

# Consumers International: coming together for change

## About Us

We believe in a world where everyone has access to safe and sustainable goods and services. We bring together over 200 member organisations in more than 100 countries to empower and champion the rights of consumers everywhere.

We are their voice in international policy-making forums and the global marketplace to ensure they are treated safely, fairly and honestly. We are resolutely independent, unconstrained by businesses or political parties.

We work in partnership and exercise our influence with integrity, tenacity and passion to deliver tangible results.

## What is a consumer?

We are all consumers. From the obvious necessities we purchase daily, to how we connect with the world using mobile phones or travel to and from work. We consume every day and in every part of our lives.

## Do consumer rights & needs matter?

Our core belief is that all people have a right to access safe goods and quality services, to be treated fairly and offered effective solutions if things go wrong.

This is more than just making sure you get a good deal on a new car. It's about our right to access the basic things we need to live, including food, shelter and safe drinking water. It's about making sure your new television won't break down after three months, that your car has the features and technology to keep you safe, and that the data companies collect about you online isn't lost or stolen. Sometimes accessing our consumer rights can be the difference between life and death. And in many countries the goal of realizing these rights is still a long way off.

## Developing international guidelines on consumer protection

US President John F. Kennedy first outlined a vision of consumer rights in a special message to Congress on 15 March 1962 (the day we now celebrate [World Consumer Rights Day](#)). Over time, the consumer movement developed this into a broader vision of our rights and needs as consumers that now guides much of our work and that of our members.

Following successful campaigning by Consumers International, the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1985. These were brought up to date in 2015, when the General Assembly adopted the [revised UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection](#). These guidelines are an important tool, giving added legitimacy to the principles of consumer rights and practical support and guidance for the development of consumer protection around the world. The guidelines contain a number of consumer needs that broadly reflect the consumer rights.

Our accessible [guide to the UN consumer protection guidelines](#) summarises the main principles of consumer protection and how they can be [applied](#).

## What are we trying to achieve?

We are all consumers, everyday, everywhere. And when things go wrong we pay the price. Sometimes that price is something small, sometimes the price can be our health, our rights, our lives. In recent decades consumer protection has improved in many countries. Yet our mission is more urgent than ever. Many consumers still lack basic protections and as the world has globalised and digitalised, changes to the global marketplace are outpacing consumer protection. Too often consumers are left at a disadvantage with the companies and governments they encounter, leaving them exposed to unsafe, unfair or unethical practice.

We want to change this and ensure that the voice of consumers is as powerful as the governments and corporations they interact with. Achieving this will ensure everyone can realise the benefits of our increasingly globalised and digital world. In a time where companies often have huge global reach we need to think big and act together.

## What we believe in

- Making an impact
- Operating with the greatest possible integrity
- Independence from business and politics
- Respecting and empowering our members
- Being diverse and inclusive
- Collaboration and knowledge sharing
- Transparency and accountability

## Our Strategy

Our current strategic plan was launched in 2015 following detailed conversations with our members. We want to ensure consumers have a powerful voice in the global marketplace. We're seeking to increase the collective power and influence of Consumers International, our member organisations and consumers and expand our focus on partnership. Together we'll solve the big problems consumers experience in the global marketplace.

We are seeking to achieve global impact through:

- Building a [digital world](#) consumers can trust
- Ensuring excellence in global [consumer protection](#) through specific projects

<http://www.consumersinternational.org>