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MESSAGE TO 20TH CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL WORLD CONGRESS
Brasilia, 19 November 2015

*Delivered by Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi,
Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)*

I am pleased to send greetings to the 20th Consumers International World Congress, and I thank the Government of Brazil and Her Excellency President Dilma Rouseff for hosting.

In September, world leaders adopted ambitious goals and targets to end poverty, protect the planet and achieve lasting prosperity for all. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a plan of action to empower people and leave no one behind.

Sustainable Development Goal 12, on responsible consumption and production, explicitly recognizes the responsibility of consumers to make sustainable choices. To accomplish this, consumers must be empowered by better information and stronger consumer protection.

The 21st Century consumer is a global consumer. There are more consumers today than at any time in history; today's consumers have the largest choice of goods and services ever seen. But greater numbers and choice also entail greater risks.

The newly revised United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, which are expected to be adopted by the General Assembly in its current session, are both stronger and more relevant to today's consumers than any previous international instrument. I thank the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development for supporting the negotiations, and Consumers International for its significant contribution to the revision process.

Consumers can be powerful agents for change, with businesses and governments responding to consumer preferences. The choices made by consumers worldwide can greatly influence sustainable development. In the lead-up to the climate conference in Paris in December, consumer voices have been among the loudest calling for a transformation.

Empowered consumers must continue to be on the leading edge of change as we implement Agenda 2030. As consumer rights groups and consumer protection agencies you are important partners. I count on you to help improve consumer knowledge, advocate for consumer-friendly policies and promote sustainable consumption.

I welcome your continued engagement with the United Nations system, and I wish you a productive meeting.