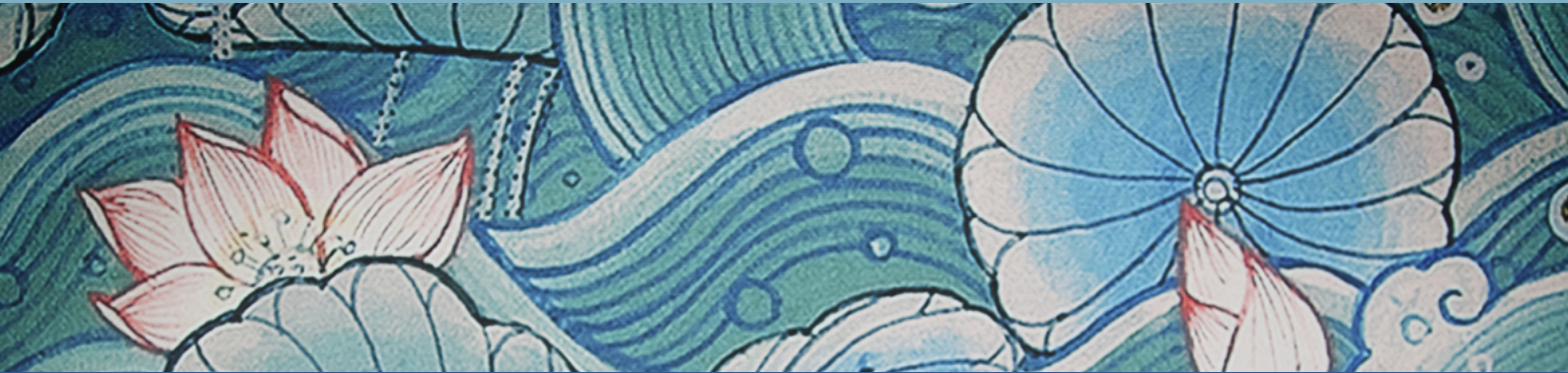


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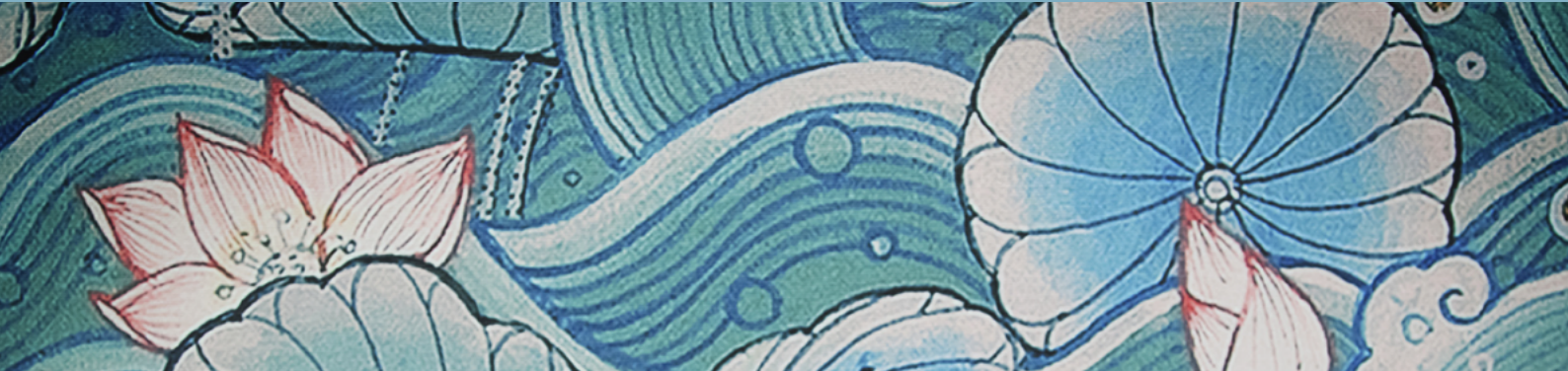
**UNCTAD**



# **VOLUNTARY PEER REVIEW OF CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW AND POLICY OF THAILAND**



UNITED NATIONS



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UNITED NATIONS

Geneva, 2022

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## NOTE

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) serves as the focal point within the United Nations Secretariat for all matters related to consumer protection policy. UNCTAD promotes the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection and encourages interested member States to create awareness of the many ways in which member States, businesses and civil society can foster consumer protection in the provision of public and private goods and services.

UNCTAD seeks to further the understanding of the contribution of consumer protection law and policy to development and to create an environment enabling the efficient functioning of markets. UNCTAD's work is carried out through intergovernmental deliberations, capacity-building activities, policy advice, and research and analysis on the interface among consumer protection, competition and development.

Voluntary peer reviews of consumer protection law and policy conducted by UNCTAD are mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/186 of 22 December 2015 adopting the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection. The guidelines seek, among other things, to assist countries in achieving or maintaining adequate protection for their population as consumers.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Voluntary peer reviews of consumer protection law and policy are conducted by UNCTAD at the annual meetings of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy or at 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.

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## POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

The Kingdom of Thailand (Thailand) is located primarily in mainland Southeast Asia. Historically known as Siam<sup>1</sup>, the country spans an area of approximately 513,000 kilometres extending about 1,715 kilometres from north to south and 915 kilometres from east to west.<sup>2</sup> As of 2020, the population stood at approximately 69.8 million<sup>3</sup>, consisting mostly of ethnic Thais, whereas the minority comprises people of Malay, Cambodia, Chinese, Vietnamese, Burmese, Indian and non-Thai hill tribe descent<sup>4</sup>.

As Thailand is a constitutional monarchy, its head of state is the King of Thailand. The current monarch, Maha Vajiralongkorn, was proclaimed king in December 2016<sup>5</sup>. The current head of government, Prayut Chan-o-cha, has technically held the office of Prime Minister since he led the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) in 2014<sup>6</sup>. The NCPO drafted a new constitution<sup>7</sup>, which was promulgated in 2017. The Constitution provides for a National Assembly, comprised of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Members of these two bodies are voted in

by the citizens in a general election.<sup>8</sup> After the General Election 2019, Prayut Chan-o-cha was elected as the Prime Minister by the National Assembly<sup>9</sup>.

Thailand's progress from a low-income to an upper-middle income country, which has been achieved over the last four decades, has been lauded as a success story. The average economic growth ranging between 7.5 per cent from 1960-1996 and 5 per cent during the years of the Asian Financial Crisis, drove job creation that helped many of its citizens escape the clutches of poverty. In recent years, the country's growth has slowed to 4.2 per cent in 2018 and 2.4 per cent in 2019.<sup>10</sup> The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for 2020 was \$501.64 billion, down from its peak of \$544.26 billion in 2019<sup>11</sup>, due in large part to the COVID-19 pandemic which wreaked havoc on its major economic sectors, industry, and services.<sup>12</sup>

Thailand's welfare programs are lauded by international agencies. Its Universal Healthcare Coverage Scheme (UCS) and Old Age Allowance (OAA) are regional models for social welfare programs. In the last 14 years, UCS has contributed toward declines in infant and child mortality, HIV infections, effects of diabetes, and workers' sick days. OAA has also reduced elderly poverty. Over the last 30 years, Thailand's relative poverty rate, measured on the basis of the national poverty line, declined from 65 per cent in 1988 to 9.85 per cent in 2018. Extreme poverty rates, measured by the World Bank as those living below US\$ 1.90 per day, have been reduced to virtually zero.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Royal Thai Honorary Consulate General, Portland, Oregon, USA (n.d.). Thailand overview. Available at <http://www.thai-or.com/thailand-overview> (accessed 28 November 2021)

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (n.d.). General information on Thailand. Available at [https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/General\\_Information\\_TH.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/General_Information_TH.pdf) (accessed 26 November 2021)

<sup>3</sup> World Bank (2022). Population, total - Thailand. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=TH> (accessed 15 January 2022)

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (n.d.). General information on Thailand. Available at [https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/General\\_Information\\_TH.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/General_Information_TH.pdf) (accessed 26 November 2021)

<sup>8</sup> Royal Thai Honorary Consulate General, Portland, Oregon, USA (n.d.). Thailand overview. Available at <http://www.thai-or.com/thailand-overview> (accessed 28 November 2021)

<sup>9</sup> BBC (2019, June 6). Thai parliament elects ex military

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