



Empowering Consumers, Protecting the Planet

Aligning consumer protection with
selected multilateral environmental
agreements

Technical cooperation outcome





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Geneva, 2025

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Abbreviations

10YFP	10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production
10YFP CI-SCP	Consumer Information Programme for Sustainable Consumption and Production
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CI-SCP	Consumer Information for Sustainable Consumption and Production
COP	Conference of the Parties
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
KMGBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreement
NDC	Nationally determined contribution
POPs	Persistent organic pollutants
POPRC	Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee
SCP 2023–2030	Global Strategy of Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCTAD	United Nations Trade and Development
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGCP	United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection



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A man in a white t-shirt is looking down at a smartphone. The image is overlaid with a solid blue color. In the top right corner, there are three white chevron shapes pointing downwards. In the bottom left corner, there is a white triangle pointing upwards.

Chapter 1

Introduction



Concern for the well-being of the planet has been gradually moving to centre stage in global policy debates. Consensus-building on the need for sustainable development has been carried out over many decades, with the early roots dating to discussions in the 1970s on the human environment. Sustainable development became entrenched as a global commitment with the adoption in 1987 of the Brundtland Report, which outlined the guiding principles of that concept (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

Building on that report, the notion of “unsustainable/sustainable consumption” emerged as central to Agenda 21, which was the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992. The notion of “sustainable consumption and production patterns” emerged in the implementation plan from the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, which stated: “We recognize that poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns and protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development are overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development. All countries should promote sustainable consumption and production patterns.”¹

Addressing the planetary crisis through sustainable consumption and production

During the Johannesburg Summit,² the decision was made to develop a 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP), which was adopted 10 years later at Rio+20. The One Planet Network, a multistakeholder partnership for sustainable

development, was also established to implement the commitments of the 10YFP.³ These foundations established sustainable consumption and production as the key levers for achieving sustainable development, and they continue to serve as important foundations for the ongoing work of the United Nations related to sustainability.

As a result of this foundational work, it is increasingly recognized that unsustainable patterns of consumption and production sit at the nexus of the prevailing triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.⁴ These three issues affect the viability and well-being both now and for the liveability of future generations (IPCC, 2022). The Global Resources Outlook 2024 reports that, in the five-year period since the 2019 edition of the report, trends in global resource use have accelerated (UNEP, 2024). The report also shows how demand for resources is expected to continue increasing in the coming decades. This means that, without urgent and concerted action, by 2060 resource extraction could rise by 60 per cent from 2020 levels, causing increasing damage and posing additional risks. Compounding these devastating impacts are the human and environmental consequences for communities and countries engulfed by war and internecine conflict, and/or ravaged by deep inter-generational poverty.

Collective action for sustainable development

To be impactful, sustainable development requires global collaboration involving governments, businesses, consumers, researchers and innovators in both production and consumption cycles. Solutions must adapt to the diverse conditions of developed and developing

Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) are central to addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, and have become foundational pillars of international sustainability policy frameworks.

¹ For more information on the Rio Summit, see <https://www.un.org/conferences/environment/rio1992> (accessed 7 May 2025).

² For more information on the Johannesburg Summit, see <https://www.un.org/conferences/environment/johannesburg2002> (accessed 7 May 2025).

³ For more information, see the One Planet Network website at <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/> (accessed 7 May 2025).

⁴ For more information, see the message by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres for International Mother Earth Day, 21 April 2022, available at <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sgsm21243.doc.htm> (accessed 7 May 2025).

markets, with special consideration given to evolving markets and sustainability challenges. It is essential to co-create sustainable solutions with all stakeholders, including informal traders, rural producers and vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers.⁵ Governments worldwide must enable the shift toward more sustainable consumption and production through appropriate regulatory frameworks. Moreover, businesses play a critical role in facilitating transparency, enhancing disclosure and ensuring accountability, empowering consumers to make informed choices and fostering trust in sustainable development initiatives. This collective effort is crucial to address the triple planetary crisis and ensure the future viability of people and the planet, as envisioned in global agreements. Incorporating consumer protection into these efforts can support sustainable economic development and drive meaningful change.

The role of consumers

Consumers play a pivotal role in shaping global markets, influencing production processes and driving innovation. Consumer empowerment and voluntary business efforts are key forces driving the shift towards sustainable consumption and production. Consumer behaviour is an essential factor for change: when consumers are informed and prioritize sustainability, they encourage businesses to adapt to meet these expectations and to compete on sustainability. As environmental concerns grow, consumers increasingly seek transparency and accountability regarding companies' manufacturing and supply chains (UNCTAD, 2023). Among these empowered consumers, 68 per cent plan to focus more on identifying brands that reduce environmental impact, while 61 per cent actively seek energy-efficient labels when making purchases (UNCTAD, 2023). These trends underscore how

informed consumer behaviour significantly influences the market, prompting businesses to adopt more sustainable practices in response to consumer demand. In this way, consumer empowerment and voluntary business actions create a positive cycle, where businesses continuously strive to meet the increasing demand for environmentally responsible products.

Consumer protection is not just about safeguarding economic interests; it is a powerful driver of sustainability. By embedding sustainability into consumer protection laws and practices, governments can foster responsible consumption patterns that reduce waste, lower emissions and encourage businesses to adopt greener production methods.

The meaning of multilateral environmental agreements in the context of this report

Multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) are legally binding international agreements that are formally ratified by their parties. They are independent agreements to which States, regional economic integration organizations and, in some instances, international organizations have become a party. MEAs are governed by their respective governing body (usually the Conference of the Parties or equivalent). Each MEA governing body and its decisions are independent, but decisions may include invitations for actions by non-parties and other entities, such as the governing bodies of other MEAs or the United Nations Environment Assembly and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), among others. Many MEAs have subsidiary bodies – for example, on science and/or implementation – that report to the respective governing body. Each MEA is supported by a secretariat, or equivalent that undertakes tasks as prescribed by the treaty text and the governing body.

⁵ The term “vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers” recognizes circumstances such as the sociodemographic characteristics, behavioural characteristics, personal situation or market environment of a consumer.

The UNEP Executive Director provides secretariat functions for 15 MEAs.⁶

The MEAs examined in this report include the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In this context, MEAs serve as a vital framework for promoting international cooperation on environmental standards and sustainable development.

A joint initiative to advance multilateral environmental agreements through consumer protection

The United Nations plays a central role in addressing global challenges by fostering international cooperation and harmonizing the actions of nations. UNEP and UNCTAD are working collaboratively on a joint initiative to support the achievement of global commitments as reflected in MEAs, thereby increasing their impact, with a particular focus on consumer protection and consumer information policy tools.

The outcomes of this joint initiative should make a concrete contribution to the advancement of United Nations aspirations, notably the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and specifically SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. Two targets are of particular interest, given their relation to MEAs:

- Target 12.4, which states: “Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous

waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement”.

- Target 12.8, which states: “By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature”.

Moreover, the initiative supports the advancement of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as per Resolution 76/300 of the United Nations General Assembly in 2022.⁷

The analysis aims to contribute to global goals contained in other frameworks such as the Global Strategy for Sustainable Consumption and Production 2023–2030,⁸ and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 15 and 16 on sustainable consumption.⁹

Objective and intended audience of this report

This report underscores how consumer protection policies can be aligned with MEA provisions to facilitate sustainable consumption, while identifying opportunities for enhanced collaboration between governments, businesses and consumers to support implementation of the MEAs. This is done by analysing the MEAs to identify ways in which consumer protection is reflected in the provisions, clauses and text of each one; and exploring ways in which consumer protection policies can support implementation of the identified MEAs. The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP) are the key frame

⁶ The synergies among the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions led to joint management of the UNEP-administered secretariats of these three conventions. The governing bodies of the MEAs decide on matters of cooperation to achieve their objectives. Accordingly, UNEP and the MEA secretariats, regardless of whether or not they are administered by UNEP, cooperate on programmatic matters within their respective mandates. Implementation of the MEAs remains within the purview of the parties at national, regional and international levels, as appropriate. Other actors (e.g. UNEP), when invited, can support implementation.

⁷ For more information, see <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3983329?ln=en&v=pdf> (United Nations, 2022).

⁸ For more information, see the Global Strategy for Sustainable Consumption and Production, available at <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/knowledge-centre/resources/global-strategy-sustainable-consumption-and-production> (One Planet, 2022).

⁹ For more information, see Convention on Biological Diversity Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Target 15, available at <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/15>, and Target 16, available at <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/16> (accessed 7 May 2025).

of reference for the consumer protection elements referenced in the analysis.¹⁰

To further explore these intersections, UNCTAD and UNEP convened a panel discussion in April 2024 under theme “Revealing Consumer Protection in Multilateral Environmental Agreements”.¹¹ Panellists from the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the CBD and the UNFCCC shared expertise and provided perspectives in this regard.

The intended audiences for this report are consumer protection and environmental authorities, along with stakeholders focused on advancing sustainable consumption. Fostering communication and collaboration among those working in these fields is essential to drive sustainable consumption.

Report structure

This report begins by providing an overview of the current global sustainability landscape, underscoring the need for systemic changes in consumption and production practices. Section 2 describes

the United Nations agencies’ mandates on consumer protection, sustainable consumption and the environment. Section 3 highlights how consumer protection principles and tools – such as safety, information rights and environmental accountability – could align with MEA goals to benefit both consumers and ecosystems. It also delves into the selected MEAs of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the CBD and the UNFCCC, detailing how each agreement intersects with consumer protection tools to enhance environmental health, safety and informed consumer choice. Section 4 suggests ways that UNCTAD, UNEP and other stakeholders can collaborate to promote sustainable consumption and implementation of the selected MEAs. Finally, Section 5 provides insights on strengthening the alignment between MEA frameworks and consumer protection policies, emphasizing policy coherence, stakeholder engagement and capacity-building to achieve sustainable consumption goals.

¹⁰ For more information, see the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, available at <https://unctad.org/topic/competition-and-consumer-protection/un-guidelines-for-consumer-protection> (UNCTAD 2016).

¹¹ For more information, see <https://unctad.org/meeting/panel-discussion-revealing-consumer-protection-multilateral-environmental-agreements> (accessed 7 May 2025).



The background of the slide is a blue-tinted photograph of a hand holding a smartphone. A small, rectangular, light-colored tag is attached to the phone. The tag has text that reads "SAVED" at the top, followed by "CREATION AND EXTRACTION OF RAW MATERIAL", a QR code, and "RECYCLED MATERIALS" at the bottom with a recycling symbol. In the top right corner, there is a white graphic of three stacked chevrons pointing downwards. In the bottom left corner, there is a white triangular graphic pointing upwards.

Chapter 2

Global mandates on environmental sustainability and consumer protection

SCAN TO KNOW HOW WE
SAVE OUR PLANET
CREATION AND EXTRACTION
OF RAW MATERIAL
FOR THE PRODUCTION OF GOODS



MADE BY
100% RECYCLING
MATERIALS



The United Nations is pivotal in fostering global collaboration and the coordination of sustainable development by promoting and encouraging sustainable consumption and production. Given the centrality of sustainability and the key role of consumers and producers in this effort, the respective custodial roles of UNEP and UNCTAD position these entities as important facilitators. This is crucial work to overcome the triple planetary crisis and take strides towards achieving global sustainable development in all economies, to the benefit of all communities and consumers. For the purposes of this research, these respective mandates are briefly set out below so as to explore how UNCTAD and UNEP play a role in supporting implementation of MEAs, particularly through a lens of consumer protection and consumer information.

UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

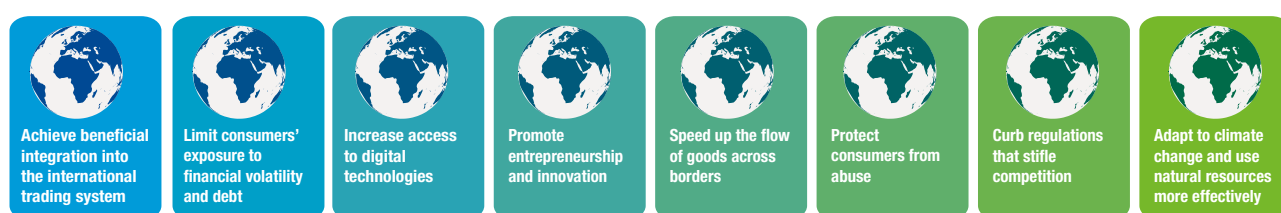
As a permanent intergovernmental body, UNCTAD supports developing countries in accessing the benefits of a globalized

economy more fairly and effectively at the international, regional and national levels. UNCTAD helps countries navigate economic participation, growth and sustainable development within the global economy by promoting beneficial integration into the international trading system, limiting exposure to financial volatility and debt, increasing access to digital technologies, and fostering entrepreneurship and innovation.

UNCTAD's mandate outlined in the Bridgetown Covenant highlights the need for strengthened consumer protection laws and policies to ensure fair, transparent and safe market practices (UNCTAD, 2021). This includes safeguarding consumer rights, fostering competitive markets, and empowering consumers – a critical aspect of achieving SDG 12 on Sustainable Consumption and Production. UNCTAD's efforts to promote competition and support policy frameworks that protect consumers position it as a key player in sustainable and inclusive economic growth, as illustrated in figure 1. Six principles for good business practices should be integral to the outcomes to enable consumer protection.

Both UNCTAD and UNEP are uniquely positioned to bridge consumer protection with the implementation of MEAs, creating synergies that empower consumers, enable responsible business conduct, and support the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Figure 1.
UNCTAD's economic development and consumer protection roles



← Principles for good business practices to enable Consumer Protection →

Fair and equitable treatment	Commercial behaviour	Disclosure and transparency	Education and awareness-raising	Protection of privacy	Complaints and disputes	Complaints and disputes
Businesses should deal fairly and honestly with consumers at all stages of their relationship so that it is an integral part of the business culture	Businesses should not subject consumers to illegal, unethical, discriminatory or deceptive practices such as abusive marketing tactics, abusive debt collection or other improper behaviour that may pose unnecessary risks or harm consumers	Businesses should deal fairly and honestly with consumers at all stages of their relationship so that it is an integral part of the business culture	Businesses should deal fairly and honestly with consumers at all stages of their relationship so that it is an integral part of the business culture	Businesses should deal fairly and honestly with consumers at all stages of their relationship so that it is an integral part of the business culture	Businesses should deal fairly and honestly with consumers at all stages of their relationship so that it is an integral part of the business culture	Businesses should deal fairly and honestly with consumers at all stages of their relationship so that it is an integral part of the business culture

Source: UNCTAD.

UNCTAD is the custodian of the UNGCP, which provide the principles and characteristics of effective consumer protection legislation, including enforcement mechanisms and redress systems. In the context of these guidelines, the term “consumer” generally refers to a natural person, regardless of nationality, acting primarily for personal, family or household purposes. The guidelines are intended to meet the following legitimate needs of consumers:

- Access by consumers to essential goods and services
- Protection of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers
- Protection of consumers from hazards to their health and safety
- Promotion and protection of the economic interests of consumers
- Access by consumers to adequate information to enable them to make informed choices according to individual wishes and needs
- Consumer education, including on the environmental, social and economic consequences of consumer choice
- Availability of effective consumer dispute resolution and redress
- Freedom to form consumer and other relevant groups or organizations and the opportunity for such organizations to present their views in decision-making processes affecting them
- Promotion of sustainable consumption patterns
- A level of protection for consumers using electronic commerce that is not less than that afforded in other forms of commerce
- The protection of consumer privacy and the global free flow of information.

Of particular interest to this report is the guidance related to the promotion of sustainable consumption set out in Section H: 49–62 of the UNGCP. This section emphasizes the importance of sustainable consumption as a shared responsibility among governments, businesses and consumers. Governments are expected to develop and implement policies that promote sustainable consumption and conduct research on consumer behaviour and environmental impacts to inform policies effectively. Businesses must design environmentally friendly products and provide clear sustainability information. Consumers are encouraged to make informed choices and engage in policy discussions. The section also highlights the essential role of international cooperation and support for developing countries.

The UNGCP are extensive and offer wide scope for encouraging and enabling transitions towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns. Unlocking the full potential of the UNGCP requires expanding existing collaboration and finding new avenues to work jointly with United Nations agencies and other interested parties.

Since 1996, UNCTAD has hosted the BioTrade Initiative,¹² launched in response to Agenda 21 from the 1992 Earth Summit. This initiative was designed to operationalize the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) by promoting the sustainable collection, production, transformation and trade of biodiversity-derived goods and services—underpinned by the BioTrade Principles and Criteria, which guide stakeholders toward conservation, sustainable use, and equitable benefit-sharing. Over the years, the initiative has supported governments in nearly 80 countries, developing national, regional, and global programmes to bolster capacity, foster market linkages,

¹² The UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative has developed a unique portfolio of global, regional and country programmes as well as a network of partners and practitioners. It aims to support countries in implementing principles that conserve biodiversity, and benefit local communities and enable them to diversify their export base through sustainable trade. For more information, see <https://unctad.org/topic/trade-and-environment/biotrade> (accessed 7 May 2025).

and integrate biodiversity and social outcomes with economic development.¹³

United Nations Environment Programme

UNEP is the leading global authority on the environment, working with stakeholders to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.¹⁴ It has a custodial responsibility for international environmental agreements and globally agreed-upon instruments, for instance, administering and providing secretariat functions for specific MEAs.

UNEP further drives transformational change by addressing root causes of unsustainable practices and fostering sustainable consumption and production patterns, particularly through its role as the secretariat to the 10YFP. Adopted by United Nations Member States in 2012, this framework anchors the sustainable consumption agenda within the United Nations system, serving as the blueprint for promoting sustainable consumption and production in both developing and developed countries, directly contributing to SDG 12.

Importantly, the 10YFP Board adopted the Global Strategy of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP 2023–2030),¹⁵ which has been acknowledged by the United Nations General Assembly. This strategy is premised on the understanding that the current way societies consume and produce results in increasing inequalities and vulnerabilities, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with poverty

and under-consumption remaining a pressing challenge in many countries, particularly in the developing world.

The strategy aims to integrate sustainable consumption and production, the circular economy, and the sustainable and circular bioeconomy into relevant MEAs, national plans and strategies to address the underlying causes of the climate, biodiversity and pollution crisis. It supports achieving SDG 12 and other targets across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, relevant MEAs and other global agreements/processes. The strategy emphasizes key enablers of change to promote sustainable lifestyles and empower consumers to make informed decisions based on transparent information, offering a blueprint for societal shifts towards more sustainable consumption and production.

To support implementation of the SCP agenda, the 10YFP secretariat has established four areas of excellence: (1) Consumer Information, (2) Lifestyles and Skills, (3) Public Procurement, and (4) Governance and Mainstreaming. The Consumer Information for Sustainable Consumption and Production (CI-SCP) global platform supports the provision of quality sustainability information on goods and services and aims to engage with consumers and help them gain access to credible and reliable sustainability information to make informed purchasing decisions. Its aspirational target is “companies providing credible sustainability information on at least 50 per cent of their products and services at the point of sale”.¹⁶

A key contribution of the One Planet Network CI-SCP Programme is the

¹³ For more information, see the Bridgetown Covenant, paragraphs 65, 73, and 127(II) (UNCTAD, 2021). The covenant underscores the importance of integrating biodiversity considerations into trade and development policies, promoting sustainable trade in biodiversity products, and fostering economic growth that respects natural ecosystems.

¹⁴ For more information, see United Nations Environment Programme website at <https://www.unep.org/who-we-are/about-us> (accessed 7 May 2025).

¹⁵ For more information, see the Global Strategy for Sustainable Consumption and Production, available at <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/knowledge-centre/resources/global-strategy-sustainable-consumption-and-production> (One Planet, 2022).

¹⁶ For more information on the platform, see One Planet Network, available at <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/programmes/consumer-information-scp> (accessed 7 May 2025).



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development of Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information (UNEP, 2017), which provide global guidance on making credible and reliable environmental, social and economic claims to empower and enable sustainable consumer choices. The guidelines' high-level principles of reliability, relevance, clarity, transparency and accessibility establish minimum requirements to provide information to consumers. Another significant output of the programme is the One Planet Network publication on regulatory frameworks to combat greenwashing (Parance et al., 2023), which aims to help governments adopt or improve

regulations to combat greenwashing, ultimately having the potential to play an important role in advancing consumer protection in alignment with the MEAs.

As UNEP administers and provides secretariat functions for a range of MEAs, it plays a crucial custodial role in advancing sustainable consumption and production across key environmental areas. These MEAs, which address biodiversity, chemicals and waste, climate change and ocean preservation, are essential components of the environmental framework that supports sustainable development.



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light-colored jacket, is standing in a library or bookstore. She is looking at a book on a shelf. The background is filled with bookshelves. The entire image has a blue overlay.

Chapter 3

Multilateral environmental agreements and their alignment with consumer protection tools and consumer interests



The MEAs chosen for this study present specific issues that intersect with consumer protection in critical ways, touching on health, safety, information rights and environmental sustainability. They address essential aspects of environmental protection that directly or indirectly affect consumer rights and well-being, making them a strategic choice for exploring the intersection of environmental policy and consumer protection tools. The MEAs selected are the:

- Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal
- Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

This analysis examines how MEA provisions intersect with consumer protection, and to identify opportunities to facilitate implementation of the MEAs through consumer policy tools. Existing frameworks, such as the UNGCP, provide a foundation for exploring intersections between the consumer protection responsibilities of UNCTAD and UNEP.

Table 1 provides an overview of consumer protection policy measures, besides the UNGCP (see Section 1), that could align with MEA provisions. These measures are categorized into demand-side, supply-side and government initiatives, and they include tools that could strengthen consumer protection within MEA contexts.

The following sections provide a more in-depth examination of the objectives

of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the CBD and the UNFCCC, and identify intersections with consumer protection instruments. The analysis also suggests additional opportunities to use existing MEA provisions in ways that can further enable consumer protection. This provides a powerful illustration of how consumer protection tools and consumer action and involvement can magnify the impact of these MEAs. Each analysis first introduces an MEA and identifies areas where its commitments clearly intersect with consumer interests. The final outcomes of these mappings highlight potential areas for further collaboration between UNCTAD and UNEP – specifically the MEA secretariats and the 10YFP – and the One Planet Network.

Basel Convention: Protecting human health and the environment against hazardous wastes

The Basel Convention is a legally binding global treaty that regulates the transboundary movements and disposal of hazardous and other wastes. The convention obliges its parties to ensure that such wastes are managed and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.¹⁷ Adopted on 22 March 1989 by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Basel, Switzerland, the convention was prompted by the discovery in the 1980s of toxic waste deposits imported to Africa and other developing regions. The convention entered into force on 5 May 1992 and had 191 parties as of 1 August 2024.

The convention covers a wide range of hazardous wastes based on their origin and/or composition and characteristics,¹⁸ as well as four types of wastes defined as “other

Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) address critical environmental issues—such as hazardous waste, chemicals, biodiversity loss, and climate change—that have direct implications for consumer health, safety, and well-being.

¹⁷ For more information, see the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, available at <https://www.basel.int/> (accessed 7 May 2025).

¹⁸ Toxic, poisonous, explosive, corrosive, flammable, ecotoxic and infectious wastes.



Table 1.
Consumer protection policy measures and instruments

Demand-side measures	Supply-side measures	Government initiatives
Education and awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence choices towards sustainability • Promote responsible behaviour and sustainable consumption • Nudge market demand for sustainable products 	Business guidance and engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage responsible business practices • Offer recognition awards for sustainable leaders • Use naming and shaming to deter non-compliance • Issue compliance warnings to guide business practices 	Business instruments and incentives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust cost of products to make sustainable options accessible • Protect fair competition and consumer interests • Offer incentives for sustainable practices • Promote innovation in green sectors
Information provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable product comparison (e.g. sustainability ratings) • Increase accountability through transparency • Protect consumers from deceptive practices • Mitigate risks and harm 	Codes of conduct, advertising and trust marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish best practice benchmarks • Promote self-regulation and peer-sharing • Ensure environmental claims are truthful, clear and accurate • Boost consumer confidence and loyalty through clear certification 	Dispute resolution and redress mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide complaint mechanisms for consumers • Facilitate direct consumer-business dispute resolution use through third-party mediation when necessary • Offer formal and informal individual or collective actions
Disclosure measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product labelling • Product energy efficiency • Health and safety warnings • Unit price display for comparison purposes • Country of origin to promote traceability 	Standards and certification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set specifications and procedures for safety, reliability and consistency • Provide a quality baseline across products • Enable inter-operability across suppliers • Enable benchmarking and performance assessment • Set minimum durability requirements, reparability and anti-obsolescence standards • Use consumer feedback to establish standards 	Enforcement and compliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take targeted action to enforce consumer protection and product safety laws • Use a graduated system of sanctions for violations • Prioritize enforcement based on impact • Allocate resources for effective oversight • Focus on consumer protection to reduce harm and guide policy
Cooling-off periods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buyers to reconsider and change their mind – no consequence • Re-evaluation for un-influenced reconsideration 	Product safety, licensing and accreditation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guarantee minimum product quality • Set mandatory compliance baselines • Maintain industry standards for product and service quality 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation of contract terms • Ensure quality and safety assurances (e.g. guarantee) • Enforce non-excludable consumer rights and guarantees • Options for non-fulfilment, nullification or termination 		

Source: UNCTAD.



wastes”.¹⁹ Its provisions focus on three principal aims: reducing the generation of hazardous waste; promoting environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes regardless of their disposal location; and restricting transboundary movements of hazardous wastes, except when such movements are aligned with the principles of environmentally sound management. In cases where transboundary movements are permissible, a regulatory system is applied.

To assist and support parties in implementing the convention, Regional and Coordinating Centres have been established under the Basel Convention with the mandate to deliver training and transfer technology to manage hazardous and other wastes and minimize their generation.

Intersections, synergies and gaps in relation to consumer protection

The intersection of the Basel Convention with consumer protection emphasizes the regulatory, consensual movement of hazardous chemicals across borders, benefiting consumer health, safety, and sustainability while promoting sustainable consumption patterns. Key provisions include the management of plastic waste, subject to the prior informed consent mechanism and obligations for environmentally sound management.

There are also requirements for labelling, packaging, transport and re-importation when environmentally sound management cannot be completed, directly impacting the well-being and health of communities and consumers. In addition, the convention focuses on risk containment measures and constitutes a paradigm shift from waste prevention and minimization to redesigning products to eliminate waste. It promotes consideration of a product's life cycle, with extended producer responsibility and a focus on transparency, accountability and information disclosure.

The convention fosters proactive engagement with stakeholders to educate, empower and encourage behaviour change. Parties to the convention have established partnerships and public-private cooperation, where consumer associations are invited to take part and cooperate with stakeholders to design and implement solutions for specific waste streams. Examples of such initiatives include the Household Waste Partnership, Plastic Waste Partnership, and Partnership for Action on Challenges Relating to E-waste.

Certain Basel Convention provisions could be linked with consumer protection tools, as referenced in mapping table 1.



Mapping table 1.
Basel Convention provisions and consumer protection alignment

Basel Convention provision	Consumer protection tools and policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control hazardous waste movements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right of access to non-hazardous products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect human health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection of consumers from hazards to their health and safety Consumer health education and information programmes Development and use of environmental health and safety standards Promotion of awareness of health-related benefits of sustainable consumption and production patterns Advancement of consumer interests, prioritizing consumer health Adoption of appropriate measures taking into account relevant health and environment information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumers' right to promote just, equitable and sustainable economic and social development and environmental protection (supported by 28 references and provisions within the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection related to environmental concerns)

Source: UNCTAD.

¹⁹ Household waste, incinerator ash, plastic waste and non-hazardous electronic and electrical wastes.



Future possibilities to strengthen connections

In addition to the intersections listed in mapping table 1, there are several potential opportunities to further strengthen the connection between Basel Convention provisions and consumer protection policies. These opportunities include:

- Fostering education and awareness
- Raising awareness among consumer protection stakeholders can be achieved through information and education, with potential for further expansion. Increasing awareness-raising and capacity-building for producers and consumer protection regulators and public officials would also amplify the impact of these provisions. Examples of these provisions, along with related education and awareness opportunities, are:
 - Provisions on labelling of consumer products that are presently or potentially hazardous.
 - Provisions on consumers' contribution to management of household waste for specified consumer goods, notably batteries, tires and e-waste; creating awareness of the need to continue development and implementation of environmentally sound low-waste technologies, recycling options, good house-keeping and management systems with a view to reducing the generation of hazardous wastes and other wastes to a minimum; and education about unintended consequences when mixing waste types and potentially triggering reactions between them.
- The success of education and awareness activities relies on them being easily available, using accessible language, and employing presentation formats. The information provided through labelling must similarly be designed to enable ease of understanding and usefulness for consumers and consumer protection

stakeholders. In addition, labelling should follow a holistic approach where possible, taking into account all aspects of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

- Co-creation of consumer protection initiatives for greater impact
- Future consumer protection synergies can be achieved by implementing convention procedures in more consumer-friendly ways. Co-creating these synergies with consumers would spark interest, raise awareness and improve access to information about the convention's goals, in turn expanding the reach and deepening the impact of the convention. For instance, involving consumers and businesses in integrating waste management into national sustainable development strategies could promote more responsible and sustainable consumption and production practices, supporting sustainable livelihoods.

Rotterdam Convention: Promoting shared responsibility and cooperation in the international trade of hazardous chemicals

The Rotterdam Convention is a legally binding global treaty that aims to protect human health and the environment from the potential harm of certain hazardous chemicals.²⁰ It also aims to contribute to environmentally sound management of these chemicals by (i) facilitating information exchange about their characteristics; (ii) providing for national decision-making processes on their import and export; and (iii) disseminating these decisions to parties. A key provision of the convention is the prior informed consent procedure, which requires that prior approval be obtained before the cross-boundary movement of certain hazardous chemicals. The

²⁰ For more information, see the Rotterdam Convention website at <https://www.pic.int/> (accessed 7 May 2025).

convention was adopted in September 1998 in response to the growth in chemical production and trade in 1970s and to concerns about the potential risks posed by hazardous chemicals and pesticides. It entered into force on 24 February 2004 and had 166 parties as of 1 August 2024.

Trade under the Rotterdam Convention refers to the export and import of covered chemicals. It applies to chemicals listed in Annex III to the convention, including severely hazardous pesticide formulations and industrial chemicals.

Intersection, synergies and gaps in relation to consumer protection

The current intersection of the Rotterdam Convention with consumer protection emphasizes the requirement of prior informed consent for the movement of chemicals. This allows countries to make informed choices that benefit consumer health, safety, and sustainability. It includes risk containment measures to further

protect consumers and promotes the exchange of information on a wide range of chemicals, enhancing transparency and enabling better decision-making regarding chemical management.

The convention states the need to take into account the circumstances and particular requirements of developing countries and economies in transition. This is an important recognition of heightened consumer vulnerability in these economies. Importantly, the convention recognizes that trade and environmental policies should be mutually supportive with a view to achieving sustainable development. This interlinkage is important because consumer protection needs to be embedded in business practices that enable trade and economic activity.

Certain Rotterdam Convention provisions could be linked with consumer protection tools, as referenced in mapping table 2.



Mapping table 2.

Rotterdam Convention provisions and consumer protection alignment

Rotterdam Convention provisions	Consumer protection tools and policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior informed consent procedure for hazardous chemicals and pesticides; and facilitating information exchange about their characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right of access to non-hazardous products • Right to information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting human health, including consumers' and workers' health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of consumers from hazards to their health and safety • Consumer health education and information programmes • Development and use of environmental health and safety standards • Promotion of awareness of health-related benefits of sustainable consumption and production patterns • Advancement of consumer interests, prioritizing concern for consumer health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer and worker protection against the harmful impact on the environment of certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers' right to promote just, equitable and sustainable economic and social development and environmental protection • (This is a founding objective of the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, which is followed by 28 references and provisions related to environmental concerns)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for information accompanying exported chemicals with labelling requirements ensuring adequate availability of up-to-date information about risks and/or hazards to human health or the environment, noting relevant international standards • As practicable, label information provided in one or more of the official languages of the importing party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to information, with language requirement expanding accessibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly available information on domestic regulatory actions, with limitations on confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public access to information on chemical handling, accident management and safer alternatives for human health or the environment than listed chemicals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer education and information programmes on health

Source: UNCTAD.



Future possibilities to strengthen connections

Several future possibilities can be explored to strengthen the intersection between the Rotterdam Convention and consumer protection policies. These opportunities include:

- **Enhancing consumer awareness on hazardous chemicals**

Consumer awareness could be improved through targeted education on hazardous chemicals and pesticides listed under the Rotterdam Convention, emphasizing their potential health risks. Public information campaigns, similar to those suggested in the convention provisions, can be integrated into national consumer protection frameworks to empower consumers with knowledge, enhancing their ability to make informed choices.

- **Simplifying chemical safety information for consumers**

Chemical safety information is central to business-to-business exchange and should continue being technically and scientifically grounded. Nevertheless, consumer groups should advocate for the use of clear and simple language in hazard warnings and chemical safety information for consumers, ensuring that the general public can easily understand and act on the information provided.

- **Promoting collaboration between designated national authorities and consumer protection agencies**

Collaboration between national authorities designated at the national level to act on behalf of the party and consumer protection agencies could ensure that critical information about hazardous substances is effectively communicated to the public.²¹ Also, the national agencies in charge of consumer protection could

help activate the Rotterdam Convention's provision to encourage initiatives by industry to promote chemical safety.

- **Leveraging the prior informed consent procedure**

The emphasis of the Basel and Rotterdam Conventions on the prior informed consent procedure offers a practical mechanism for consumer protection authorities to advocate for more transparency and access to information on hazardous substances already available through international trade. These actions would promote safer consumption patterns and strengthen regulatory frameworks that protect consumers from chemical use risks.

- **Using International Court of Justice rulings for stronger national policies**

Consumer protection agencies could leverage rulings from the International Court of Justice on hazardous chemical disputes to inform and strengthen national policies, ensuring robust safeguards for consumers.

- **Engaging consumer organizations in policymaking**

Engaging consumer organizations as observers in the Conference of the Parties (COP) meetings would also enable them to advocate for stricter chemical controls and integrate consumer concerns into policy decisions.

- **Advocating for clearer labelling and stronger protections**

Consumer advocacy groups could push for clearer labelling and stronger protections both in national policies and in COP discussions, contributing to enhanced consumer safety in international chemical trade. Labelling should follow a holistic approach, taking into account all aspects of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, where possible.

²¹ For more information, see the Designated National Authorities page of the Rotterdam Convention website at <https://www.pic.int/Procedures/DesignatedNationalAuthorities/tabid/1366/language/en-US/Default.aspx> (accessed 7 May 2025).

Stockholm Convention: Protecting human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants

The Stockholm Convention is a legally binding instrument to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants (POPs).²² It was adopted at a Conference of Plenipotentiaries on 22 May 2001 in Stockholm, Sweden. The convention entered into force on 17 May 2004 and had 186 parties as of 1 August 2024.

Parties to this convention recognize that POPs have toxic properties, resist degradation, bioaccumulate, and are transported through air, water and migratory species across international boundaries. They are ultimately deposited far from their place of release, and accumulate in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

The Stockholm Convention is particularly concerned with the impact of POPs on vulnerable populations, including women and children, and recognizes the heightened risks in developing countries. The convention provides a list of chemicals that are subject to control measures, with a rigorous scientific process in place for adding new chemicals to this list. Key provisions of the convention require parties to take steps to eliminate or restrict the production and use of listed POPs, control their import and export, and ensure environmentally sound management of stockpiles and waste containing POPs. The convention also addresses the unintentional production

of POPs, such as those generated as by-products of industrial processes or combustion, and calls for implementation of the best available techniques and environmental practices to minimize and, where feasible, eliminate their release.

Intersections, synergies and gaps in relation to consumer protection

The current intersection of the Stockholm Convention with consumer protection involves efforts to implement compulsory labelling to identify POPs in products, thereby empowering consumers to make informed choices. The convention mandates elimination of the production, use, import and export of the most hazardous substances, including dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which directly impact consumer health. In addition, it promotes transparency through traceability of these harmful substances.

A key mechanism in the Stockholm Convention is the POPs Review Committee (POPRC), which evaluates chemicals for potential inclusion in the convention and provides guidelines for the safe disposal of hazardous substances. The POPRC presents an opportunity to enhance consumer protection by extending participation to include consumer observers.

The Stockholm Convention cross-references the Basel Convention due to the overlap in hazardous and toxic chemical substances, and it shares consumer protection provisions with both the Basel and Rotterdam Conventions. However, the Stockholm Convention also introduces unique consumer protection aspects. These similarities and novel intersections are outlined in mapping table 3.

²² For more information, see the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants website at <https://chm.pops.int/> (accessed 7 May 2025).





Mapping table 3.
Stockholm Convention provisions and consumer protection alignment

Stockholm Convention provisions	Consumer protection tools and policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of human health and the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of consumers from hazards to health and safety as a legitimate consumer need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturer responsibility and product life cycle approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business has a responsibility to promote sustainable consumption through the design, production and distribution of goods and services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder inclusion, with an added emphasis on recognizing the importance of non-governmental organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States, in partnership with businesses and relevant civil society organizations, should develop and implement strategies that promote sustainable consumption
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize human hazardous exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the importance of developing and using environmentally sound alternative products and processes, including regarding disposal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National policy, legal and administrative measures and action plans to manage hazard, risk and exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the use of national and international environmental health and safety standards for products and services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for observer status in Conference of Parties and committee processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy provides a forum for consultation and exchange of experience where sustainable consumption is often discussed¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote education, training and public awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer access to accurate information about the environmental impact (climate, biodiversity loss and pollution) of products and services should be encouraged through such means as product profiles, environmental reports by industry, information centres for consumers, voluntary and transparent labelling programmes and product information hotlines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisions for information exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation or the encouragement of cooperation in implementation of consumer protection policies to achieve greater results within existing resources (United Nations Guideline for Consumer Protection, Guideline 79 (b))
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispute settlement, including submission to the International Court of Justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of an arbitration tribunal

Source: UNCTAD.

Future possibilities to strengthen connections

The Stockholm Convention presents opportunities for inclusion in consumer policy, particularly through its provisions on public participation, education, awareness and training. These opportunities include:

- **Addressing the needs of vulnerable consumers**

Notably, the convention specifies target groups, including vulnerable consumers, more thoroughly than the Basel and Rotterdam Conventions. This is important because vulnerable consumers are often overlooked in protection efforts. Also acknowledged in the convention is

the fact that sustainable economic and social development and the eradication of poverty are, of necessity, the first and overriding priorities of developing country parties. This is significant because it impacts the extent to which consumer protection measures can be realistically considered and implemented efficiently in these countries.

- **Strengthening consumer protection through labelling**

As mentioned earlier, the POPRC could enhance consumer protection by introducing labelling requirements for products containing newly listed POPs, particularly when exemptions apply.



Clear labelling would inform consumers about the presence of harmful chemicals, enabling safer choices and boosting transparency across the marketplace, aligning with consumer protection principles of safety and information access. Labelling should follow a holistic approach where possible, taking into account all aspects of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

- **National-level actions to support consumer protection**

At the national level, governments could further consumer protection by prohibiting specific POPs in consumer goods and encouraging companies to phase them out in products and supply chains. National policies could incentivize innovation in alternative chemicals and green production, alongside technical support for businesses transitioning away from POPs, thereby

reducing exposure and promoting sustainable industry practices.

- **Raising public awareness about the risks of POPs**

Governments and consumer protection agencies, in partnership with the Stockholm Convention secretariat, could launch awareness initiatives to educate the public on the risks of POPs in everyday products.

- **Empowering consumer organizations in policy development**

Consumer organizations, particularly in partnership with producer groups such as farming communities, should be empowered to propose the listing of severely hazardous pesticide formulations under the convention. Their insights and lived experiences can shape policies that protect public health and the environment.



Box 1.

Additional opportunities to be explored

As demonstrated in the mappings and discussions in the main text, the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions all have provisions that intersect with consumer protection instruments, as contained in the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection. There are also future possibilities that can be explored and creatively incorporated into existing consumer protection work programmes of government entities responsible for this area. These initiatives would not necessarily require consumer policy or legislative amendments and could commence with immediate effect. Fostering coordination between national focal points of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and consumer protection agencies can promote the implementation of MEAs. Moreover, focusing on education and awareness-raising efforts would constitute an effective and low-cost starting point. In this way, knowledge about the conventions would be disseminated, while simultaneously advancing consumer protection.



Convention on Biological Diversity: Promoting the conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources

Biological diversity – the variability of life on Earth – is the key to the ability of the biosphere to continue providing ecological “goods and services”. It is the ultimate resource upon which families, communities, nations and future generations depend. The CBD is one of the key agreements signed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit,²³ establishing a legally binding commitment by signatory parties to conserve biological diversity, sustainably use its components, and equitably share the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The conservation of biological diversity is recognized as an integral part of socioeconomic development processes, and it requires using biological resources sustainably. The CBD sets forth principles for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources, notably those destined for commercial use. It also covers the rapidly expanding field of biotechnology, addressing technology development and transfer, benefit-sharing and biosafety.

The convention recognizes that biological diversity is about more than plants, animals and micro-organisms and their ecosystems – it is about people and the human need for food security, medicines, fresh air and water, shelter, and a clean and healthy environment in which to live. It is premised on the understanding that

biological resources are the pillars upon which civilizations are built and which sustain human life. Nature's products are recognized as the essence of diverse industries, including agriculture, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, paper, horticulture, construction and waste treatment. The loss of biodiversity destabilizes ecosystems, impacts natural productivity and weakens resilience, resulting in increased susceptibility to natural disasters, which in turns puts the safety of communities at risk.

A significant milestone is the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), adopted during the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) following a four-year consultation and negotiation process (UNEP, 2022). The framework supports the achievement of the SDGs and builds on the CBD's work. It sets out an ambitious pathway to reach the global vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050. The KMGBF is built around a theory of change that outlines how global action can halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2050. The framework emphasizes transformative actions across societies and economies, including changes in consumption and production patterns, to achieve its goals. It contains 23 targets for 2030, of which targets 15 and 16 are particularly relevant to this research, as they relate to providing information to consumers and enabling choices for sustainable consumption.

KMGBF Target 15: Businesses assess, disclose and reduce biodiversity-related risks and negative impacts

“Take legal, administrative or policy measures to encourage and enable business, and in particular to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions: (a) Regularly monitor, assess, and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on

²³ For more information see the Convention on Biological Diversity website at <https://www.cbd.int/> (accessed 7 May 2025).

biodiversity, including with requirements for all large as well as transnational companies and financial institutions along their operations, supply and value chains, and portfolios; (b) Provide information needed to consumers to promote sustainable consumption patterns; (c) Report on compliance with access and benefit-sharing regulations and measures, as applicable; in order to progressively reduce negative impacts on biodiversity, increase positive impacts, reduce biodiversity-related risks to business and financial institutions, and promote actions to ensure sustainable patterns of production”.²⁴

KMGBF Target 16: Enable sustainable consumption choices to reduce waste and overconsumption

“Ensure that people are encouraged and enabled to make sustainable consumption choices, including by establishing supportive policy, legislative or regulatory frameworks, improving education and access to relevant and accurate information and alternatives, and by 2030, reduce the global footprint of consumption in an equitable manner, including through halving global food waste, significantly reducing overconsumption and substantially reducing waste generation, in order for all people to live well in harmony with Mother Earth”.²⁵

The CBD accordingly positions the individual as central to biodiversity-related decisions, taking into account that the small choices that individuals make incrementally contribute to biodiversity impact. While the CBD does not specifically use the term “consumer”, the centrality and impact of individual action is clear. Importantly, the language in which the CBD is couched is also more accessible, making it easier for ordinary people to “see and locate” themselves within the CBD objectives. It is thus important to provide individuals

with information about the sustainability impact of goods and services in order to inform consumption choices. Business choices throughout the production cycle also impact on biodiversity. Similarly, the regulatory role of government is significant.

Intersections, synergies and gaps in relation to consumer protection

The current intersection of the CBD with consumer protection highlights several key areas. It acknowledges the special conditions of least developed countries and small island states, emphasizing the need for provisions that can address the needs of vulnerable consumers. The breadth of issues covered by the CBD demands a whole-of-government approach, horizontal integration across departments, and a combination of policy instruments, including laws, incentives, research investment, stakeholder involvement and awareness-raising campaigns.

Certain CBD provisions could be linked with consumer protection tools, as referenced in mapping table 4.

Future possibilities to strengthen connections

Based on the analysis of the intersection between the CBD and consumer protection, future possibilities for action include the following:

- **Promoting sustainable consumption patterns through education and awareness**

One key area is the promotion of sustainable consumption patterns through public education and awareness campaigns, particularly regarding the impact of daily consumer choices on biodiversity supporting a fundamental shift towards demand-side resource allocation. The CI-SCP Working Group on Biodiversity and Consumption, which includes the CBD Secretariat, UNCTAD

²⁴ For more information, see Convention on Biological Diversity, Target 15, available at <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/15> (accessed 7 May 2025).

²⁵ For more information, see Convention on Biological Diversity, Target 16, available at <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/16> (accessed 7 May 2025).



Mapping table 4.
Convention on Biological Diversity provisions and consumer protection alignment

Convention on Biological Diversity provisions	Consumer protection tools and policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of practical need for horizontal integration and coordination across government structures, given the inherently cross-cutting character of biodiversity and sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of consumer protection authorities in interministerial coordination to ensure that consumer interests and concerns are addressed in policymaking • Stakeholder involvement, notably for marginalized and vulnerable constituencies; and deliberate inclusion of business • Public education and awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biotechnology and Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and safety considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate consideration of the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources into national decision-making “as far as possible and as appropriate” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement of actions for a sustainable future: sustainable development and sustainable consumption and production
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 15 calls for businesses, particularly large and transnational corporations, to disclose their biodiversity impacts and dependencies across supply chains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to credible information about the environmental impacts of products, empowering consumers to make informed and sustainable choices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 16 seeks to empower individuals to make sustainable choices by implementing policies, promoting access to information and reducing overconsumption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to sustainability information, and support for policies for safe, sustainable consumer choices • Right to a safe, sustainable environment

Source: UNCTAD.

BioTrade, Consumers International and key players focused on CBD and KMGBF topics, offers a potential space to strengthen these initiatives. This Working Group emphasizes the role of sustainable consumption in mitigating the impact of human activities on biodiversity and ecosystem services, while actively promoting actions aimed at their protection and enhancement. By integrating CBD provisions into national consumer protection frameworks, governments can ensure that consumers are informed about the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions, helping them make more sustainable choices.

- **Integrating Indigenous and cultural approaches to consumer protection**
Unique to the CBD is the recognition and integration of Indigenous, customary and cultural practices regarding the protection and use of biological resources. This is significant and gives impetus to recognizing and incorporating Indigenous approaches to consumer protection, notably information and education,

the right to be heard, and access to sustainable goods and services.

- **Addressing gender and vulnerability in biodiversity conservation**

The intentional recognition of women's contributions is important, as it creates opportunities for the specific needs of female consumers, and of vulnerable consumers in general, to be integral to biodiversity considerations.

- **National policy development for CBD and consumer protection**

National policy development is encouraged to enable country-level implementation of the CBD and consumer protection provisions offering significant opportunities to incorporate consumer voices. Mainstreaming consumer protection perspectives into national biodiversity strategies and action plans that align with MEAs, and involving consumer protection stakeholders in the design and updating of these strategies and plans, can ensure that biodiversity strategies are informed by consumer needs. One way to achieve this is by granting observer status to



consumer protection groups at COP meetings, allowing them to advocate for consumer interests in biodiversity and sustainability discussions. In addition, the preparation of reports providing key information would inform consumer advocacy, ensuring that policy decisions related to biodiversity conservation reflect consumer needs and concerns. By engaging diverse stakeholders, the CI-SCP Working Group on Biodiversity and Consumption can be instrumental in advancing sustainable consumption efforts aligned with Targets 15 and 16.

- **Exploring the integration of CBD provisions into consumer protection policies**

In line with the CBD's obligation that contracting parties integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources into national decision-making, there is an opportunity to explore specific ways this could be incorporated into consumer protection policies and legislation. A pilot study could be developed collaboratively by researchers, practitioners and public officials focusing initially on KMGBF Targets 15 and 16. Target 15 seeks to reduce the negative impacts and increase the positive impacts of business on biodiversity, while Target 16 aims to reduce the global consumption footprint by halving food waste and significantly cutting overconsumption by 2050. If successful, this pilot could provide a model for integrating sustainable consumption targets into consumer protection frameworks and could be replicated in other MEAs.

- **Leveraging peer reviews to strengthen biodiversity and consumer protection policies**

Peer reviews are used as a mechanism to strengthen, widen and expand

the impact of the CBD. For example, parties and observers were invited to participate in the peer review of draft studies to inform the development and operationalization of the multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources. These processes provide opportunities for sharing good practice as well as capacity-building. Through the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy,²⁶ UNCTAD facilitates voluntary peer reviews of consumer protection for member States.²⁷ This cross-pollination of methods between biodiversity and consumer protection could lead to valuable insights, strengthening both policy areas and their intersections.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: Promoting sustainable development and environmental integrity

The UNFCCC was adopted in 1992 with the aim of stabilizing dangerous human/anthropogenic interference with the climate system.²⁸ The UNFCCC secretariat is tasked with supporting the global response to the threat of climate change. The 198 parties to this convention acknowledge that change in the Earth's climate and its adverse effects are a common concern of humankind, and the parties are therefore determined to protect the climate system for present

²⁶ For more information <https://unctad.org/topic/competition-and-consumer-protection/intergovernmental-group-of-experts-on-consumer-protection> (accessed 11 June 2025)

²⁷ For more information <https://unctad.org/topic/competition-and-consumer-protection/voluntary-peer-review-of-consumer-protection-law-and-policy>

²⁸ For more information on the UNFCCC, see the United Nations Climate Change website at <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/what-is-the-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change> (accessed 7 May 2025).

and future generations. This should be achieved in a way that allows ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, ensures that food production is not threatened, and enables economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.

The work of the UNFCCC is therefore vital to protect consumers from the worst social, economic and health impacts of climate change. This includes adapting strategies to the reality of a warmer future. Although the UNFCCC does not spell out consumer protection with specificity, it is clear how and what consumers choose, and how and what businesses produce, significantly impact the achievement of UNFCCC goals and outcomes. Consumer and producer behaviour is core. Consumer education and information, along with production life cycle considerations and applications, are key levers for change and mitigation of climate change and its sustainability implications.

Parties to the UNFCCC meet at the annual COP session where governments, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector and environmental groups gather. The approach is to foster multilateral processes in which parties to the convention have an equal voice; where civil society representatives can express their views; and where businesses can present their solutions. The COP provides a platform for review, reflection and consideration of new and/or amended commitments.

For example, at COP 21 in Paris held on 12 December 2015, parties to the UNFCCC reached a landmark agreement to combat climate change and accelerate and intensify actions and investments needed for a sustainable low-carbon future. The Paris Agreement includes a statement on sustainable consumption and production, and sustainable lifestyles.

Similarly, at the Sharm el-Sheikh Climate Change Conference (COP 27), countries came together to take action to achieve the world's collective climate goals as agreed upon under the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC. The resultant Sharm el-Sheikh

Plan notes the importance of transition to sustainable lifestyles and sustainable patterns of consumption and production for efforts to address climate change. Informed by the UNFCCC commitments, countries develop nationally determined contributions (NDCs), which are self-defined national climate pledges. These must be updated every five years to ensure that successive NDCs represent a progression to the highest possible ambition based on each party's capability and capacity. The NDC revision process should be undertaken inclusively with stakeholders, which is an opportunity to hear consumer concerns. The NDC revision process can provide a springboard for bringing about changes in national consumer protection policy and law. The UNFCCC is thus a key global instrument to protect consumers from multifaceted social, economic and health impacts of climate change and in so doing protect the world's most vulnerable people, while upholding the responsibility to future generations.

Intersections synergies and gaps in relation to consumer protection

The current intersection of the UNFCCC with consumer protection reflects globally agreed-upon targets based on the principle that the source of climate change is human activity, and that behavioural changes can help reduce harmful impacts on both people and the planet. The solutions require fundamental changes in how societies operate, cutting across various sectors such as infrastructure, transport, energy, production, consumption and natural resource management.

To broaden access to sustainable choices, changes in production methods are essential. A coordinated global framework for integrated action is needed, and this must be reflected in policy instruments at the national level.

The UNFCCC recognizes consumers as potential change agents, requiring constant and consistent access for them to information, education and awareness programs. Consumer education focuses



on raising awareness of the costs and consequences of decisions and actions, encouraging consumers to be aware, demanding, and proactive decision makers. This underscores the role of consumers in driving sustainable solutions

and their involvement in the transition towards a more sustainable future.

UNFCCC principles could be linked with consumer protection tools, as referenced in mapping table 5.



Mapping table 5.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change principles and consumer protection alignment

UNFCCC principles	Consumer protection tools and policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Member States should strive to promote sustainable consumption patterns, and developed countries should take the lead Developing countries should seek to achieve sustainable consumption patterns in their development process, having due regard for the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, Guideline 6)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of specific needs of those vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, as well as the specific needs of developing country parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All enterprises should obey relevant laws and regulations of the countries where they do business; they should also conform to the appropriate provisions of international standards for consumer protection to which the competent authorities of the country in question have agreed (United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, Guideline 9)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote sustainable development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of sustainable consumption patterns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to sustainable economic growth and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation or encouragement of cooperation in implementation of consumer protection policies to achieve greater results within existing resources Ensuring that policies and measures for consumer protection are implemented with due regard to their not becoming barriers to international trade, and that they are consistent with international trade obligations

Source: UNCTAD.

Future possibilities to strengthen connections

Based on the analysis of the intersection between the UNFCCC and consumer protection, the following future possibilities have been identified:

• Human-centred focus of the UNFCCC and consumer behaviour

The human-centred focus of the UNFCCC reflects the significant role that human activities play in causing climate change. This positions consumer behaviour, through the choices that consumers make with each spending and purchasing decision, at the core of achieving the UNFCCC's purpose. Similarly, consumer choice can influence production

options chosen by businesses. There is thus an open ecosystem in which consumer protection and protection of the climate system are symbiotic.

• Enabling policies and transparency for informed consumer decisions on climate impact

Individual responsibility and changes in behaviour and habits require enabling policies, infrastructure, business models and practices, as well as new ways of producing and delivering goods and services. Consumer protection and information is not only about individual behaviour. It is also about creating transparency and accountability across value chains and making sure that information on climate emissions and



consequences is shared, made available and communicated. It also concerns people having the right to know what kind of impacts products and services have on the climate, environment and, eventually, their well-being. It extends to the right to make informed decisions accordingly. The adoption of a specific consumer protection protocol to the UNFCCC may be a possibility for consumer organizations to consider as a mechanism for formal inclusion to definitively embed consumer protection within UNFCCC provisions.

- *Synergy between UNFCCC principles and global consumer rights*

There is permeability between the principles and mechanisms of the UNFCCC and the set of global fundamental consumer rights embedded within the UNGCP. Pivotal is the right

to safety and a healthy and sustainable environment, which is directly connected to climate change and planetary survival. The stakeholder-inclusive operation and implementation mechanisms of the UNFCCC purposively harness the widest participation, which provides for the inclusion of consumer voices. The participatory approaches to developing NDCs are illustrative of ways in which participation is encouraged. The provisions on education, training and public awareness match consumer rights in this regard. The inclusive approach and specific referencing of gender and Indigenous communities in the UNFCCC speaks to the UNGCP's deliberate intentions regarding vulnerable consumers in terms of voice, information and education.





Box 2.

Legally binding international treaties to promote environmental democracy

Aarhus Convention

The Aarhus Convention is formally known as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. The UNECE is the custodian of this international treaty, which aims to promote environmental democracy by ensuring public rights to environmental information, participation in environmental decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters. The Aarhus Convention is built on three fundamental pillars:

- Access to information
- Public participation in decision-making
- Access to justice

These pillars collectively enhance decision-making quality and empower citizens to protect their environment. The Aarhus Convention thus has an important role to play in promoting transparency, accountability and sustainable development. In relation to consumer protection, the convention provides mechanisms that can indirectly benefit consumers by ensuring that environmental information is accessible, which can be crucial for making informed decisions. Moreover, it allows the public, including consumers, to participate in environmental decision-making processes, potentially influencing policies and regulations that affect consumer interests, especially in terms of environmental standards for products and services.

Another topic under consideration by the Aarhus Convention is the role of collective redress mechanism (class action) in environmental matters.

Escazú Agreement

The Escazú Agreement is formally known as the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2018). It is a key legal instrument for environmental protection and human rights in the region. The agreement is overseen by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Adopted in Escazú, Costa Rica in 2018, the regional agreement aims to ensure the full and effective implementation of the rights to access environmental information, participate in environmental decision-making, and access justice in environmental matters across Latin America and the Caribbean. It also aims to foster capacity-building and cooperation, contributing to the protection of everyone's right to live in a healthy environment and to sustainable development – both for current and future generations.

Under its Article 6, titled “Generation and dissemination of environmental information”, the Escazú agreement states that “Each Party shall ensure that consumers and users have official, relevant and clear information on the environmental qualities of goods and services and their effects on health, favouring sustainable production and consumption patterns”.

Source: Prepared by UNCTAD based on the information provided by the UNECE and ECLAC (2018).





Chapter 4

Proposed collaboration to advance sustainable consumption and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements



The results of the preliminary mapping exercises suggest that there are significant areas of commonality between consumer protection instruments and MEA provisions. First, there is a clear intersection between existing consumer protection tools, including the UNGCP, and convention provisions regarding consumer interests. Second, the mappings suggest that through inter-agency engagement, there are additional programmatic synergies that can be extrapolated and conceived as the basis for joint collaborative work. The mappings also present several possibilities for further collaboration between UNCTAD and UNEP, specifically the MEA secretariats and the 10YFP CI-SCP and One Planet Network.

Common threads include the opportunity for stakeholder engagement, the inclusion of consumer voice, involvement and participation, the provision of accessible, credible and reliable consumer information, and awareness and education initiatives. Each of these threads presents possibilities for expanding the impact and reach of the MEAs, while at the same time ensuring enhanced implementation and protection of consumer rights. One Planet Network's Guidelines on Providing Product Sustainability Information are a valuable resource for these collaborative initiatives and next steps.

Provisions within the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the CBD and the UNFCCC also present the opportunity for new and expanded collaborative initiatives between United Nations implementing agencies and consumer protection stakeholders, such as national consumer protection agencies, consumer organizations, businesses, national MEA focal points, academia and researchers. Some of these possibilities are detailed below.

Awareness-raising, education and training

- Use existing regional centres established under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions to provide targeted training

and technology transfer on hazardous waste management. These centres can be leveraged to meet specific regional needs and enhance consumer, business and community stakeholder awareness of environmental practices.

- Encourage UNCTAD, UNEP and MEA secretariats to create joint information and education campaigns to raise consumer awareness of MEA provisions, empowering consumers to make informed environmental choices.
- Develop collaborative awareness-raising campaigns associated with MEAs that engage consumers and stakeholders. Content should be co-developed by consumer protection agencies and national focal points to ensure policy cohesion and facilitate practical implementation.
- Activate the MEAs' technical assistance provisions to support inter-agency initiatives that provide practical training and resources for sustainable consumption practices, fostering cooperative implementation efforts across sectors.

Development of national policies and legislation

- Promote consumer involvement in the development of respective national policy legislation to enable implementation of the MEAs and ensure that consumer concerns are incorporated. For example, consumer protection perspectives could be mainstreamed into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) or NDCs by including consumer protection stakeholders in their design and updates.
- Promote the integration of sustainable consumption and the right to information on consumer protection policies by maximizing the linkages with MEA provisions. This approach supports MEA implementation and reinforces sustainable consumption as a national priority.
- Customize existing resources such as the UNEP Regulatory Frameworks to Combat Greenwashing (Parance et al.,

UNCTAD and UNEP, along with MEA secretariats and national authorities, can jointly foster coherent policy frameworks that link sustainable consumption with MEA implementation.

2023) and the Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information (UNEP, 2017) to meet specific national needs, ensuring alignment with MEA provisions and strengthening national consumer protection frameworks.

- Develop guidelines at the country level on how to communicate sustainability attributes in alignment with MEAs.

Information availability, accessibility and sharing

- Ensure that consumer protection stakeholders have easy access to convention-required notifications, such as national definitions of hazardous wastes, prohibitions and control measures, to support informed decision-making and compliance.
- Make MEA-related reports and submissions from Member States accessible to consumers, businesses and researchers. Engagement forums should be facilitated for stakeholders on the information contained in these reports and submissions.
- Work with value chain actors to enhance transparency regarding the sustainability impacts of products and services. Provide segmented accessible information (e.g. supply-chain or product-specific information, company operation information, facility-level information) to make it easier for stakeholders to understand and use this information effectively.
- Strengthen consumer access to product sustainability information. Information should be easily accessible through clear and credible environmental labels and/or Digital Product Information Systems. Information must be based on a life cycle approach looking at climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

Stakeholder engagement

- Actively involve consumer stakeholders in developing labelling formats, information tools and initiatives. Consultation and engagement should be activated during the preparation of technical guidelines to ensure that consumer perspectives are integrated.
- Create mechanisms to enable institutional coordination among national authorities responsible for implementation of MEAs and consumer protection authorities.
- Encourage the attendance of consumer protection authorities and consumer associations as observers so that they can become informed and contribute to COP deliberations, for example in the form of key messages and presentation of technical papers. Certain provisions in conventions allow for any other qualified body or agency that has informed the secretariat of its wish to be represented as an observer at a meeting of the COP – whether national or international, or governmental or non-governmental organizations such as consumer organizations – to be admitted as such.
- Engage key actors such as consumer protection agencies and consumer groups in the CI-SCP, such as the working group on product sustainability information, where issues related to greenwashing are discussed, or the working group on biodiversity and consumption, where issues related to consumer information and protection in the context of the CBD and KMGBF are discussed.

Research and innovation in consumer protection for sustainable consumption

- Identify platforms to share the findings of this joint UNEP-UNCTAD research project as a case study of opportunities



for policy integration. Present findings at upcoming COP meetings using MEA review sessions as direct opportunities to illustrate consumer protection impacts and policy integration examples.²⁹

- Identify ways to stimulate research and innovation and set up mechanisms to encourage interest and participation by academia. Lessons may be found

in the Research Partnership Platform on Competition and Consumer Protection initiated by UNCTAD.³⁰

Member States have a critical role to play in the successful implementation of the ideas proposed above, notably through improved policy coordination across implementing departments, agencies, regulators and entities.

²⁹ Among other responsibilities, the UNCTAD-convened Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy considers studies, documentation and reports from relevant organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations and networks; exchanges information on work programmes and topics for consultations; and identifies work-sharing projects and cooperation in the provision of technical assistance. The group thus presents a possible platform for joint collaboration and partnership with the MEA secretariat for sharing information about MEAs.

³⁰ For more information on the platform, see <https://unctad.org/topic/competition-and-consumer-protection/research-partnership-platform> (accessed 7 May 2025).



Chapter 5

Conclusions and recommendations



The primary purpose of this report has been to inquire into the contribution that consumer protection tools can offer towards achieving the objectives of the identified MEAs. Mapping exercises were plotted based on the perspectives and ideas shared by experts and stakeholders engaged in consumer protection and/or implementation of MEAs. The common denominator weaving the possibilities together is a clear commitment to, and activity around, advancing the global agenda for sustainability through more sustainable approaches to consumption and production.

The mapping confirmed the foundational work taking place under the auspices of UNCTAD and UNEP, and revealed intersections that already exist and that could be expanded. It also raised ideas for other steps that could be undertaken, including:

- Using important guiding principles and provisions, as well as blueprints for advancing important dimensions of sustainable consumption and production, already set out in existing international instruments, notably the MEAs and UNGCP. These can provide guidance for Member States when considering the development or amendment of sustainability and consumer protection policies.
- Enhancing policy coordination at the national, regional and international levels, as well as fostering multistakeholder involvement, such as that enabled through the One Planet Network; strengthening existing efforts in this regard; and tracking possible changes in consumer behaviour emerging from such involvement.
- Designing capacity-building initiatives and providing guidance for government officials tasked with implementing the respective international instruments and consumer protection policies through

collaborative technical cooperation initiatives and by integrating public information-sharing platforms.

These preliminary recommendations serve as examples of ways to enhance the impact and expand the operationalization and implementation of the MEAs through UNEP and UNCTAD collaboration.

At the national level, a starting point could be assessing national consumer protection laws to determine alignment with MEA provisions. This would generate a baseline to initiate enabling policy amendments to align with and integrate MEA intentions in consumer protection legislation.

UNEP-UNCTAD joint initiatives are well positioned to make a concrete contribution to the advancement of the SDGs, specifically SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. Of particular interest, given its relation to MEAs, is Target 12.4: “Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement”; and Target 12.8: “By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature”. Drawing on these targets will contribute to having a positive impact on the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution by encouraging consumers, businesses and governments to adopt more responsible and sustainable consumption and production practices.

Table 2 outlines key recommendations and identifies the relevant stakeholders involved in their implementation. Naturally, these recommendations should be prioritized looking at national contexts to maximize their impact and effectiveness.

There is untapped potential to integrate consumer protection tools more systematically into the implementation of MEAs—through legislation, public policy, awareness-raising, business engagement, and international cooperation.

 **Table 2.**
Key Recommendations and stakeholders involved

	Recommendations	Stakeholders involved
Awareness-raising, education and training	Encourage UNCTAD, UNEP and MEA secretariats to create joint information and education campaigns to raise consumer awareness about MEA provisions, empowering consumers to make informed environmental choices.	UNCTAD, UNEP and MEA secretariats
	Develop collaborative awareness-raising campaigns associated with the MEAs to engage consumers. Content should be co-developed by consumer protection agencies and the MEA secretariats to ensure policy cohesion and facilitate practical implementation.	MEA secretariats and consumer protection agencies
	Activate the MEAs' technical assistance provisions to support inter-agency initiatives that provide practical training and resources for sustainable consumption practices, fostering cooperative implementation efforts across sectors.	MEA secretariats and consumer protection agencies
	Use existing regional centres established under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions to provide targeted training and technology transfer on hazardous waste management. These centres can be leveraged to meet specific regional needs and enhance consumer, business and community stakeholder awareness of environmental practices.	MEA secretariats (particularly the Basel and Stockholm Convention secretariats) and their Regional Training Centres, and Ministries of Environment
Development of national policies and legislation	Promote consumer involvement in the development of national policies aligned with MEAs to ensure that consumer concerns are integrated.	Policymakers and consumer protection agencies
	Embed sustainable consumption principles and the consumer's right to information about consumer protection policies, linking these policies to MEA goals.	National consumer protection agencies and Ministries of Environment
	Customize existing resources to meet specific national needs, ensuring alignment with MEA provisions and strengthening national consumer protection frameworks.	UNEP through the CI-SCP, consumer protection agencies and consumer associations
	Develop guidelines at the country level on how to communicate sustainability attributes in alignment with MEAs.	Consumer protection agencies, UNCTAD and UNEP
Information availability, accessibility and sharing	Ensure that consumer protection stakeholders have easy access to convention-required notifications.	MEA secretariats and national focal points
	Make MEA-related reports and submissions from Member States accessible to consumers, businesses and researchers.	MEA secretariats and national focal points
	Work with value chain actors to enhance transparency regarding the sustainability impacts of products and services.	Ministries of Environment and consumer protection agencies
	Strengthen consumer access to product sustainability information. Information should be easily accessible through clear and credible environmental labels and/or Digital Product Information Systems. Information must be based on a life cycle approach looking at climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.	UNEP, UNCTAD, MEA secretariats, and Ministries of Environment
Stakeholder engagement	Actively involve consumer stakeholders in developing labelling formats and information tools required by the MEAs. Labelling should follow a holistic approach where possible, taking into account all aspects of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.	MEA secretariats, consumer protection agencies and consumer associations
	Create mechanisms to enable institutional coordination among national authorities responsible for implementation of MEAs and consumer protection authorities.	Ministries of Environment, consumer protection agencies and MEA national focal points
	Encourage the attendance as observers of consumer protection authorities and consumer associations to become informed and contribute to deliberations at Conferences of the Parties.	Consumer protection agencies and consumer associations
	Engagement of key actors such as consumer protection agencies and consumer groups in the CI-SCP.	Consumer protection agencies and consumer associations
Research and innovation	Share the findings of this joint UNEP-UNCTAD project as a case study of opportunities for policy integration.	UNEP and UNCTAD
	Stimulate research and innovation and set up mechanisms to encourage participation by academia.	UNCTAD

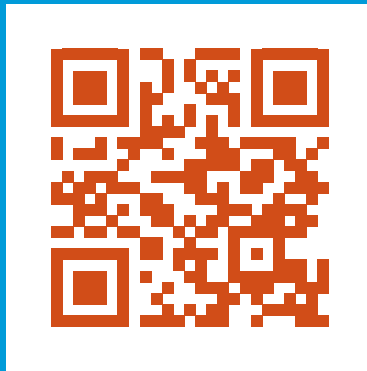
Source: UNCTAD.

Note: CI-SCP: Consumer Information for Sustainable Consumption and Production; MEA: multilateral environmental agreement; UNCTAD: United Nations Trade and Development; UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme.

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