



## Concept Note

### **Regional Webinar Activity for the ECLAC Region**

DA COVID-19 technical cooperation project on Social Protection

Phase 2 – Component

### **“Consumer Protection and health during Covid-19: experiences from Latin America and the Caribbean”**

**Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021**  
**15:00 -17.00 (CET, Geneva Time)**

#### **1. Introduction and background information**

##### 1.1 Introduction

UNCTAD is implementing a component of the technical cooperation project mentioned above, on “Strengthening consumer protection in the provision of health services (including e-health) in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic”, with the aim to contribute through consumer protection policy to stronger social protection policies for rapid recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and increase resilience, especially of the most vulnerable populations, to the negative impacts of future exogenous shocks.

The project is part of the UN Development Account (DA) COVID-19 response, which is an important development programme of the United Nations Secretariat aimed at enhancing the capacities of developing countries in the priority areas of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The regional webinar activity, which will take place on Friday **12<sup>th</sup> March 2021 from 15:00 - 17:00 (CET, Geneva Time)**, is part of the Phase 2 of this UNCTAD component. It is based on the successful completion of the UNCTAD report entitled “Strengthening consumer protection in the provision of health services (including e-health) in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The current phase (2) involves the organization of regional webinars with the representatives from United Nations Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) of ECA, ESCWA and ECLAC and their member States’ consumer protection agencies and health authorities, to discuss the findings and the recommendations of the report and hear about other related relevant studies and experiences.

This webinar, in the form of a policy dialogue, aims to spur discussions among high-level stakeholders at regional level on how to strengthen social protection policies to ‘leave no one behind’ during a pandemic and to aid rapid recovery.



The activity will be a building step for Phase 3 which will include other regional workshops for member States' representatives of consumer protection agencies and health authorities, in close coordination with the RECs.

## 1.2 Background information

This project is inspired from the words of the UN Secretary-General during the early days of the pandemic on 2nd April 2020: “We simply cannot return to where we were before COVID-19 struck, with societies unnecessarily vulnerable to crisis. We need to build a better world.”

The regional webinar will be based on the report drafted by UNCTAD in 2021 on the topic “Strengthening consumer protection in the provision of health services (including e-health) in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic”.

This paper sets out a wider range of consumer protection functions that are related to health services and aims to draw the links between these two fields. It suggests contributions which consumer protection concepts and interventions can make to health. It explores the scope for both operational and conceptual exchange, examining the potential for applying consumer principles to emerging developments such as eHealth and the concomitant concerns such as those around digital exclusion and privacy. Health services are set within the broad context of social protection, noting, in particular, the need to integrate people working and living in informal sectors and communities into the health and social services, while identifying elements to which consumer protection can contribute. The paper comments on the interplay of different national agencies and the international legal and institutional frameworks and possible amendments to such structures, such as an Ombudsperson to mediate complaints and suggest improvements to service quality and a service regulator to deal with major issues such as affordability. Positive responses to COVID-19 are described and future approaches suggested to help consumers.

Finally, recommendations are made at the end of the report to decision makers at governmental level and consumer protection agencies for examining suggested issues for possible initiatives, collaboration, and exchange.

## **2. Presentation of the regional webinar**

### **2.1 Objective**

The webinar provides a forum for an informal dialogue between high level representatives of consumer protection agencies and health bodies from member States, representatives from the



RECs and UNCTAD to discuss how the COVID-19 crisis impacted consumers in the provision of health services (including e-health), namely in the region, and how can consumer policy contribute to improve consumers' welfare in this key sector. The webinar will serve to present the main findings and the recommendations of the report.

## **2.2 Target Audience**

The regional webinar is addressed to high level representatives (directors, heads of institutions) and key stakeholders' representatives (experts) from the following organizations:

- Member States' Ministries of Health;
- Member States' Consumer Protection Agencies;
- Member States' Social Protection Agencies;
- Representatives from other Ministries with responsibilities related to Social Protection at country level (Ministry of Finance, etc.) and from policy making bodies active in this area;
- UN Regional Economic Commissions (ECA, ESCWA, ECLAC);
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), WHO, WHO AFRO;
- Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA);
- UNCTAD.

## **2.3 Outcome**

- Increased understanding of the potential cooperation area between consumer protection agencies and health authorities and improved knowledge of common goals and concerns of both policy areas;
- Foster cooperation between public bodies on the topics arising out of the dialogue, either through policymaking or through the implementation of concrete initiatives and measures.

## **2.4 Agenda of the Regional Webinar 12<sup>th</sup> March (15:00 -17.00 - CET, Geneva Time)**

Moderation: Mr. Pierre Horna and Ms. Elizabeth Gachuri, Competition and Consumer Policies Branch (CCPB), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)



**Opening remarks:** Mrs. Teresa Moreira, Head of CCPB, UNCTAD (5 min.)

### **Panel Discussion**

“Main findings and recommendations of the Global Report: Strengthening consumer protection in the provision of health services (including e-health) in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic”, Mr. Robin Simpson, UNCTAD Consultant (10 min.)

### Regional Perspective

- “Universal access to health and social protection”, Ms. Amalia Del Riego, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) (10 min.)
- “The relationship between Social Protection and Health in Latin America during COVID-19”, Ms. María Luisa Marinho, Oficial Adjunta de Asuntos Sociales de la División de Desarrollo Social/Social Affairs Officer, Division on Social Development, UN Economic Commission for Latin America, and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (10 min.)
- Regional response of the Caribbean to consumer concerns during the pandemic, Ms. Nievia Ramsundar, Executive Director the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Competition Commission (10 min.).

### Member States Perspective

Case study from Consumer Protection Authorities at national level

- “SENACON’s experience during Covid19”, Ms. Juliana Oliveira Domingues, Coordenação de Articulação e Relações Institucionais, Secretaria Nacional do Consumidor (SENACON)/ Coordination and Institutional Relations, National Consumer Secretariat of Brazil (10 Min.)

Case study from Health Authorities at national level

- “Peru’s experience: collaboration between INDECOPI, SUSALUD, Ministry of Health of Peru in time of Covid19”, Mr. Carlos Acosta Saal, Superintendente Nacional de Salud (SUSALUD)/ Health National Superintendent of Peru (10 min.)

**Open Dialogue with participants** (30 min.)

**Closing statements:** Ms. Teresa Moreira, Head CCPB UNCTAD (5 min.)



## 2.5 Format of the event

The webinar will be held through the virtual Zoom platform (up to 500 participants) and it will have simultaneous interpretation in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

The event will have a duration of two hours and will not be open to the public.

It will be hosted by UNCTAD.

## 2.6. Follow up activity

A report will be published in English after the event to present key messages.

### Appendix 1: Corresponding Time Zone of the Regional Webinar in Latin America & Caribbean

Location	Local Time	Time Zone	UTC Offset
<a href="#">Geneva</a> (Switzerland - Geneva)	12 March 2021, 15:00:00	<a href="#">CET</a>	UTC+1 hour
<a href="#">Lima</a> (Peru - Lima)	12 March 2021, 09:00:00	<a href="#">PET</a>	UTC-5 hours
<a href="#">Santiago</a> (Chile)	12 March 2021, 11:00:00	<a href="#">CLST</a>	UTC-3 hours
<a href="#">Brasilia</a> (Brazil - Distrito Federal)	12 March 2021, 11:00:00	<a href="#">BRT</a>	UTC-3 hours
<a href="#">Washington DC</a> (USA - District of Columbia)	12 March 2021, 09:00:00	<a href="#">EST</a>	UTC-5 hours
<a href="#">Bridgetown</a> (Barbados)	12 March 2021, 10:00:00	<a href="#">AST</a>	UTC-4 hours
<a href="#">Saint John's</a> (Antigua and Barbuda)	12 March 2021, 10:00:00	<a href="#">AST</a>	UTC-4 hours
<a href="#">Mexico City</a> (Mexico - Ciudad de México)	12 March 2021, 08:00:00	<a href="#">CST</a>	UTC-6 hours
Corresponding UTC (GMT)	12 March 2021, 14:00:00		