

# World Consumer Rights Day 2026

## Concept Note

**Theme: Safe Products, Confident Consumers in Ghana's Downstream  
Petroleum Sector**

***Date:*** 19th March, 2026

***Venue:*** Moses Asaga Auditorium, Accra



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**International**  
Since 1983

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## Draft Concept Note

### **World Consumer Rights Day 2026 Celebration:**

#### **Theme: Safe Products, Confident Consumers in Ghana's Downstream Petroleum Sector**

#### **1. Background and Context**

1.1 World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) is observed annually on March 15 to raise global awareness about consumer rights and needs. Established by Consumers International, it commemorates U.S. President John F. Kennedy's 1962 address to Congress on consumer rights, emphasizing the right to safety, information, choice, and redress. Each year features a specific theme; for 2026, the theme is "Safe Products, Confident Consumers," focusing on addressing issues from poor-quality products and rallying advocates for consumer protection.

1.2 In Ghana, the downstream petroleum sector, which encompasses refining, storage, transportation, distribution, and retail of products like petrol, diesel, and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) plays a critical role in the economy, supporting transportation, industry, and households. Regulated by the National Petroleum Authority (NPA), the sector has been partially liberalized since 2015, operating under a deregulated pricing regime influenced by global crude oil trends, exchange rates, and local factors. However, consumers face persistent challenges, including high pump prices due to taxes, under-delivery concerns, fuel adulteration and product quality in the downstream sector.

1.3 Recent debates highlight tensions in the sector, such as the NPA's Fuel Price Floor Programme, introduced to prevent predatory pricing and ensure market stability but criticized for limiting price reductions and denying consumers full benefits from falling global prices. Stakeholders, including oil marketing companies (OMCs), argue that the policy balances industry viability with consumer protection, while others call for its scrapping to enhance affordability. Additionally, logistical issues like vessel congestion at ports lead to annual demurrages of about US\$25 million, ultimately borne by consumers through higher prices.

1.4 Consumer concerns extend to safety and confidence: risks of unsafe fuel causing vehicle damage or health hazards from poor LPG handling; lack of transparency in pricing mechanisms; and limited redress mechanisms for grievances. The sector's heavy reliance on bank financing and mounting arrears exacerbate instability, potentially leading to disruptions that affect accessibility. As Ghana navigates post-pandemic recovery and economic pressures, including inflation and currency depreciation, these issues undermine consumer welfare and sustainable consumption.

1.5 Aligning with the 2026 WCRD theme, CUTS International Accra proposes a collaborative celebration with the NPA to spotlight these concerns. This event will draw lessons from global best practices, such as enhanced quality assurance and transparent pricing in other markets, to build consumer confidence in Ghana's petroleum products. By convening stakeholders, the celebration aims to advocate for reforms that ensure safe, affordable, and reliable petroleum products.

1.6 Relations between consumer groups like CUTS and regulators like the NPA are shaped by shared goals of consumer protection and sector sustainability. Past collaborations, such as advocacy on pricing transparency, underscore the potential for joint initiatives. Investments in infrastructure, like additional mooring facilities, and policy reviews could mitigate costs, while consumer education on rights fosters empowerment.

1.7 The downstream sector's challenges call for urgent dialogue, especially amid calls for structural reforms to promote fair competition and long-term viability. This celebration will serve as a platform to generate evidence-based recommendations, informing policy decisions by the Government of Ghana and NPA to create an enabling environment for consumers and operators alike.

## **2. Scope and Objectives of the Celebration**

2.1 CUTS Accra, in partnership with the NPA, proposes a one-day World Consumer Rights Day 2026 celebration on March 16, 2026, in Accra. The event will focus on the downstream petroleum sector, using the global theme "Safe Products, Confident Consumers" to highlight Ghana-specific issues. It will engage 100-150 participants, including government officials, NPA representatives, OMCs, consumer advocates, academia, and media, emphasizing safety, quality, pricing transparency, and redress mechanisms.

2.2 Main Objectives The celebration's main objective is to raise awareness of consumer rights in the downstream petroleum sector and advocate for reforms that ensure safe products and build consumer confidence.

Specific Objectives 2.3 The specific objectives are as follows:

- Highlight key consumer concerns, such as product quality, safety risks, and supply reliability, through presentations and discussions.
- Review regulatory frameworks, including the Fuel Price Floor Programme and downstream taxation, to propose consumer-friendly amendments.
- Promote collaborative strategies between regulators, operators, and consumers for improved infrastructure, quality assurance, and redress systems.
- Empower consumers with information on their rights and avenues for complaints, fostering a more confident marketplace.

### **Why CUTS is the Ideal Organization to Organize this Celebration**

CUTS International Accra is a leading research and advocacy organization dedicated to consumer protection, trade, investment, and sustainable development in West Africa. With a strong track record in facilitating multi-stakeholder events, such as national dialogues on urban mobility and assessments of diaspora contributions, CUTS brings expertise in evidence-based advocacy and robust networks with entities like the NPA, NCA, BOG, GSA, PURC, FDA and international bodies such as Consumers International. Our focus on empowering consumers

aligns perfectly with WCRD's ethos, ensuring this celebration not only highlights petroleum sector concerns but also drives actionable policy changes for a fairer, safer market in Ghana.

### **3. Celebration Approach and Preparation**

**Approach** The event will feature a mix of plenary sessions, panel discussions, and interactive segments to encourage participation and consensus. Preparatory activities over two months will include stakeholder consultations, background research on sector issues, and development of awareness materials.

**Preparation Phases 3.1** The initiative will be undertaken in three phases over two months leading to the event. The first phase will profile consumer concerns in the downstream petroleum sector based on secondary data from NPA reports, industry analyses, and consumer surveys.

**3.2** The second phase will review literature on global best practices for consumer protection in petroleum markets, informing briefing papers and discussion guides.

**3.3** The third phase will involve pre-event consultations with key informants via meetings to gather insights. The celebration itself will feature live discussions, culminating in a joint declaration on commitments to consumer safety.

**Participants 3.4** Participants will include NPA officials, OMC representatives, consumer groups, sectoral experts, academia, media, and government from the Ministry of Energy. A list will be compiled from relevant institutions, aiming for diverse representation.

### **4. Expected Outputs**

A celebration report summarizing discussions, recommendations, and the joint declaration, including policy briefs for stakeholders. Awareness materials, such as digital stories and infographics on consumer rights in the petroleum sector, for wider dissemination.

### **5. Outcome**

**5.1** The celebration will enhance understanding of consumer rights and concerns in Ghana's downstream petroleum sector.

**5.2** It will stimulate policymakers and regulators to foster reforms for safer products and greater consumer confidence.

**5.3** The event will contribute to sustainable development by promoting fair practices and reducing economic burdens on consumers.

**5.4** It will identify gaps in protection and highlight areas for ongoing advocacy and research.

## **About CUTS International Accra**

CUTS International Accra is an independent non-profit economic policy research, advocacy, and capacity-building think tank based in Ghana. It forms part of CUTS International, a global organisation established in 1983 with project implementation experience in more than 35 countries. CUTS operates through regional offices across South Asia, Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and the United States, with its Washington DC and Geneva offices supporting global policy engagement.

CUTS' vision is to enable consumers, particularly the poor and marginalised, to realise their rights to basic needs, sustainable development, and good governance through a strong consumer movement. The organisation adopts a centrist and evidence-driven approach, prioritising outcomes over outputs and focusing on policy areas and geographic spaces where institutional gaps exist. Its work combines rigorous research, strategic advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and targeted capacity building.

In Ghana and West Africa, CUTS works across key functional areas including trade and development, competition policy and law, consumer education and awareness, public finance, economic governance, human development, healthcare, education, road safety, urban mobility and the Sustainable Development Goals. Since 1983, CUTS has consistently applied evidence-based research to inform public policy and promote inclusive economic growth.

CUTS has emerged as a leading institution supporting regulatory reform, private sector development, fiscal policy dialogue, competition policy, and consumer welfare in Ghana.

CUTS has undertaken major policy studies for national and international partners. Recent assignments include The State of Ghanaian Consumer, Assessing Ghanaian private sector readiness for AfCFTA implementation for the Ministry of Trade and Industry and BUSAC; investment facilitation for sustainable development for the World Economic Forum and the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre; market diagnostics in mobile insurance for GIZ, the National Insurance Commission, and CGAP of the World Bank; and a nationwide State of Ghanaian Consumers study covering electricity, water, financial services, healthcare, and telecommunications.

Internationally, CUTS has supported policy dialogue at global platforms including the World Investment Forum, contributing research on export-oriented foreign direct investment, policy coherence, and investment uncertainty. The organisation has consulted for institutions such as the World Bank Group, GIZ, DFID, USAID, FAO, SNV, the European Union, and the World Economic Forum. CUTS maintains active collaboration with major international and regional institutions including ECOWAS, the African Union, UNCTAD, OECD, WTO, Consumer International, COMESA, ASEAN competition bodies, and leading research centres. Its advocacy work has contributed to tangible policy outcomes, including Ghana's adoption of income tax exemptions for low-income earners and sustained advocacy for consumer protection, competition law, and transport sector reform.

Through research-led advocacy, strong institutional partnerships, and regional experience, CUTS International Accra remains a trusted policy actor advancing consumer welfare, fair markets, and inclusive development in Ghana and across West Africa.