



THE ISO CONSUMER UPDATE

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News

COPOLCO's participation at UNCTAD's Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy

Julie Hunter – a member of COPOLCO's Chair's Advisory Group – was invited to represent COPOLCO and speak at the **seventh session** of UNCTAD's Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGE) on Consumer Protection Law and Policy, held in July in Geneva.

Julie's presentation centred on the transition to clean energy, emphasizing the importance of standards in protecting and empowering consumers for a sustainable future. The session highlighted the role of standards in setting good practice for responsible businesses in adopting ethical behaviour and sustainable patterns of production and consumption. She emphasized that a successful transition to clean energy is dependent on consumers being able to access green choices, stressing the value of consumer education and clear information.

Julie discussed ISO and COPOLCO's contributions to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including mapping standards related to SDGs, highlighting specific standards that could assist organizations in minimizing their environmental impact and meeting sustainability objectives, such as those in **IWA 42:2022 Net zero guidelines**, **ISO 26000:2010 Guidance on social responsibility**, as well as standards related to energy efficiency, renewable energy and green labelling.

Julie emphasized the importance of international cooperation, and advocacy to safeguard consumer rights during this transition, pointing out that it is essential for governments and policymakers to recognize standards as a tool for consumer protection, and to support collaboration between National Standards Bodies (NSBs) and consumer stakeholders. Throughout the session, she stressed the value of consumer participation in standards, the necessity for robust consumer representation at the national level and for consumers to be involved at all levels of policy and decision-making.

One outcome of the meeting was a decision to focus on consumer stakeholder collaboration as one of the topics for the 2024 IGE.

You can access Julie's presentation to the IGE [here](#).

(The IGE on Consumer Protection Law and Policy is a permanent body established under the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection. Its functions include monitoring guideline application and implementation, offering a consultation platform, conducting research, providing technical assistance, performing voluntary peer reviews, and periodically updating the guidelines.)

Country news

Canada

Canada's Mirror Committee for ISO COPOLCO is responsible for coordinating national inputs to **ISO/PC 343 Management System for UN Sustainable development goals – Requirements for any organization**. The project encompasses two deliverables:

- ISO 53001- 1: *Sustainable Development Goals management systems – Requirements to contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development goals (Type A MSS)*
- ISO 53001-2: *Sustainable Development Goals management systems – Guidelines for implementation of ISO 53001-1 (Type B MSS)*.

Additionally, Accessibility Standards Canada is actively developing standards in priority areas outlined in the Accessible Canada Act. The status of each standard is as follows:

- CAN-ASC-5.1 - Emergency measures: Currently open for public review
- CAN-ASC-1.1 - Employment: Currently open for public review
- CAN-ASC-2.1 - Outdoor spaces: Public review completed. Comments are being reviewed by the Technical Committee. Publication expected in spring 2024
- CAN-ASC-3.1 - Plain language: Currently under development by the technical committee
- CAN-ASC-2.2 - Emergency egress: Currently under development by the technical committee
- CAN-ASC-2.4 - Wayfinding and signage: Currently under development by the technical committee.

Accessibility Standards Canada also provides grants and contributions funding research focused on the seven priority areas outlined in the Accessible Canada Act. The [Centre of Expertise for Standards and Research on Accessibility](#) at Accessibility Standards Canada has information on these projects and details on accessing the research results.

Czechia

The Consumer Cabinet for Standardization has expressed its commitment to raising awareness of the role of standards by providing examples of specific topics and areas of standardization to Czech consumers and other market operators, particularly SMEs.

This initiative received the support and approval of the Czech Agency for Standardization (ČAS) and the Council of Quality of the Czech Republic. The Cabinet secured financial backing for its endeavours, facilitated by the preparation of studies and comprehensive web-based information (with support from ČAS), and printed materials (with support from the Council). The two highlighted topics are:

- **Safe Use of Child Restraints in Cars**
Child car seats play a crucial role in ensuring the safety of children during transportation, with their usage mandated in the Czech Republic, and regulated by guidelines established by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in Geneva. A study and printed booklet outline the benefits of implementing the new regulation R129, addressing issues such as transporting children with special needs and incorporating the ISO standard for anchoring child seats in cars (**ISOFIX**).
- **European and International Standardization towards Sustainability**
In contemporary consumer choices, sustainability is increasingly considered alongside traditional priorities like quality, price, and availability. Sustainability involves environmental, social, and economic considerations in meeting present needs without compromising future generations. The EU is actively developing legislative measures to support sustainability and the circular economy. An information package, along with a study and printed booklet, aims to shed light on the flexible and effective use of standardization for a properly functioning market, aligning with the objectives of the European Green Deal.

Kenya

The Kenyan government promotes the creation of consumer bodies and the establishment of good and proper standards and rules, to be followed by such bodies in protecting competition and consumer welfare.

It also recognizes consumer bodies duly registered under the appropriate national laws as the proper bodies, in their areas of operation, to represent consumers before the Authority.

These organizations are vital for enforcing the principles of consumer protection to safeguard consumers from exploitation. In the absence of consumer protection agencies, consumers may fall victim to the sale of unsafe products, adulteration and hoarding of goods, the use of incorrect weights and measures, excessive pricing, and the sale of inferior quality goods.

Currently, although the Kenya Bureau of Standards does not possess specific training tools and resources for its consumers, it make efforts to educate them through workshops and seminars, where they can also provide feedback on consumer issues affecting them.

The following are the International Standards we, as an NSB, intend to adopt because we consider them significant for our country and the entire East Africa region:

- **ISO 31700-1:2023** *Consumer protection — Privacy by design for consumer goods and services — Part 1: High-level requirements*
- **ISO/TR 31700-2:2023** *Consumer protection — Privacy by design for consumer goods and services — Part 2: Use cases*

In our local context, many consumers face challenges because they often do not understand their rights. Therefore, KEBS is undertaking initiatives to educate them about their rights, so that they can effectively address these challenges.

Iran

To safeguard consumer rights in Iran, the Iran National Standards Organization (INSO) has recently updated and revised the following national standards:

- **INSO 13629** *Home appliances – After-sales service – Principles and assessment methods*
Considering the diverse needs of households and consumers, the local production of household appliances, and the extensive distribution network, manufacturers of household appliances are now required to ensure that all their products comply with the relevant standards. In line with this, they must also provide adequate after-sales services to buyers and meet consumer expectations. Consequently, adherence to this standard has become mandatory.
- **Revision of INSO 19117** *Vehicle – After-sales service – Principles and assessment methods*
This standard establishes the minimum requirements for after-sales service offered by vehicle suppliers, intermediaries, and authorized agents within the country. This standard assesses the cars while determining the principles of after-sales services, such as training and skills of personnel, how to supply parts and provide services, as well as monitoring customer opinions based on service quality indicators such as service speed, performance results, and the status of service agencies.

Other news from ISO

Finding sustainable solutions through standards at the ISO Annual Meeting 2023

The ISO Annual Meeting 2023 took place in Brisbane, from 18 to 22 September. The programme, which featured over 20 sessions, showcased the pivotal role that International Standards play in meeting global needs and accelerating progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a particular emphasis on collaboration, the use of technology, and sustainability.



Sadie Dainton, Reinaldo Figueiredo and Julia Bonner Douett

COPOLCO's Chair – Sadie Dainton – joined Reinaldo Figueiredo, the Chair of ISO's Committee for conformity assessment (CASCO), and Julia Bonner Douett, the Chair of ISO's Committee on developing country matters (DEVCO), discussed the circular economy and how ISO standards can encourage accountability and trust in claims of sustainability. The following are highlights from Sadie's intervention:



The world faces pressing environmental issues such as pollution, ecosystem collapse, declining biodiversity, impacts to human health, and climate change, largely attributable to our current linear economy model – in which finite resources are extracted to make products which are generally not used to their full potential before being disposed of – which generates enormous amounts of waste. According to figures provided by the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), only 9% of resources are recycled or reused. Projections indicate that by 2050, we may need three Earths to meet demand, with escalating rates of resource consumption and waste generation.

COPOLCO's mission is to improve consumer participation in national and international standardization, thereby enabling consumers to access safe, sustainable goods and services through transparent, verifiable information.

The recent 44th COPOLCO Plenary, hosted by the Bureau of Indian Standards, emphasized the role of standards in achieving the SDGs. Stakeholders explored challenges in accessing sustainable choices, and discussed how standards could enhance this process.



The Chair presented data and findings underscoring the significance of standards in the circular economy, specifically in managing the "use and recovery" phase and minimizing waste and pollution during production. The Chair also noted that as much as 40% of online green claims are either exaggerated, false, or deceptive, and that the information related to such claims is insufficient or overly complex for consumers to comprehend.

Ms. Dainton emphasized the crucial role of involving all stakeholders, including consumers, in the development of standards. She highlighted that engaging consumers is essential for building trust and confidence, especially in the context of the circular economy, where their perspectives as key end-users contribute to effective standardization activities. She concluded:

“ Understanding consumer needs, behaviours, and experiences, coupled with international consumer policy expertise, positions ISO standards to significantly contribute to addressing climate change and transitioning to a net-zero future. ”



Additionally, CASCO's Vice Chair, Caroline Outa, participated in a panel of experts in the session titled *Global trade: The importance of accountability in sustainability claims*. The experts explored how standards and conformity assessment can enhance the reliability, consistency, and credibility of claims, ultimately providing greater clarity in the market and ensuring accountability in sustainability claims. The panel stressed the importance of making claims that consumers can trust and easily comprehend. They also discussed how adopting common frameworks through standards can cultivate trust and integrity, in turn facilitating international trade and empowering developing countries to play a more impactful role in the global supply chain.

You can read a [summary](#) of the Annual Meeting or find day-by-day recaps sessions [here](#). To rewatch sessions online, visit annualmeeting.iso.org.

Transaction assurance in e-commerce

Released in September, [ISO32111: 2023 Transaction assurance in E-commerce — Principles and framework](#), (initiated by AFNOR and supported by COPOLCO), holds significant relevance and importance for consumers: it plays a crucial role in ensuring consumer confidence in online purchases, particularly those involving cross-border transactions. COPOLCO Members are urged to take note of this standard and actively support its national implementation.

Proposal to establish a Technical Committee on Consumer protection

A ballot has been initiated to establish an ISO Technical Committee (TC) on Consumer Protection: *Privacy by design for consumer products* (TS/P 316). The ballot closes on 22 December. This is of particular interest to consumers, as it is an initiative that originated in COPOLCO and transitioned into a Project Committee (PC) a few years ago. Driven by consumer voices within the PC, the proposal is pending approval by members and ISO's Technical Management Board (TMB).

COPOLCO Members are kindly reminded to contribute to the ISO member body vote on the proposal.

Climate Action Toolkit

International Standards are crucial for helping to drive action on climate change by governments, businesses, organizations, and individuals. The recently published [Climate action toolkit](#) aims to provide ISO members with success stories and best practices on the role of International Standards for climate action. It is intended to help members advocate effectively for policies that promote standards, thereby helping policies to align with real-world needs.

Upcoming events

- WG 23, 4th meeting: 7 November, virtual
- WG 24, 4th meeting: 9 November, virtual
- WG 1, 21st meeting: 29 to 30 November, face-to-face
- WG 21, 4th meeting: 7 December, virtual
- WG 22, 4th meeting: 12 December, virtual.

To find out more

See how [standards matter for consumers](#).

Access [more resources](#) on consumers and standards.

Consult [past issues of ISO Consumer update](#).

Visit us on the [ISOConsumers Facebook page](#).