

World Consumer Rights Day 2023

Protecting the Welfare of Ghanaian Consumers in the Absence of a Functioning Consumer Protection Law

Friday 17th March, 2023 • Time:11am

Virtual Join Webinar here: <https://bit.ly/3LmYczp>

Background and Rationale

Over the past ten years, there have been various attempts by the government to get to the Consumer Protection Law passed. Four presidents have come and gone yet the progress has painstakingly been slow. It is evidently clear that the absence of Consumer Protection Law in the country has contributed to the widespread and deliberate abuse of consumer rights.

Consumer rights are like fundamental human rights which the state has to promote, protect and safeguard through the enactment of laws and its enforcement. Imagine, a consumer walks into a shop to buy an item and takes it home and changes his or her mind. In about 99% of scenarios in the country, the consumer will not be able to return it because the shop has clearly written: **goods sold are not returnable** although this is against the existing laws. Because of this phenomenon of not being able to return goods bought or cancel services after signing the contract, Ghana's marketplace has become a junkyard for inferior goods.

In 2018, CUTS and Consumer Protection Agency (CPA) mobilized over 20,000 signatures urging the Executive to tidy up every work that needs to be done on the draft bill and have it forwarded to Parliament. Unfortunately, the marching feat of over 20,000 Ghanaians who backed the need for the government to prioritize the bill was not enough to be convince the government to do the needful.

With the coming into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and with Ghana as the host, of the AfCFTA Secretariat, the consumer protection law is more important than ever. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has been urging all countries to put in place a functional consumer protection regime which will protect consumers and as well as enshrining their rights in the market place.

The seeming lack of interest in the law by the government can be seen to have stalled the progress. Whilst the government has on many occasions promised to protect Ghanaian businesses from foreign firms, nothing of that sort has been done to protect the interest of the over 30 million Ghanaians who buy and consume goods and services.

It is in this light that CUTS International, Accra in partnership with the University of Professional Studies (UPSA) Law School and K-App Law, on the occasion of World Consumer Rights Day 2023, is organizing a Webinar on the Protection of Consumer Rights in Ghana and especially "Empowering Consumers Through Clean Energy Transitions"

Overall Goal of the Webinar

The overall goal is to advocate for the speedy passage of Consumer Protection Policy and Law and also ensure consumer welfare through effective regulatory actions. Energy is needed for almost every economic activity. With the world focusing on energy transition or the shift to the use of cleaner energy resources to address climate related issues, the cost of living has also been challenging, therefore the question is how can consumers be empowered to protect their rights since every consumer practically consumes some form of energy?

The meeting would bring together, regulatory authorities, practitioners, academic experts, government representatives, development partners, business associations and consumer organizations with insights on the Ghanaian consumer challenges, to discuss the above stated topic.

Target Participants of the Webinar

- National Communication Authority (NCA)
- Public Utility Regulatory Commission (PURC)
- Food and Drugs Authority (FDA)
- Ghana Standard Authority (GSA)
- National Petroleum Authority (NPA)
- Ghana Civil Aviation Authority
- Telecom operators
- CSOs and NGOs
- Academia & Students
- General Public

Agenda

Time	Activity
11:00-11:05am	Participants joining Opening Prayer
11:05-11:10	<i>Welcome Remarks:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appiah Kusi Adomako, <i>West African Regional Director, CUTS</i> 2. Dr. Francisca Kusi-Appiah <i>UPSA Law School & K-App Law</i>
11:10-11:20	<i>Statement of Support</i> Mr Kofi Kapito , Executive Director, Consumer Protection Agency (CPA)
11:20- 11:30	<i>Presentation:</i> State of the Ghanaian Consumer , Isaac Yaw Obeng, Head of Research, CUTS
11:30-12:20	Statements from Regulators: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Ishmeal Arckah, <i>Executive Secretary, Public Utility Regulatory Commission (PURC)</i> 2. Kwame Gyan, <i>Deputy Director, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, National Communication Authority (NCA)</i> 3. Mr Leonard Obeng-Nkansah, <i>Regulatory Officer, Food & Drugs Authority (FDA)</i> 4. Aseye Kokui Sepenu, <i>Marketing Officer, ISO COPOLCO National Rep, Ghana Standard Authority (GSA)</i> 5. Pearl Ussiph, <i>Consumer Service Unit of National Petroleum Authority (NPA)</i>
12:20-12:40	Open Forum: Questions & Contributions Session
12:40 – 12:45pm	Summarization of Discussions & Way Forward

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