th birthday.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta said that exercising responsibility for the life of the other is also saving yours. She was someone who used words, often harsh and criticized, to present his ideas, but his actions and examples spoke louder than his words.

The United Nations, through Resolution 67/105, of 2012, chose September 5, in honor of the anniversary of the death of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, to celebrate International Day of Charity.

Last October 2, we celebrated the International Day of Non-Violence, a date also chosen by the United Nations for being the birthday of the Indian leader, Mahatma Gandhi, born 151 years ago, with the aim of spreading the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness and reaffirming the desire to guarantee a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence.

As already stated on the date by Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres, Gandh's legacy can be seen through the organizations's work on mutual understanding, equality, sustainable development, power for young people and the peaceful resolution of differences.

Albert Einstein one of the greatest physicists of mankind, whose figure is also remembered around this building, has said once: *"Future generations will hardly believe that a man like Gandhi has passed through the face of the earth, in flesh and blood – they will say that it is a myth."*

The United Nations Organization was privileged to receive two visits by Karol Józef Wojtyła, in the years 1979 and 1995, the latter in celebration of the institution's fiftieth anniversary, an occasion in which Pope John Paul II, to whom we celebrate the centenary of his birth on May 18, he urged member states to fight against poverty: *"It is necessary that in the international economic panorama an ethic of solidarity is imposed if participation, economic growth, and a fair distribution of goods are to characterize the future of humanity ... we can build in the century to come and for the next millennium a civilization worthy of the human person, a true culture of freedom. We can and we must do it! And in doing so, we will be able to realize that the tears of this century have paved the way for a new spring for the human spirit."*

We need to prepare the ground well, as warned by the World Health Organization, more powerful viruses and pandemics are coming, that is, health and the economy will again be in check.

Solidarity, citizenship and the good examples shown

around the world in this pandemic period showed what human beings are capable of when they come together around a common and noble objective.

These positive attitudes signal much more than just a hope for the next challenges; they indicate the concrete confidence that, together, we can pave the way to overcome the difficult crossings that may come.

We never need reconciliation as much as at this emblematic moment. It is the union - not the division - that will make us overcome the health crisis that we are facing, that will allow us to reverse the economic crisis and that will disarm the social, institutional and political conflicts that hover over the world.

We need algorithms in today's world, but let us not forget that the world is made up of people (even one of one of the greatest physicists of mankind realized).

Therefore, feelings are essential to us as human beings and we need to understand that. Reception, dignity, respect, understanding and reliability can and should also be part of the economic vocabulary.

Good work to all colleagues, from all the nations gathered here.

Wishes of much inspiration and above all wishes for full health!

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