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

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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Report on the implementation of the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection and of the work of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy

Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

Summary

The implementation of the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection by Member States and relevant organizations, since the Eighth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices, is reviewed in this note. The guidelines at present are contextualized and emerging issues in consumer protection are addressed. In particular, implementation of the guidelines at the national, regional and international levels is reviewed with regard to the following areas: the digital economy; product safety; sustainable consumption; vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers; dispute resolution and redress; stakeholder engagement; and international cooperation. The work of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy since its establishment in 2016 is discussed and areas for improvement in its work and questions for discussion are proposed.



I. Introduction

1. Consumer protection is fundamental in ensuring fair and inclusive economic systems that foster sustainable development. The significance of consumer protection transcends individual transactions; its implementation contributes to the achievement of broader socioeconomic objectives such as poverty alleviation, gender equality and environmental sustainability. Empowered consumers are better equipped to make informed choices, driving competition, innovation and resilience in markets. Moreover, robust consumer protection frameworks are critical in addressing inequalities, ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to fair and transparent markets.

2. The United Nations guidelines for consumer protection, adopted by the General Assembly in 1985, have had a pivotal role in shaping consumer protection frameworks worldwide. The guidelines provide a comprehensive set of principles for setting out the main characteristics of effective consumer protection legislation, enforcement institutions and redress systems, suitable to the economic, social and environmental contexts of States. The guidelines have undergone revisions, reflecting evolving economic, social and environmental circumstances, including an expansion in 1999, to include sustainable consumption, and a comprehensive revision in 2015, which marked a significant enhancement of the guidelines, introducing new elements such as access by consumers to essential goods and services, the protection of vulnerable consumers, national policies for consumer protection, principles for good business practices, electronic commerce (e-commerce), financial services and dispute resolution. The changes reflect the evolving dynamics of consumer markets in the digital age and the increasing complexity of globally integrated consumer markets.

3. The General Assembly requested the UNCTAD secretariat to exchange information on progress and experiences regarding the implementation of the resolution and established the Intergovernmental Working Group on Consumer Protection Law and Policy to, among other functions, “provide an annual forum and modalities for multilateral consultations, discussion and exchange of views between Member States on matters related to the guidelines, in particular their implementation and the experience arising therefrom” and to operate between and report to the United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set, at which its work would be reviewed and the renewal of its mandate considered; the Conference may also mandate the periodic review of the guidelines.¹

4. At its eighth session, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy requested the UNCTAD secretariat to prepare a review of the implementation of the guidelines and of the work of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts for the Ninth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set.² An evaluation of the implementation of the guidelines since their latest revision in 2015 is provided in this note, drawing on the UNCTAD world consumer protection map,³ insights from States and other relevant stakeholders, responses to a questionnaire circulated by UNCTAD⁴ and further research. The contributions of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts are examined, highlighting progress, challenges and opportunities for advancing consumer protection. UNCTAD aligns consumer protection with global development priorities, as detailed in this note, and aims to support States in leveraging the guidelines for consumer protection in achieving inclusive and sustainable economic progress.

¹ A/RES/70/186.

² TD/B/C.I/CPLP/42.

³ See <https://unctad.org/topic/competition-and-consumer-protection/consumer-protection-map>.

⁴ Respondents included Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, El Salvador, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Peru, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Sao Tome and Principe, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uzbekistan and Consumers International.

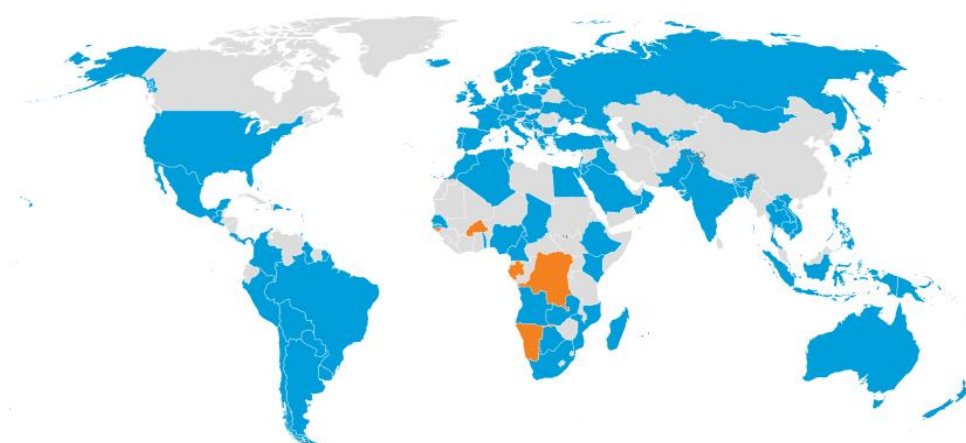
II. Progress on implementation

5. The General Assembly reaffirmed the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection as “a valuable set of principles for setting out the main characteristics of effective consumer protection legislation, enforcement institutions and redress systems and for assisting interested Member States in formulating and enforcing domestic and regional laws, rules and regulations that are suitable to their own economic and social and environmental circumstances, as well as promoting international enforcement cooperation among Member States and encouraging the sharing of experiences in consumer protection”.⁵

6. The guidelines have been widely implemented by States.⁶ The UNCTAD world consumer protection map provides information on the status of consumer law and policy worldwide; 110 of the 193 United Nations Member States currently participate in this project. Official information regarding the remaining 83 Member States is not available, yet it may be assumed that the majority do not have legal and institutional frameworks for consumer protection in place. The map shows that 105 countries, or about 54 per cent of United Nations Member States, have a dedicated consumer protection law (figure 1). Most of the States that do not yet have a law or for which data are not available are the least developed countries and small island developing States. This shows the significant divide between countries in which consumers benefit from legal protection and those in which consumers do not.

Figure 1

Countries with dedicated laws on consumer protection*



*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Source: UNCTAD.

Note: Blue indicates “yes” (105 countries); orange indicates “no” (5 countries); grey indicates no data.

7. An essential part of an effective consumer protection framework is ensuring that public authorities are tasked with the implementation and enforcement of consumer protection laws and policies. The rate of implementation of this guideline is similar to that of the adoption of consumer protection laws, that is, most countries that have enacted a law have also entrusted a public authority as a consumer protection policymaking and enforcement agency (figure 2). National authorities that have the necessary human and financial resources to promote effective compliance and to obtain or facilitate redress for

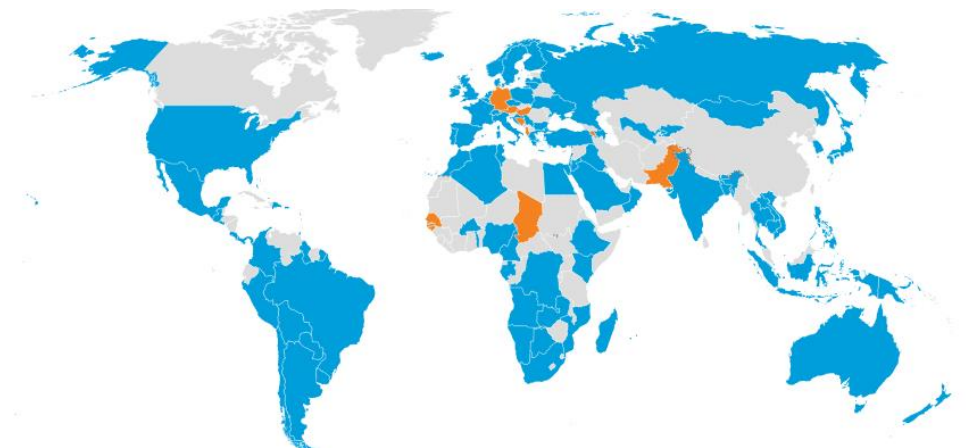
⁵ A/RES/70/186.

⁶ TD/B/C.I/CPLP/23, TD/B/C.I/CPLP/39, TD/RBP/CONF.9/2.

consumers are necessary in order to protect consumers and are a precondition for effective cross-border, regional and international cooperation.⁷

Figure 2

Countries with a main consumer protection authority or agency*



*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Source: UNCTAD.

Note: Blue indicates “yes” (99 countries); orange indicates “no” (11 countries); grey indicates no data.

8. Countries with a dedicated legal framework have been updating such frameworks since 2020. All but one respondent to the UNCTAD questionnaire reported having updated laws for consumer protection in response to the dynamic global landscape of consumer markets and in the face of emerging challenges such as those posed by the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers, the outbreak of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, developments in the digital economy and growing concerns about the impact of consumption on sustainable and inclusive development. These challenges are considered in chapter III, along with regulatory responses by States and other stakeholders.

III. Emerging trends and challenges in implementation

9. The implementation of the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection has continued to evolve since the Eighth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set, to face emerging challenges. For example, in Argentina, the authority has addressed the risks to consumer health and safety from informal commerce in social media markets; in Germany, consumer protection tools have been used in the energy sector to address the cost-of-living crisis; and in Japan, efforts have been made to protect the interests of elderly consumers in the digital economy. Reflections on emerging trends and challenges faced when implementing consumer protection policies are provided in this chapter, based on responses to the UNCTAD questionnaire.

A. E-commerce and the digital economy

10. The guidelines for consumer protection state that Member States should work towards enhancing consumer confidence in e-commerce “by the continued development of transparent and effective consumer protection policies, ensuring a level of protection that is not less than that afforded in other forms of commerce”.⁸ Countries have developed diverse

⁷ Muniz Cipriano AC and Izaguerri Vila A, 2020, International cooperation in consumer protection, Research Paper No. 54, UNCTAD.

⁸ A/RES/70/186.

strategies to address challenges in e-commerce and the digital economy, reflecting priorities and regulatory approaches under the guidelines.

11. Argentina has focused on ensuring transparency and robust regulation, to protect consumer rights in digital markets.⁹

12. Brazil has amended the Consumer Protection Code eight times since 2020, to uphold consumer rights in e-commerce, covering issues such as advertizing, information, cooling-off periods and overindebteness.¹⁰

13. Bulgaria has emphasized consumer protection through legal reforms, enhancing transparency in online transactions, particularly with regard to paid placements, reviews and personalized pricing; has addressed issues such as dual quality in marketing; and has implemented remedies for unfair practices.¹¹

14. Chile has passed laws requiring telecommunications providers to inform consumers about better service plans and ensure transparency in pricing and offerings, making plan transitions simpler for consumers.¹²

15. El Salvador has highlighted challenges in providing consumers with complete and truthful information, focusing on preventing practices such as dark commercial patterns and undue pressure in digital transactions.¹³

16. France has enacted a regulation on guarantees for digital goods and services.¹⁴

17. France and Germany have transposed the European Union Digital Services Act, mandating transparency in online pricing and withdrawal processes for consumers.¹⁵

18. Japan has addressed issues particular to unsafe products and opaque transactions on digital platforms through new legislation (Act on the Protection of Consumers Who Use Digital Platforms for Shopping, 2021).

19. Poland has addressed the increase of manipulative designs and deceptive practices in digital markets through enhanced transparency requirements and regulatory measures.¹⁶

20. South Africa has launched a tool for consumer use in verifying whether a website is fraudulent.¹⁷

21. Switzerland, in 2021, amended the Price Indication Ordinance, allowing for the digital provision of mandatory price information in advertisements by businesses.¹⁸

22. The Russian Federation, in 2025, subjected 24 groups of products to digital labelling, a norm enforced by the consumer protection authority.¹⁹

23. The United Kingdom has enacted the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act, 2024, aimed at regulating large platforms, ensuring algorithmic transparency and addressing fake reviews, reflecting a comprehensive approach to modern digital challenges.

24. UNCTAD has recommended various policy measures to improve consumer trust and protection in digital markets, particularly in the context of online platforms. Policymakers should collect intelligence through public consultations, market studies,

⁹ See <https://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/detalleAviso/primera/304600/20240312>, <https://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/detalleAviso/primera/305494/20240408>, <https://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/detalleAviso/primera/312210/20240814> and <https://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/detalleAviso/primera/318151/20241213>.

¹⁰ Response to the questionnaire from Brazil.

¹¹ Response to the questionnaire from Bulgaria.

¹² See <https://www.diariooficial.interior.gob.cl/publicaciones/2024/11/15/43999/01/2570537.pdf>.

¹³ Response to the questionnaire from El Salvador.

¹⁴ See <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000044125847/>.

¹⁵ See https://www.bmj.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Gesetzgebung/BGBl/Bgbl_Digitale_Inhalte.html.

¹⁶ Response to the questionnaire from Poland.

¹⁷ See <https://thence.org.za/media-statement-the-national-consumer-commission-teams-up-with-safps-to-help-curb-scams/>.

¹⁸ See <https://www.admin.ch/gov/fr/accueil/documentation/communiques.msg-id-83582.html>.

¹⁹ Response to the questionnaire from the Russian Federation.

complaints-related data, investigations and surveillance, to identify emerging consumer challenges. Ensuring that information on providers, products, services and terms is clear, adequate and timely is critical, as is verifying the authenticity of consumer reviews and enforcing advertising rules for social media influencers. Strengthening consumer education and business guidance, particularly for vulnerable consumers, is also critical. Consumer product safety should be prioritized through voluntary commitments, and surveillance and enforcement should be strengthened. Data protection needs to be reinforced, including through the promotion of data collection, correction, treatment and usage policies, and data protection by design needs to be encouraged. Online platform initiatives should facilitate dispute resolution between consumers and third-party sellers while also ensuring consumers' access to justice, as well as public reporting by online dispute resolution providers, to ensure evidence-based policymaking. Platform liability regimes should be assessed, to determine whether they are in line with consumer interests, and the clarity of applicable responsibilities should be ensured. Finally, enforcement against dark commercial patterns should be prioritized, including through cross-border, regional and international cooperation.²⁰

B. Product safety

25. The guidelines for consumer protection state that consumers should have the right of access to non-hazardous products, and include several recommendations on enhancing product safety in markets. Countries have implemented various strategies to enhance product safety, reflecting the shared global challenge of ensuring that consumers are protected from unsafe goods.

26. Brazil reformed the regulatory framework through Ordinance No. 30 of the National Institute for Metrology, Quality and Technology,²¹ adopting a risk-based approach, streamlining conformity assessments and aligning with international standards. The measures serve to emphasize supplier accountability, mandatory safety compliance and penalties for non-compliance. Brazil has faced challenges in monitoring e-commerce platforms on which counterfeit or uncertified products are prevalent and has accordingly strengthened oversight, established collaborations with digital platforms and conducted public awareness initiatives.²²

27. Chile has addressed challenges in informal and cross-border trade, with the National Consumer Service focusing on consumer education and protective mechanisms towards foreign suppliers, highlighting gaps in informal commerce oversight.²³

28. El Salvador amended the Consumer Protection Law in 2024.²⁴ The amendment mandated the removal of unsafe products from markets, reinforcing preventive measures and supplier obligations, while emphasizing international cooperation in addressing cross-border safety challenges.

29. Mozambique has a legal framework in place, yet has faced difficulties in addressing consumer product safety hazards caused by imported vehicles, due to the lack of effective cooperation with foreign counterparts.²⁵

30. Peru has implemented a digital alert system for unsafe products, along with educational campaigns and artificial intelligence-driven innovations under an initiative of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.²⁶

²⁰ TD/B/C.I/CPLP/34.

²¹ See <https://www.gov.br/inmetro/pt-br/assuntos/regulamentacao/modelo-regulatorio-do-inmetro/inmetro-regulatory-model-published-march-2022.pdf>.

²² Response to the questionnaire from Brazil.

²³ Response to the questionnaire from Chile.

²⁴ See <https://www.defensoria.gob.sv/download/ley-de-proteccion-al-consumidor-reformas-2024-diario-oficial/>.

²⁵ Response to the questionnaire from Mozambique.

²⁶ Response to the questionnaire from Peru.

31. The Republic of Korea has introduced comprehensive measures, including blocking hazardous imports and engaging businesses in voluntary safety management systems.²⁷

32. The United Kingdom has adapted the regulatory framework to modern technological advances and complex supply chains, including through the Product Regulation and Metrology Bill.²⁸

33. Uzbekistan has used market monitoring in order to ensure compliance with national regulations.²⁹

34. Such efforts, including collaborations with stakeholders, underscore a collective drive for robust product safety governance globally, addressing both domestic and international concerns.

35. International cooperation is critical, to prevent the cross-border distribution of unsafe consumer products, as uncoordinated national efforts may be insufficient in addressing the global nature of the issue. UNCTAD research highlights that international cooperation in consumer protection remains limited, particularly in enforcement, with most efforts relying on informal inter-agency collaboration, except within the European Union.³⁰ Divergent product safety frameworks across States further complicate cooperation, as a product deemed unsafe in one jurisdiction may be considered compliant in another. Regional and international product recall networks provide valuable data for authorities, yet better integration is needed to enhance effectiveness. Strengthening information-sharing mechanisms regarding banned, withdrawn or restricted products remains critical, since current gaps prevent timely responses. Many jurisdictions lack the necessary agreements and systems to facilitate efficient data exchanges. With regard to preventing the cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products, the Eighth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set recognized that this “can be reduced globally as international cooperation is strengthened”.³¹

C. Sustainable consumption

36. The guidelines for consumer protection state that consumers have the right to promote just, equitable and sustainable economic and social development and environmental protection. Sustainable consumption can thus be linked to the wider right to development, encompassing the economic, social and environmental dimensions.³² In 2024, the United Nations Environment Assembly adopted a resolution on promoting sustainable lifestyles that, inter alia, encourages Member States to take actions in support of empowering citizens to make informed choices.³³ Countries have made efforts to align policies with the guidelines for consumer protection, to promote sustainable consumption.

37. Brazil has advanced sustainability through initiatives such as an energy labelling programme and vehicle fuel consumption standards, encouraging consumers to opt for eco-friendly products while fostering industry innovation. The Green Seal Brazil

²⁷ See https://www.kca.go.kr/down/eng/laws/1_Framework%20Act%20on%20Consumers.pdf and https://www.kca.go.kr/down/eng/laws/11_Product%20Liability%20Act.pdf.

²⁸ See <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3752>.

²⁹ Response to the questionnaire from Uzbekistan.

³⁰ Muniz Cipriano AC and Izaguerri Vila A, 2020; UNCTAD, 2025, *Emerging Trends and Challenges in Consumer Product Safety* (United Nations publication, sales No. E.25.II.D.8, Geneva).

³¹ TD/RBP/CONF.9/9.

³² UNCTAD, 2017, *Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through Consumer Protection* (United Nations publication, New York and Geneva); see <https://www.oecd-events.org/consumer-policy-ministerial/en/session/49446efd-1724-ef11-86d2-000d3abd5c23/session-5-promoting-development-and-inclusivity-through-consumer-policy>.

³³ UNEP/EA.6/Res.8.

Programme certifies environmentally responsible products and services, supporting circular economy practices.³⁴

38. In Bulgaria, amendments to the Consumer Protection Act targeted greenwashing and early obsolescence, prohibiting deceptive environmental claims and practices that reduced product durability, ensuring consumer access to genuine sustainable options.³⁵

39. France has enacted circular economy and climate resilience laws.³⁶ This helps strengthen consumer awareness of the environmental qualities and characteristics of products, including environmental labelling, reparability and durability indices, and helps enhance transparency on the obligations of certain businesses to promote the circular economy, such as through the availability of spare parts.

40. Germany has aligned the legislative framework with European Union directives, emphasizing eco-design standards, sustainable packaging and the reparability of goods; for example, the Deutschland Ticket transport initiative simplifies public transport while promoting environmentally friendly travel.

41. Poland has addressed greenwashing by introducing stringent regulations for environmental claims, ensuring transparency and accountability in sustainability-related marketing.³⁷

42. The Republic of Korea Consumer Agency has analysed digital green policies and eco-friendly consumer behaviour, while promoting the right to repair and digital labelling for recyclable products.³⁸

43. The United Kingdom has addressed unsubstantiated green claims through the Green Claims Code, holding businesses accountable for misleading sustainability marketing.³⁹

44. Such global initiatives serve to highlight the shared challenges of fostering sustainable consumption and addressing deceptive practices while encouraging innovation and consumer awareness. UNCTAD research serves to show further examples of regulations and enforcement activities that can guide States.⁴⁰ Best practices for businesses and information for policymakers is provided in *Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information*.⁴¹ A report on regulatory frameworks to combat greenwashing provides further guidance on possible approaches to addressing misleading environmental claims.⁴²

D. Vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers

45. The guidelines for consumer protection state that the protection of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers is a legitimate need that the guidelines are intended to meet. This policy area is of increasing concern among consumer protection authorities, particularly in the context of the pandemic, during which consumer policies have served as a safeguard against vulnerability and exclusion.

³⁴ See <https://www.gov.br/inmetro/pt-br/assuntos/avaliacao-da-conformidade/programa-brasileiro-de-etiquetagem/40-anos-do-programa-brasileiro-de-etiquetagem-eficiente-por-natureza> and <https://www.gov.br/participamaisbrasil/programa-selo-verde-brasil>.

³⁵ Response to the questionnaire from Bulgaria.

³⁶ See <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000041553759/> and <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000043956924/>.

³⁷ Response to the questionnaire from Poland.

³⁸ Response to the questionnaire from the Republic of Korea.

³⁹ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-claims-code-making-environmental-claims>.

⁴⁰ UNCTAD, 2023, *Competition and Consumer Policies for Sustainability* (United Nations publication, Geneva).

⁴¹ United Nations Environment Programme, 2017, *Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information* (Nairobi).

⁴² See <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/knowledge-centre/resources/regulatory-frameworks-combat-greenwashing>.

46. Mexico has launched a package of measures between the Government and the private sector to ensure fair prices in the basic basket of consumer goods. This effort is reinforced by the efforts of the consumer protection authority on consumer information on prices.⁴³

47. Peru has enacted Law No. 31040, amending the Consumer Protection Defence Code with regard to hoarding and price gouging, requiring authorities to establish a list of essential goods and services within two working days of a declaration of emergency.⁴⁴

48. Countries have adopted diverse strategies to address the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers in line with the guidelines for consumer protection.

49. Argentina has implemented Provision 137/2024, establishing a regime to provide guidance, assistance and advisory services to disadvantaged consumers, in order to help ensure effective dispute resolution mechanisms tailored to the needs of such consumers.⁴⁵

50. El Salvador, France and Germany, amid the cost-of-living crisis, have adopted measures to shield vulnerable consumers, particularly with regard to energy prices and “shrinkflation”, whereby the quantity of goods sold is reduced while the price is maintained.⁴⁶

51. In France, recent legislative reforms have strengthened criminal penalties for deceptive and aggressive commercial practices against vulnerable populations and, if such offenses are committed online or through digital platforms, penalties are increased to five years in prison and a fine of up to €750,000, reinforcing consumer protection in the digital marketplace.⁴⁷

52. In Japan, the ageing population and advances in digitalization have posed challenges, with cognitive biases and bounded rationality making consumers susceptible to unfair practices, and authorities have emphasized the need to reform consumer laws to address such issues and regulate emerging digital transactions.⁴⁸

53. Peru has developed accessible tools, such as consumer guides and decalogues in Indigenous languages, to enhance inclusivity and address emergencies, which serves to show a commitment to equity and accessibility.⁴⁹

E. Dispute resolution and redress

54. The guidelines for consumer protection state that Member States should encourage the development of fair, effective, transparent and impartial mechanisms to address consumer complaints through administrative, judicial and alternative dispute resolution, including for cross-border cases. Diverse national strategies have been adopted in enhancing dispute resolution and redress mechanisms.

55. Argentina has implemented Provision 404/2024, enabling both domestic and international tourists to resolve disputes through the National Consumer Arbitration System within 24 hours, enhancing accessibility for swift resolutions.⁵⁰

⁴³ See <https://www.gob.mx/shcp/pacic> and <https://www.gob.mx/profeco/prensa/profeco-mantiene-monitoreo-riguroso-a-precios-de-combustibles-y-productos-basicos>.

⁴⁴ See TD/B/C.I/CPLP/25-TD/B/C.I/CLP/60 and <https://busquedas.elperuano.pe/dispositivo/NL/1880788-1>.

⁴⁵ See <https://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/detalleAviso/primera/308412/20240530>.

⁴⁶ See <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000049502248> and <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/service/electricity-and-gas-price-brake-2156432>.

⁴⁷ See <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000046186723> and <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000049523123>.

⁴⁸ Response to the questionnaire from Japan.

⁴⁹ See <https://www.gob.pe/institucion/indecopi/informes-publicaciones/4006973-decalogo-del-consumidor> and <https://www.gob.pe/institucion/indecopi/informes-publicaciones/5371878-decalogo-de-buenas-practicas-para-un-consumo-responsable>.

⁵⁰ See <https://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/detalleAviso/primera/305494/20240408>.

56. Brazil has implemented local agency programmes, revamped the online Consumidor platform and strengthened specialized consumer courts, to facilitate dispute resolution; and the Consumer Defence Code further supports damage reparation through the enforcement of liability regimes, collective actions and educational campaigns.⁵¹

57. Germany has introduced collective redress mechanisms following the European Union Representation Actions Directive, allowing qualified entities to seek injunctions or redress measures for groups of consumers, alongside a new decision procedure to expedite mass claims.⁵²

58. Peru has consolidated leadership through initiatives such as Online Claim, which has addressed over 95,000 claims nationally, achieving a high rate of conciliation.⁵³ Legislative measures, such as reducing response times for complaints and strengthening participation in conciliation hearings, have emphasized efficiency and accountability.

59. Poland has transposed the European Union Representation Actions Directive, empowering collective claims.

60. The Republic of Korea has strengthened mediation mechanisms and launched mobile chat-based counselling, to enhance access to redress.⁵⁴

61. In the United Kingdom, the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act has served to boost regulatory enforcement powers, mandating accredited dispute resolution providers and enabling compensation for non-financial losses.

62. Such initiatives demonstrate global efforts to improve redress accessibility, efficiency and fairness; and address complex consumer disputes effectively.

63. UNCTAD research has highlighted that the lack of a robust international legal framework remains a barrier to improving consumer dispute resolution and redress. The complexities of private international law necessitate harmonization efforts, particularly through the integration of consumer and contract law, to serve as a reference for States in cross-border dispute resolution and redress. National and regional progress is varied, highlighting the need for tailored approaches suited to different realities. Despite these differences, common challenges persist, including with regard to securing sustainable sources of funding, consumer awareness, business participation and legal complexities affecting the effectiveness of consumer dispute resolution and redress mechanisms. Such mechanisms should be consumer-centric, ensuring accessibility, transparency, affordability and fairness. The following benefits underscore this approach: improved access to justice; enhanced consumer trust in the digital economy; and optimized judicial resources, by diverting low-value disputes from courts to consumer dispute resolution and redress schemes. Policy considerations in strengthening dispute resolution can be identified, as follows: ensuring effective dispute resolution for all consumers, particularly vulnerable groups; fostering public and private dispute resolution bodies with broad sectoral coverage; establishing quality criteria and monitoring mechanisms; incentivizing business participation and, where necessary, mandating jurisdictions; enhancing consumer awareness through education campaigns; granting enforceability to decisions; linking outcomes to payment systems in e-commerce; ensuring sustainable funding sources; and promoting international cooperation and the sharing of best practices.⁵⁵

F. Stakeholder engagement

64. At its first session, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts emphasized “the need to engage stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

⁵¹ Response to the questionnaire from Brazil.

⁵² See <https://www.recht.bund.de/eli/bund/bgbl-1/2023/272>.

⁵³ See <https://enlinea.indecopi.gob.pe/reclamavirtual/>.

⁵⁴ Response to the questionnaire from the Republic of Korea.

⁵⁵ UNCTAD, 2024, *Consumer Dispute Resolution in the World* (United Nations publication, sales No. E.24.2.D.8, Geneva).

Development, in particular with regard to inclusive consumer protection policies”.⁵⁶ Stakeholder engagement remains a critical component of advancing consumer protection globally.

65. In Argentina, the establishment of the Commission for Consumer Law Reform served to strengthen collaboration between experts and policymakers, enhancing the framework for consumer protection.⁵⁷

66. Brazil has focused on engaging stakeholders through the programmes of local agencies and educational initiatives, fostering a collective approach to resolving consumer disputes.⁵⁸

67. Chile has made efforts to define the boundaries of the consumer protection agency with regard to sectoral regulatory authorities, reflecting the complexity of coordinating efforts across institutions.⁵⁹

68. Luxembourg has identified collaboration among ministries with an interest in consumer protection as an increasing challenge for the Directorate for Consumer Protection.⁶⁰

69. Peru has achieved progress through the National Integrated Consumer Protection System, emphasizing inter-agency cooperation and professionalizing consumer associations; key initiatives included an updated consumer portal that has reached over 1.3 million users and campaigns targeting sustainability and inclusivity, such as addressing ethnic discrimination in consumer practices.⁶¹

70. The Republic of Korea has prioritized memorandums of understanding with key private-sector actors, promoting transparency in product labelling and fostering a trustworthy digital marketplace.

71. The Russian Federation, to strengthen consumer protection in contractual relations, amended the consumer protection law, particularly in the field of financial services, in which consumer vulnerability was deemed greater. The amendments prohibit contractual clauses that restrict consumers’ rights to seek redress, impose unwanted additional services, allow unilateral modifications by businesses or require pre-determined consent for additional goods or services. In addition, businesses can no longer refuse to conclude, amend, terminate or execute a contract based on a consumer’s refusal to provide personal data. By establishing a list of unfair contractual terms, the measures ensure greater transparency for both consumers and businesses, preventing the inclusion of provisions that violate legal requirements. The adoption and dissemination of these measures have had a key role in curbing unfair business practices, reducing instances of contractual abuse and fostering greater accountability among businesses in dealings with consumers.⁶²

72. Consumers International has identified financial constraints, limited government support and operational inefficiencies as critical barriers facing members. Such challenges underscore the need for stronger collaboration and resource allocation, to amplify the role of consumer groups in shaping and implementing policies. Collectively, efforts highlight the ongoing challenges and opportunities in fostering multi-stakeholder engagement, for effective consumer protection.⁶³

G. International cooperation

73. The guidelines for consumer protection provide the framework based upon which international cooperation in consumer protection is currently conducted, which is based on

⁵⁶ TD/B/C.I/CPLP/4.

⁵⁷ Response to the questionnaire from Argentina.

⁵⁸ Response to the questionnaire from Brazil.

⁵⁹ Response to the questionnaire from Chile.

⁶⁰ Response to the questionnaire from Luxembourg.

⁶¹ See <https://www.gob.pe/27595>.

⁶² Response to the questionnaire from the Russian Federation.

⁶³ Response to the questionnaire from Consumers International.

formal and informal agreements among authorities at the cross-border and bilateral levels. Such efforts are commonly underpinned by regional integration trade agreements.⁶⁴ International cooperation has been essential in addressing cross-border challenges in consumer protection. Challenges identified include the following: the difficulty of enforcing consumer protection laws against businesses that operate in a country without a legal or physical presence; the availability of unsafe products in local platform marketplaces; and the lack of efficacy of online dispute resolution for consumers in cross-border disputes.

74. Mexico has noted the successful collaboration stemming from a multilateral memorandum of understanding with Chile, Colombia, Peru and the United States, focused on strengthening enforcement and cross-border asset recovery, which was expanded in 2024 to include Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Panama, serving to show the increasing commitment to international regulatory alignment.⁶⁵

75. Some countries, including Mozambique, Poland, South Africa and the United Kingdom, have highlighted the complexities of enforcing consumer protection laws across borders.

76. Poland has faced challenges in addressing unfair practices by international entities due to divergent legal frameworks.

77. The United Kingdom has leveraged new powers to provide investigative assistance and information exchanges with foreign regulators, reinforcing international collaboration.

78. Such efforts collectively advance the international cooperation vision of the guidelines for consumer protection, while serving to highlight ongoing challenges in bridging enforcement gaps.

79. Consumer protection policies are evolving in order to address challenges related to digital markets, global cooperation and sustainability. Efforts are focused on enhancing consumer safety, regulatory oversight and transparency, to ensure fair, safe and sustainable markets. Attention is given to protecting vulnerable consumers through targeted policies and inclusive education and assistance initiatives. In addition, dispute resolution mechanisms are being modernized, incorporating digital solutions and collective redress options, to improve access to justice. Effective stakeholder engagement among regulators, businesses and consumer organizations is increasingly becoming critical, to ensure more impactful outcomes. International cooperation also remains critical in addressing cross-border enforcement challenges and regulatory inconsistencies. As consumer markets continue to evolve, policies need to remain adaptive, inclusive and globally coordinated, to uphold consumer rights and market fairness. UNCTAD consensus-building, research and recommendations provide essential guidance in strengthening consumer protection frameworks worldwide.

IV. Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy

80. The General Assembly decided to establish the intergovernmental group of experts on consumer protection law and policy, to provide the institutional machinery for the guidelines on consumer protection (box 1). The group operates under the method of work and work programme adopted at its first session and meets annually during a two-day period, operating between sessions of the United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set.⁶⁶ With an average attendance at each session of over 300 participants representing over 70 States, the group has become a reference point in global discussions on consumer protection. Participants include government officials representing permanent missions and consumer protection authorities, as well as practitioners and representatives of

⁶⁴ Muniz Cipriano AC and Izaguerri Vila A, 2020.

⁶⁵ See <https://www.ftc.gov/legal-library/browse/cooperation-agreements/multilateral-memorandum-understanding-cross-border-consumer-protection-cooperation>.

⁶⁶ TD/B/C.I/CPLP/2.

international organizations, business and consumer groups and academia. Respondents to the UNCTAD questionnaire unanimously expressed satisfaction with the mandate and performance of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts.

Box 1

Functions of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy

97. The intergovernmental group of experts on consumer protection law and policy shall have the following functions:

(a) To provide an annual forum and modalities for multilateral consultations, discussion and exchange of views between Member States on matters related to the guidelines, in particular their implementation and the experience arising therefrom;

(b) To undertake studies and research periodically on consumer protection issues related to the guidelines based on a consensus and the interests of Member States and disseminate them with a view to increasing the exchange of experience and giving greater effectiveness to the guidelines;

(c) To conduct voluntary peer reviews of national consumer protection policies of Member States, as implemented by consumer protection authorities;

(d) To collect and disseminate information on matters relating to the overall attainment of the goals of the guidelines and to the appropriate steps Member States have taken at the national or regional levels to promote effective implementation of their objectives and principles;

(e) To provide capacity-building and technical assistance to developing countries and economies in transition in formulating and enforcing consumer protection laws and policies;

(f) To consider relevant studies, documentation and reports from relevant organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations and networks, to exchange information on work programmes and topics for consultations and to identify work-sharing projects and cooperation in the provision of technical assistance;

(g) To make appropriate reports and recommendations on the consumer protection policies of Member States, including the application and implementation of these guidelines;

(h) To operate between and report to the United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices;

(i) To conduct a periodic review of the guidelines, when mandated by the United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices;

(j) To establish such procedures and methods of work as may be necessary to carry out its mandate.

Source: A/RES/70/186.

81. The primary function of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts is to serve as a platform for multilateral consultations, discussions and exchanges of views between Member States on consumer protection. The group conducts extensive formal and informal deliberations, to reach consensus on agreed conclusions that reflect the current priorities and concerns of Member States in the field of consumer protection and provide a mandate of work for the group and the UNCTAD secretariat; and to approve the provisional agenda for the next session. The secretariat prepares documentation to facilitate the deliberations, with an average of five documents per session (42 documents in total to date). Each session comprises a review of the implementation of the United Nations guidelines for consumer

protection, a presentation of the latest developments in legal and institutional frameworks and the world consumer protection map, a review of capacity-building in and technical assistance on consumer protection law and policy, a voluntary peer review of consumer protection law and policy and substantive discussions on consumer protection issues.

82. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts has addressed a range of key issues during its sessions, reflecting evolving challenges and opportunities in consumer protection globally. The discussions have covered themes such as the emerging collaborative economy, the impact of e-commerce and the engagement of stakeholders in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Legal and institutional frameworks for consumer protection have been reviewed, including through voluntary peer reviews, as well as best practices in dispute resolution and redress mechanisms; and consumer law enforcement. Particular attention has been given to the protection of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers, particularly with regard to public utilities, financial services and health services. Discussions have emphasized the need for stronger safeguards in key markets such as the digital and financial sectors, including measures to enhance trust in online platforms and financial literacy. The pandemic prompted discussions on regulatory responses and the resilience of consumer protection frameworks in crisis situations. Consumer product safety has been a recurring theme, with a focus on preventing the cross-border distribution of unsafe goods and improving safety standards. Sustainable consumption and the transition to clean energy have been highlighted as areas in which consumer protection policies can have a critical role. The importance of strengthening consumer advocacy has been underscored, through support for independent consumer groups, along with the importance of assessments of the voluntary peer review mechanism. Discussions have also explored emerging concerns such as with regard to public utilities and consumer protection in tourism.⁶⁷ The discussions have emphasized the need for continuous peer learning and the adaptation of policies to address new consumer risks and opportunities in an increasingly interconnected global economy.

83. One of the key achievements of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts has been the generation of consensus and peer-learning, to make appropriate reports and recommendations on the consumer protection policies of States, including the application and implementation of the guidelines for consumer protection. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts has served to highlight the role of UNCTAD as the focal point on consumer protection within the United Nations system and as the platform for discussions at the global level. The discussions are mainly channelled through the informal working groups established and led by States and interested stakeholders and coordinated by the secretariat, which have, to date, addressed the topics of consumer protection in e-commerce; the protection of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers; consumer product safety; consumer protection and gender; and modalities of the voluntary peer review exercises.⁶⁸ The informal working groups receive mandates from and report to the Intergovernmental Group of Experts; organize webinars and online workshops for exchanges on national and regional practices; and consult on actions that the Intergovernmental Group of Experts may act upon. Some important outputs have been the following:

(a) Informal working group on consumer protection in e-commerce: The group held a series of webinars to address the challenges and opportunities in consumer protection in the digital age; discussions focused on the protection of vulnerable consumers in digital markets, exploring the risks and implications of artificial intelligence for consumer rights and examining how artificial intelligence might be leveraged to enhance the enforcement of

⁶⁷ See all official documentation for each session at [https://unctad.org/meetings-search?f\[0\]=product%3A1454](https://unctad.org/meetings-search?f[0]=product%3A1454).

⁶⁸ See <https://unctad.org/Topic/Competition-and-Consumer-Protection/working-group-on-consumer-protection-in-e-commerce>, <https://unctad.org/Topic/Competition-and-Consumer-Protection/Working-group-on-protection-of-vulnerable-consumers>, <https://unctad.org/Topic/Competition-and-Consumer-Protection/Working-group-on-consumer-product-safety>, <https://unctad.org/Topic/Competition-and-Consumer-Protection/working-group-on-consumer-protection-and-gender> and <https://unctad.org/Topic/Competition-and-Consumer-Protection/working-group-on-voluntary-peer-reviews>.

consumer protection laws.⁶⁹ The group is developing a study on artificial intelligence and consumer protection, providing further insights into regulatory approaches and best practices, to safeguard consumers in artificial intelligence-driven markets.

(b) Informal working group on the protection of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers: The group held a series of discussions leading to a compendium of contributions on the protection of such consumers;⁷⁰

(c) Informal working group on consumer product safety: In collaboration with the European Commission, the group held four workshops aimed at strengthening global consumer product safety and focused on establishing general product safety principles, harnessing the full potential of research to enhance product safety and engaging civil society in consumer protection efforts; discussions emphasized the importance of building effective and collaborative consumer product safety frameworks, fostering a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to ensuring consumer well-being. The group also convened a series of webinars and workshops to advance consumer product safety, focused on enhancing product safety on online platforms, building trust in cross-border e-commerce and preventing the distribution of unsafe consumer products across borders; and has explored the role of import surveillance and customs cooperation in protecting consumers from hazardous goods, as well as strategies for effective outreach among both consumers and businesses, to promote product safety awareness.⁷¹ Such efforts contribute to the implementation of the recommendation on preventing the cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products, reinforcing international cooperation in consumer protection (box 2). The group is currently discussing principles for consumer product safety and a model law on the implementation of the recommendation;

(d) Informal working group on consumer protection and gender: The group held a series of webinars aimed at integrating a gender perspective into consumer protection policies and initiatives, with discussions focused on empowering women as consumers, exploring the intersection of trade, gender and consumer protection and highlighting best practices and experiences in promoting gender-inclusive consumer protection frameworks.⁷² The group is discussing a pathway for incorporating gender considerations into consumer protection⁷³ and developing a gender-inclusive consumer protection checklist, to foster more equitable and inclusive consumer protection policies globally;

⁶⁹ See <https://unctad.org/meeting/webinar-artificial-intelligence-and-consumer-protection-harnessing-tech-better-enforce>, <https://unctad.org/meeting/webinar-protection-vulnerable-consumers-digital-markets>, <https://unctad.org/meeting/webinar-artificial-intelligence-and-consumer-protection-risks-consumers> and <https://unctad.org/meeting/webinar-artificial-intelligence-deployment-consumer-protection-enforcement-authorities>.

⁷⁰ See https://unctad.org/system/files/information-document/ccpb_Compendium_Best_Practices_Vulnerable_Disadvantaged_Cons_en.pdf.

⁷¹ See <https://unctad.org/meeting/panel-discussion-strategies-effective-outreach-consumers-and-business-promote-product>, <https://unctad.org/meeting/joint-ec-unctad-workshop-building-effective-consumer-product-safety-frameworks-together>, <https://unctad.org/meeting/workshop-enhancing-consumer-product-safety-online-platforms>, <https://unctad.org/meeting/workshop-protecting-consumers-unsafe-products-through-import-surveillance-and-cooperation>, <https://unctad.org/meeting/trust-cross-border-e-commerce-case-consumer-product-safety>, <https://unctad.org/meeting/european-commission-unctad-workshop-civil-society-and-consumer-product-safety>, <https://unctad.org/meeting/european-commission-unctad-workshop-unlocking-full-potential-research-product-safety> and <https://unctad.org/meeting/unctad-european-commission-workshop-recommendation-general-product-safety-principles-0>.

⁷² See <https://unctad.org/meeting/webinar-empowering-women-consumers-bridging-trade-gender-and-consumer-protection> and <https://unctad.org/meeting/webinar-best-practices-and-experiences-consumer-protection-and-gender>.

⁷³ See <https://unctad.org/meeting/webinar-incorporating-gender-perspective-consumer-protection-launching-new-pathway>.

(e) Informal working group on modalities of the voluntary peer review exercises: The group held a series of consultations leading to the revised methodological guidelines for peer reviews.⁷⁴

Box 2

Recommendation on preventing the cross-border distribution of known unsafe consumer products

The Eighth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set adopted this recommendation, which serves to emphasize the importance of promoting safer trade practices while recognizing variations in safety standards and enforcement capabilities across Member States, as well as the need for global cooperation to safeguard consumer health and safety. Key elements include:

(a) Global consumer safety: Member States are recommended to pursue policies, consistent with World Trade Organization rules, aimed at preventing the cross-border distribution of consumer products known in their own jurisdictions to be unsafe;

(b) Awareness-raising: Member States are called on to raise awareness among businesses on the potential harms of the cross-border distribution of unsafe consumer products and among consumers on the risks to their physical safety posed by unsafe products, particularly when engaging in cross-border online transactions;

(c) Information-sharing: Member States are recommended to regularly exchange information on national policies and measures on product safety recalls and safety requirements;

(d) Role of UNCTAD: UNCTAD is requested to assist Member States in improving national and regional consumer product safety frameworks in order to better protect consumers and to prevent the cross-border distribution of unsafe consumer products; and to exchange information on progress and experiences, review that information and report to the General Assembly on this subject on the occasion of the Ninth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set.

Source: TD/RBP/CONF.9/9.

84. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts has effectively pursued consensus-building. At its eighth session, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts welcomed the declaration on cross-border dispute resolution and redress for consumers. The declaration recommends that member States implement policies, aligned with the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection, aimed at establishing effective mechanisms for consumer dispute resolution and redress, particularly for cross-border cases; encourages member States to foster international cooperation; recommends that member States raise awareness among businesses on the need to implement effective consumer dispute resolution systems, particularly for cross-border cases; and requests that UNCTAD prepare a proposal on how it could assist with the objectives of the declaration.⁷⁵

85. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts undertakes voluntary peer reviews of consumer protection law and policy, aimed at assessing national consumer protection-related legal, public policy and institutional frameworks and their implementation, identifying strengths and gaps and providing recommendations for improvement. To date, Chile, Gabon, Indonesia, Morocco, Peru and Thailand have undergone a peer review.⁷⁶ An internal impact assessment conducted in 2023 for the period 2018–2022 showed that the peer reviews had led to significant improvements in the legal and regulatory frameworks

⁷⁴ See <https://unctad.org/Topic/Competition-and-Consumer-Protection/working-group-on-voluntary-peer-reviews>.

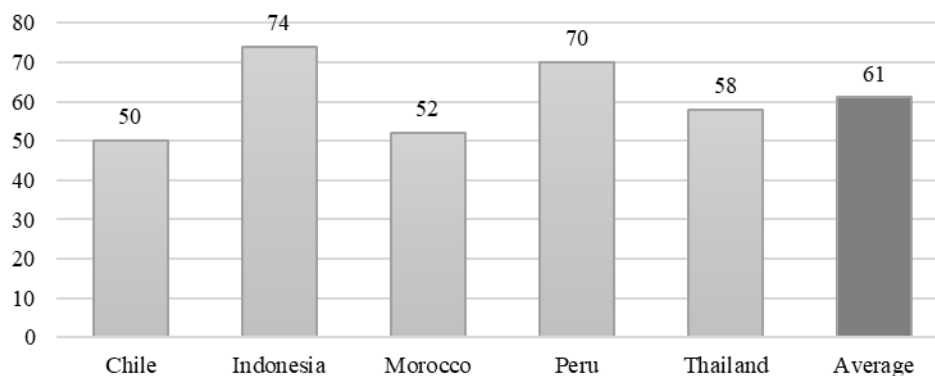
⁷⁵ TD/B/C.I/CPLP/42.

⁷⁶ TD/B/C.I/CPLP/24, TD/B/C.I/CPLP/35, TD/B/C.I/CPLP/18, TD/B/C.I/CPLP/13, TD/RBP/CONF.9/7, TD/B/C.I/CPLP/30.

for consumer protection in the peer reviewed countries, with an average implementation rate of 61 per cent of the recommendations (figure 3).⁷⁷

Figure 3

Voluntary peer reviews of consumer protection law and policy: Overall implementation rate



Source: TD/B/C.I/CPLP/40.

86. The provision of capacity-building and technical assistance to developing countries in formulating and enforcing consumer protection laws and policies is reviewed at sessions of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts, and the reviews have highlighted the significant satisfaction with these activities among the respective countries.⁷⁸

87. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts considers relevant studies, documentation and reports from relevant organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations and networks, to exchange information on work programmes and topics for consultations and to identify work-sharing projects and cooperation in the provision of technical assistance. UNCTAD has established cooperation initiatives with many regional and international organizations interested in consumer protection, including the following: Association of Southeast Asian Nations; Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; Consumers International; Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa; Eurasian Economic Commission; European Commission; Iberoamerican Forum of Consumer Protection Agencies; International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network; International Organization for Standardization; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; and Organization of American States. Within the United Nations system, UNCTAD co-chairs the One Planet Network Consumer Information for Sustainable Consumption and Production Programme under the United Nations Environment Programme, with Germany and Consumers International; and co-organizes the Arab Consumer Protection Forum with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. UNCTAD has implemented technical cooperation activities with the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. UNCTAD has engaged with regional and international networks on consumer protection, to maximize synergies.

V. Topics for consideration

88. Respondents to the UNCTAD questionnaire identified possible priorities for UNCTAD in the field of consumer protection. States highlighted the need for robust international cooperation, harmonized standards and innovative solutions to emerging

⁷⁷ TD/B/C.I/CPLP/40.

⁷⁸ TD/B/C.I/CPLP/3, TD/B/C.I/CPLP/8, TD/B/C.I/CPLP/14, TD/B/C.I/CPLP/19, TD/B/C.I/CPLP/25-TD/B/C.I/CPLP/60, TD/B/C.I/CPLP/31-TD/B/C.I/CPLP/65, TD/B/C.I/CPLP/36-TD/B/C.I/CPLP/71, TD/B/C.I/CPLP/41-TD/B/C.I/CPLP/76.

challenges. Priorities included strengthening consumer safety in digital markets, addressing sustainability and addressing disparities in consumer protection across regions. Cross-border cooperation was emphasized, particularly in monitoring e-commerce, ensuring product safety and addressing fraudulent practices. Stakeholders also stressed the importance of developing tools, such as model laws and best-practice guides, to assist underresourced agencies. Themes such as data privacy, sustainable consumption and fair finance were focal points, with an emphasis on empowering consumers through education and collaborative policymaking.

89. Respondents also identified some areas of improvement in the work of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts, including the following: capacity-building efforts could be expanded, with frequent region-specific workshops addressing challenges such as digital consumer protection, cross-border enforcement and e-commerce regulation; public-private partnerships could be encouraged, to leverage resources for consumer education campaigns, strengthen regulatory frameworks and promote innovative solutions to emerging issues; comprehensive guidelines for monitoring digital transactions could be developed, to address the complexities of digital marketplaces, addressing areas of concern such as dark patterns, personalized pricing and data privacy; comprehensive guidance on the necessary legal and institutional frameworks for consumer product safety could be prepared; regular follow-up meetings could be held between annual sessions, to help maintain momentum, and the advance issuance of work programmes and schedules could foster broader participation; greater coordination could be prioritized through collaboration with other international organizations and networks and by actively involving academia, civil society and consumer associations in discussions; tailored technical assistance could be provided to developing countries, including funding for participation, tools such as model laws and access to practical guidelines, to further strengthen global consumer protection; and the creation of an online collaboration platform could enable real-time communications, serving as a repository for shared resources and ensuring continuous engagement among members. Such measures would reinforce the ability of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts to effectively drive progress in consumer protection.

90. Delegates at the Ninth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set may wish to reflect on possible topics in the area of competition law and policy that UNCTAD should focus on over the next five years. Member States may wish to consider the following in determining possible topics to be addressed at sessions of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts over the next five years:

(a) What are the emerging trends and challenges in consumer protection that UNCTAD should focus on?

(b) What areas of the guidelines for consumer protection require further discussion, implementation and possible revision?

(c) How can resources be mobilized to support the implementation of the guidelines for consumer protection and the mandate of UNCTAD on consumer protection?
