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# REPORT ON CONSUMER ASSOCIATIONS



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## ABBREVIATIONS

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>ASEAN</b>       | Association of South-East Asian Nations                                     |
| <b>CI</b>          | Consumers International   |
| <b>FAO</b>         | Food and Agriculture Organization   |
| <b>ICPEN</b>       | International Consumer Protection Enforcement Network                       |
| <b>ICRT</b>        | International Consumer Research and Testing                                 |
| <b>IOCU</b>        | International Organization of Consumers Union                               |
| <b>ISO COPOLCO</b> | International Organization for Standardization Committee on Consumer Policy |
| <b>ITU</b>         | International Telecommunication Union                                       |
| <b>MENA</b>        | Middle East and North Africa Region   |
| <b>MSDC</b>        | Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, Malta   |
| <b>NACAB</b>       | National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, United Kingdom             |
| <b>NGO</b>         | Non-governmental Organization   |
| <b>OECD</b>        | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development                      |
| <b>UNCTAD</b>      | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development                          |
| <b>UNGCP</b>       | United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection                           |
| <b>WHO</b>         | World Health Organization   |
| <b>WTO</b>         | World Trade Organization  |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consumer associations are essential actors in the institutional frameworks for effective consumer protection. They represent the voice of the consumer and their overall participation in the policymaking processes that, in turn, help inform government policies. Consumers associations play vital roles in educating, advising, representing and counselling consumers so as to enforce their rights. They help reduce the imbalances between business and consumers by empowering consumers and giving them the confidence to make informed decisions.

The purpose of this *Report on Consumer Associations* is to provide an update on the current environment in which consumer associations operate. It is organized as follows: Part 1 serves as an overall introduction on modern consumer protection; Part 2 begins by outlining some of the historical contexts and describing the main roles of consumer associations; and Part 3 questions how modern consumer associations work from the perspectives of their operating model, and their funding opportunities. Finally, a brief conclusion offers some insights on the increasing roles of consumer associations such as in policymaking and consumer protection laws.

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