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Consumers at the Heart of Digital Innovation

April 29-May 2, 2019, Estoril, Portugal

The Programme and the Objective

The object of the Consumers International Summit, 2019 was to bring together diverse perspectives on both the digital world and consumer needs. This once in four-year experience is the only event, where the global consumer movement comes together in one place. This event also aimed to expand to include those, who create digital products and services.

This event also targeted to create the space for an open exchange of ideas, attendee contributions, engagement, network opportunities and innovative new developments and relationships to emerge that will lead to new ideas, new ways of doing things and be catalysts to real change for consumers.

The main summit was held for two days on April 30-May 01, 2019, which consisted of number of plenaries and breakout sessions and preceded by side events, the day before on April 29, 2019 and again succeeded the day after on May 02, 2019 followed by a member exclusive day, which included voting for new Council Members and the announcement of new President in the General Assembly on May 02, 2019.

Event Focus

The whole event was focussed on to put consumers at the heart of digital innovation. This time, the Congress, which this time named as a Summit was on a truly global scale, that those who create digital products and services and representatives of those, who use and regulate them were expected to be part of this event. Besides, CI tried to catalyse change in this creative and dynamic environment, which in doing so, will create breakthroughs and innovations, which will benefit consumers, digital businesses and society as a whole in the coming time.

Crucially the summit aimed to ask ‘What Could the Future Look Like, if We Put Consumers at the Heart of Digital Innovation’.

In crux, the important issues for consumers living in a digital society and economy were focussed and addressed, which are:

- What will consumer choice look like in the future digital economy?
- Smart-by-default devices are becoming mainstream but still lack the most basic data security provisions. What does truly smart look like from a consumer point of view?
- Should consumers in less developed countries be expected to accept access at any cost?

Lead Partners

The Consumer Directorate-General of Portugal and The Internet Society were the main host and partners respectively with CI of this event. Besides, the event was co-sponsored by Choice, Australia; Consumentenbond, Netherland; FOMCA, Malaysia; Consumers Korea; EUROCONSUMERS; Hong Kong Consumers Council; Consumer Reports, USA.

Proceedings

GC and DS attended Consumers International Summit, 2019 representing CUTS. Besides all plenaries, also attended side events and the breakout sessions, mainly those sessions, where the subject/topic is closer to our ongoing work within or outside projects.

On April 29, 2019 In the morning started with a **side event** co-organised by SSNC on ‘Green Action Week Skill Share: How We Reignite a Sharing Community’ with Sho Konno as the main speaker, who is a communication coach hired for the campaign.

This side event tried to explore, how the current system creates unsustainable consumerism and help develop ideas for how to change that system at a local level. This session envisaged the process to be involved in 2019’s activities and to practice planning activities.

This was again followed with another **side event** on ‘Green Action Week Skill Share: How to Persuade People with a Story’. This is the second side-event by Green Action Week on Monday, focusing on communications. These two back to back SSNC co-sponsored events were attended by GC and shared GAW experience.

This session also tried to explore the importance of communications and stories for changing the system behind unsustainable consumerism.

Then was again a **side event** co-organised by IKEA-CI on ‘Developing a Scalable Behaviour Change Model to Enable Low-Income Families to Switch to Clean and Renewable Energy Use’, which was moderated by Indrani Duraisingham and attended by all Indian and Indonesian partners and other people attending the summit. GC spoke about CUTS work done under ProVoice and DS also joined in between the discussions, when Satish, a consultant for IKEA-CI project was making the joint presentation. Prior to that was a meeting with partners alone of IKEA-CI project, where GC represented CUTS.

In the meeting, various IEC and BCC (Behaviour Change Communication) materials such as puppetry, street play, quiz, board games targeting at different levels - individual, group and community, which were developed and tested for mass dissemination through its local member organizations in all the targeted communities were displayed and exhibited and the experience between partners were shared.

In the evening of April 29, 2019, there was a **welcome event** in the plenary hall, which gathered a huge crowd of almost over 450 people consisting of CI partners, local citizens and other delegates. In the inaugural, Pedro Siza Vieira, Minister in the Cabinet of the Prime Minister and of Economy Government of Portugal; Andrew Sullivan President & CEO, The Internet Society; Gilly Wong Chief Executive, Hong Kong Consumer Council and Bart Combée, the outgoing President Consumers International were the main speakers welcoming all participants and declaring the event open over next two days.

Day One of Summit: April 30, 2019. In the morning, started with a **plenary** on ‘How Do We Put Consumers at the Heart of Digital Innovation’ with João Torres, Secretary of State of Consumer Protection, Government of Portugal; Helena Leurent, Director General, Consumers International and Ana Catarina Fonseca, Director General, Consumer Directorate-General of Portugal being the speakers of the session.

In this plenary, Helena Leurent, new Director General welcomed the audience to the Summit with the key question to be explored over the two days– ‘what could our World look like if consumers need and wants were at the heart of digital innovation?’. This issue was then discussed by other speakers as well of the session.

This was followed by another **plenary** ‘What Will Consumer Choice Look Like in the Future Digital Economy?’ moderated by Phil Evans, Independent Consultant, Competition, Consumer, Trade, IPR Policy and Reinald Krüger, Public Policy Development Director, Vodafone; Marta Tellado, President & CEO, Consumer Reports; Toa Charm, Associate Professor, Chinese University of Hong Kong Business School and Babatunde Irukera, Director General and Chief Executive, Consumer Protection Council being the speakers.

In this plenary, the overall picture view on the future of the digital economy for consumers was presented, asking how new and emerging trends might impact on consumers and industry and consumer groups across the globe can expand on the key question and how consumers can be put at the heart of the digital economy?

In the breakout sessions followed by the plenaries, GC and DS attended a **break out session** on ‘Clicks and Mortar’, which was moderated by Christine Riefa, Reader, Brunel University, whereas, Sónia Lapa de Pass, os, Head of Department of Consumer Communication, Consumer Directorate-General of Portugal; Shirish Deshpande, Chairman, MGP, India and Peter Lochbihler, Director of Public Affairs, Booking.com being the speakers of this side event.

In this break out, speakers focussed and spoke on what can platforms, enforcement agencies and companies do to improve consumers’ confidence and build a safer marketplace for both connected consumers and those yet to get online?

After the lunch, was a **plenary** on ‘Accessibility and Fairness’ moderated by Alan Kirkland, CEO, CHOICE with Eve Andersson, Director, Google AI; Marco Pierani, Public Affairs & Media Relations Director, Euroconsumers and Colin Strong, Global Head of Behavioural Science, Ipsos as other speakers.

In this plenary session, discussions on how artificial intelligence is improving consumers’ lives and creating opportunities and fairer outcomes by offering greater access to on and offline services. The discussion that follows built on these themes by asking what fairness and accessibility look like for everyone in an increasingly AI driven World.

This was followed by another **plenary** on ‘Data Reimagined’ moderated by vo Mechels, CEO, Euroconsumers and Paul Nagle, Director of International Government Affairs, Alibaba Group; Peter Lochbihler, Director of Public Affairs, Booking.com; Niall Murphy, CEO and Co-Founder, EVERYTHING and Fabrizio de Liberali, Chief Product, Officer, Digi.me being other speakers.

In this plenary, discussions on as to how can our valuable data and purchases, which is gathered every moment be used better, for safe and sustainable products and services in the future? Does the answer lie with the innovators, who are driving new ideas forward?

Then after tea, was a **break out** and both DS and GC attended a session on ‘Is Sustainability Still a Choice?’, which was moderated by Naomi Scott-Mearns, Sustainable Consumption Manager, CI and Els Bruggeman, Head Advocacy and Enforcement Euroconsumers; Hugh Weldon, CTO, Evocco and Helio Mattar, President and Chief Executive Officer, Akatu Institute for Conscious Consumption being the speakers. GC raised some queries.

In this afternoon break out, this session tried to examine initiatives to encourage sustainable consumption with a focus on digital tools to help consumers. The issues like ‘Is buying

sustainable easy for consumers?’ and ‘Should consumers be faced with an active choice to be sustainable or should tools exist to guide them?’ were discussed.

Day Two: May 1, 2019

The second day of the event started with a **plenary** on ‘Connection and Protection in the Consumer Internet of Things’ with Helena Laurent, Director General, CI as the moderator and Andrew Sullivan, President & CEO, The Internet Society; Rita Hagl-Kehl, Parliamentary State Secretary, German Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection and Justin Brookman, Director of Consumer Privacy and Technology Policy, Consumer Reports as the key speakers.

In the plenary, the meaning of smart from a consumer’s point of view and how can we build protection into connection for a world that is truly smart was discussed.

In the morning **break out**, attended a session on ‘How Can Consumers Tell, If Artificial Intelligence is on Their Side?’ Henrique Lian, Head of Institutional Affairs and Media Relations, PROTESTE; Jake Lucchi, Head of Content and AI, Public Policy, Google Asia Pacific; Liz Coll, Head of Digital Change, Consumers International and Ashim Sanyal, Chief Operating Officer and Secretary of Consumer VOICE were the main speakers in the session.

In this break out, since artificial intelligence is already revolutionising everyday services and products, but the discussion on whether, is it being built into systems with consumer safety, fairness and ethical expectations in mind.

After lunch was an Informal Discussion on ‘What Does Gen Z Mean for the Consumer Movement?’. Naomi Scott-Mearns, Sustainable Consumption Manager, Consumers International being the moderator and Louise Marie Hurel, Youth Ambassador, Internet Society, Sarah Ingle, Youth Ambassador, Internet Society, Diogo Alves, Senior Executive, World Economic Forum Global Shaper were the speakers.

This informal discussion was on to explore how the consumer movement is changing. By 2020, Gen Z (Generation Z is the demographic cohort following Generation Y, also known as the Millennials or the Millennial Generation) consumers will be the largest consumer market. As demonstrated by the recent youth climate strikes, Gen Z expect inclusivity, dialogue and respect brands that take a stand on key global issues. As the first true generation of digital natives asserts themselves, we ask them what this means for how we articulate consumer protection in the digital age.

In the afternoon, a **plenary** on ‘Access at Any Cost?’ was held with Teresa Moreira, Head of Competition and Consumer Policies, UNCTAD; Nanjira Sambuli, Senior Policy Manager, World Wide Web Foundation and Dimitar Dimitrov, Free Knowledge Ambassador Wikimedia, and Lillian Nalwoga, Programmes Manager, CIPESA being the main speakers.

In the plenary, discussions on as to how we can build confidence and boost participation for those not yet online? There is an assumption that people in poorer countries will compromise their rights to get internet access, but is this really the case? We need to ask consumers as to how we can make the internet work for them.

Afternoon was a **break out** on ‘Tech, Trade and Trust’ with Justin Macmullan, Advocacy Director, Consumers International as the moderator and Lea Auffret, Senior Trade Policy Officer, BEUC; George Cheriyan and Bernard Kuiten, Head of External Relation, World Trade Organization were the key speakers.

In this break out, issues to be adopted in the agenda to help build consumer trust in this growing sector were discussed. Early this year, a group of 72 countries started new trade discussions on cross border were e-commerce.

Closing Remarks

‘Inspirations for the Future-Coming Together for Change’

In the final session of two-day summit, innovators and leaders offered their reflections on what they have heard and experienced, and what more CI need to do to come together and connect for a digital world consumer can trust. This was chaired by Gilly Wong, Chief Executive, Hong Kong Consumer Council; Rosemary Siyachitema, Executive Director, Consumer Council of Zimbabwe and Henrique Lian, Head of Institutional Affairs and Media Relations, PROTESTE, Hugh Weldon CTO Evocco.

Regional Meeting

For Asia Pacific Consumers International members with the new Director General

In the evening, an informal meeting with DG was organised with all the Asia Pacific members gathered at one place and interacted with her and raising some very important concerns before her. Mainly restart of regional offices again was demanded by most of the members besides some other issues.

On May 2, 2019

A **plenary panel discussion** on ‘The Revision of the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection and Key Challenges in Consumer Protection’ was held with Klaus Müller, Executive Director, Federation of German Consumer Organisations as the moderator; Felicia Monye, Professor of Law, University of Nigeria; Saroja Sundaram, Director, Consumer Protection, CAG and Danilo Pérez Montiel, Consumer Defence Centre for Consumer Defence, El Salvador as the other panellists. Prior to this Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General, UNCTAD briefed the participants about the history and the future scope of UNGCP.

The revision of the UNGCP in 2015 was a major achievement in updating guidance on consumer protection for the modern World. What changes were made and what does this mean for consumer protection internationally? The panel explored and discussed some new and challenging issues in consumer protection including peer to peer markets, cross border transactions and vulnerability and discuss the role of consumer law in protecting and empowering consumers. Some speakers were focussed on their country respective, while others took a global view of it.

‘How Can We Make Sustainable Consumption the Easy Choice for Consumers?’ was the topic for a **break out session** after the plenary panel discussion. Lucas del Villar, National Director, SERNAC; Els Bruggeman, Head Advocacy and Enforcement, Euroconsumers; Mercedes López Martínez, Director, Via Organica and George Cheriyan were the key speakers, whereas

Naomi Scott-Mearns, Sustainable Consumption Manager, Consumers International was the moderator in the session.

This session emphasized on Goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals and the importance of collaboration and partnership for sustainability.

Immediately followed with a **key session** in the plenary hall on ‘Protecting and Empowering Vulnerable Consumers’. George Cheriyan was the moderator with Maria José Troya, Executive Director, The Ecuadorian Consumers and Users Tribune; Saral James, Council Member, FOMCA and Nada Nehme, Vice President, Consumers Lebanon as the other key speakers.

Highlight of this session was as to how we can protect the rights of all consumers, including the most vulnerable by taking various examples of various types of vulnerable consumers to understand the challenges and the opportunities for making a difference.

Thereafter, in the **break out** session on ‘How Can We Create More Effective Systems for Product Safety?’ was held, which was moderated by Erin Turner, Director of Campaigns and Communications, CHOICE; Sue Davies, Strategic Policy Partner, Which?; Crisólogo Cáceres Valle, President, Peruvian Association of Consumers and Users (ASPEC) and Anina M. Del Castillo Cazaño, Executive Director, Pro Consumidor were the other speakers in the session.

In this key session, the speakers spoke about market surveillance activities, campaigning for more effective national product safety systems and how all can better share information.

In the afternoon **break out**, was a session on ‘Improving Consumer Access to a Nutritious Diet’. Anja Philip, President, Danish Consumer Council was the moderator and Damien Ndizeye, Executive Secretary, ADECOR; Alejandro Calvillo Unna, Director General, El Poder del Consumidor; Ashim Sanyal, CEO of Consumer VOICE and Kaja Lund-Iversen, Senior Advisor, Norwegian Consumer Council (NCC) were the key speakers in the session.

In this session, speakers tried to understand the challenges and the solutions and the proposed the most successful strategies for consumer groups on under nutrition or over nutrition or healthy diets as important topic around the world.

Parallel to it was **another break out session** on ‘Progress in Collective Redress’ with Ivo Mechels, CEO, Euroconsumers as the moderator and Ursula Pachl, Deputy Director General, BEUC; Stefan Larenas, President, ODECU and Anindita Mehta, Deputy General Manager and Lab Director, CERC India. DS attended both spending half-half time in each.

Consumer groups around the world are campaigning for the right to seek collective redress for consumers. This session tried to look at progress in winning this right and members’ experience of bringing collective actions.

Consumers International General Assembly

In the final quarter of May 2, 2019, the General Assembly of CI was held, which was attended by all the members and some representatives, who may or may not be members of CI also were present but did not have the right to vote for council board. After proposing, announcing and

declaring Marimuthu Nadason's name as the new President of CI, the result of voting of new council members, which was done during the lunch break was announced and the newly elected Council met hold a short meeting at the end. Saroja Sundaram from India got elected to the Council.

Key Takeaways from the Summit

- Radical changes in lifestyles are needed right away to meet challenges of the climate crisis. How can digital help get us there? How can sustainability be the easy, beneficial choice for consumers?
- Improving the well-being of our communities and families, one of the most tangible benefits of economic development requires stronger protection in the digital economy.
- In new data-driven services, we need to enable the consumer movement to work with developers to define and develop the data services that consumers really value and want.
- We need investment in infrastructure, and affordable devices and services. Otherwise the rate at which the next fifty percent of the World will get online, will get slow.
- A sense of urgency for change. In some areas, like security of Internet of Things, there is a need for speed over perfection in developing basic standards of security.
- Better protection and trust will require deeper international cooperation on consumer protection.
- Launch of new research into consumer attitudes towards security and privacy in the Internet of Things and report and action areas for consumers in Artificial Intelligence.
- An urge to all members to take all this as a challenge to turn some of these ideas into action and all partnering members to turn these into positive outcomes for consumers, that genuinely put them at the heart of digital innovation.

Highlights

- Good platform to know about the issue and listen to speakers of international expertise.
- The summit brought together consumer advocacy groups, government agencies trying to keep citizens safe, and companies creating digital products and services.
- The engagement of delegates, level of active participation, and the ideas for action emanating from discussions have been truly remarkable.
- Got the opportunity to interact with CI members coming from all over World and interacting with them.
- First time, attended Congress.
- The event was well organized, managed and with live participation.
- CUTS publications, which I carried along with were lifted within first half an hour of the first day by the participants and only few of them remained until the last day.

Lowlights

- The sessions were informative but most of the speakers were trying to speak on the basis of the country perspective and not in general as stated above.
- The presentation copies were not provided to participants. Though moving towards paper less and to match with the theme of the whole Summit, almost negligible papers were there but still, at some places, it ought to be there like the agenda to all in the printed form and a resource kit etc.