

WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY 2020

THE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER



INTRODUCTION

THE WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY THEME

A global environmental crisis

We urgently need drastic action to address the global crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. To do this we need to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, waste and resource use from across all sectors.

We are currently locked into a fossil-fuel based, high-waste model that ties growth to resource use. It is vital we change our model of consumption, and do it in a way that supports rather than undermines progress on challenges of poverty, hunger, inequality, poor health and inadequate housing. These problems damage communities across the world and are felt most keenly in the global south – where climate change is having the biggest impact.

- We are currently predicted to [miss the Paris agreement of keeping the temperature rise at 1.5c](#) and [miss all of the Sustainable Development Goals](#).
- [Earth Overshoot Day](#), the day of the year we consume all of earth's resources has been getting earlier and earlier. In 2019 was 29 July.
- If we don't take action up to [700 million people will be displaced by 2030 due to water scarcity](#).
- [30%-40% of all food produced worldwide is lost or wasted](#), placing an unnecessary strain on the environment.
- Globally only [9% of all the plastic ever produced has been recycled](#), 79% is in landfills, dumps or the environment and 12% has been incinerated affecting marine pollution and biodiversity.
- [Native land species have fallen by at least 20%](#). More than 40% of amphibian species, almost 33% of reef-forming corals and more than a third of all marine mammals are threatened.

This is a global challenge which requires coordinated and global solutions. As a global consumer movement, we can play an important role. Encouraging consumers to consume sustainability is vital, as well as ensuring the infrastructure and choice is in the place for them to do that.

Consumer power

As individuals, or consumers, we have enormous power, in the purchase choices we make and how we use and dispose of those purchases, but also in our ability to influence the whole system (from production and manufacturing to packaging and disposal) by demanding more from supply chains and calling for more sustainable products and services. We also have the power to ensure that the impact of the sustainable purchases we make doesn't end as we leave the shop. That our sustainable products have the infrastructure behind them to increase their life and usefulness, which not only helps us as individuals but makes sustainability the easier option for other consumers.

The Sustainable Consumer

World Consumer Rights Day will focus on involving and empowering consumers to make the sustainable choices needed to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

This Campaign Outline will take you through some of the ways you could highlight the issues of The Sustainable Consumer in your country.

PURPOSE OF WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY

15 March is World Consumer Rights Day, an annual occasion for celebration, impact and global solidarity.

Each year we mark the day by joining together to highlight and raise awareness of an issue that is important to consumers around the world. World Consumer Rights Day is our chance to make the biggest impact possible. Working together, our voices calling for change are far more powerful than they would be alone.

WHAT IS WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY 2020'S THEME?

The Sustainable Consumer

If everyone lived the lifestyle of the average person in western Europe, we would need three planets to support us. Meanwhile, about one billion people live in extreme poverty, unable to access the minimum needed for a decent quality of life.

In order to protect the planet and provide fair social conditions for current and future generations, we need to think about the way we produce and consume goods and services. The aim of sustainable consumption is to increase resource efficiency and fair trade while helping to alleviate poverty and enable everyone to enjoy a good quality of life with access to food, water, energy, medicine and more.

Sustainable consumption is an important aspect of the Sustainable Development Goals.

[Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns](#)

“Since sustainable consumption and production aims at “doing more, and better, with less,” net welfare gains from economic activities can increase by reducing resource use, degradation and pollution along the whole life cycle, while increasing quality of life. There also needs to be significant focus on operating on supply chain, involving everyone from producer to final consumer. This includes educating consumers on sustainable consumption and lifestyles, providing them with adequate information through standards and labels, and engaging in sustainable public procurement, among others.”

But sustainable consumption should be the easy option, and not down to consumer choice alone. We need to work to reduce the confusion around sustainability by ensuring that producers, retailers and policymakers do all they can to make products safe, durable and resource-efficient; before providing clear, reliable information to guide consumer choice.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Get involved in the discussion on social media, using the hashtag #sustainableconsumer – all tweets using this hashtag will appear on our live map of activity during the day.
- Write a blog for your website, or pitch a blog to an external one you admire.
- Please get involved in the discussion around the day, on the issue of sustainable consumption, rather than specific products and brands.
- Contact a consumer rights organisation in your country and talk to them about how you could work together on something for the day.
- Get your staff involved, what will you commit to doing something to be more sustainable as individuals and as an organisation? We have briefings we can send to start a company discussion on the topic.
- Create some video content with your networks (especially young people as they are a really key generation in the fight for a more sustainable world) – we have included a short suggested video brief below.

Video brief

Vox pops - 30 sec roughly – two questions.

- 'What I'll do' to be a more sustainable consumer – for example, go meat free during the week
- 'What I want' (from business and governments) to support sustainable consumption' – for example, more recyclable packing

Please do let us know what you are doing for the campaign by emailing wcrd@consint.org.

WHO ARE WE

We believe in a world where everyone has access to safe and sustainable products and services.

We bring together over 200 member organisations in more than 100 countries to empower and champion the rights of consumers everywhere. We are their voice in international policy-making forums and the global marketplace to ensure they are treated safely, fairly and honestly.

We are resolutely independent, unconstrained by businesses or political parties. We work in partnership and exercise our influence with integrity, tenacity and passion to deliver tangible results.

Consumers International. Coming together for change