Consumers in Africa: making a difference in standards

**ARSO GA consumer seminar**
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
14 August 2015

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Part 1:
Consumer participation in standards development
Setting the context

What are consumers’ expectations for goods and services?
Expectations: Eight consumer rights

Background: John F. Kennedy, 1962

1 Four basic rights:
   • The right to safety
   • The right to be informed
   • The right to choose
   • The right to be heard

2 Expansion to eight rights: UN Guidelines for consumer protection, 1985, rev. 2015
   • The right to satisfaction of basic needs
   • The right to redress
   • The right to consumer education
   • The right to a healthy environment
Expectations: goods and services

- Protection of safety and health
- Fitness for purpose (performance)
- Environmental protection, Sustainability
- Ease of use
- Compatibility between products (interoperability)
- Transparency of product information and labelling
- Protection from false or misleading claims
- Fair competition and competitive pricing
- Systems of redress
- Consistency in the delivery of services
- Suitability for vulnerable populations
The consumer experience?

The flame seems to have been badly adjusted on that one. If you wish to make a complaint please fill out this form in triplicate.
The consumer experience?

If consumers EXPERIENCE or HEAR about a bad experience with a product or service they loose trust and confidence in them.

SAFETY
Non branded chargers for phones have led to fires and injury
Lead paint found on Mattel toys led to a massive recall
Adulterated foods can cause ill health and financial detriment

INFORMATION
Food product contents labeled not in the national language confuse and mislead consumers
Products, such as toilet tissue or rice are not priced for easy comparison

REDRESS
Lack of contact information for manufacturers of products means you can’t complain
False online reviews mislead consumers – no redress
What standards can do to address these concerns?
Improve outcomes in priority areas

- Safety, health and security
- Fitness for purpose (performance)
- Interoperability
- Product information and labelling
- Environmental protection
- Air/water protection
  - Energy efficiency
- Customer service, systems of redress
- *More recently:* Services
Important issues for consumers

*New issues at the forefront*

Former issues still count, *furthermore*:

- Environmental protection: *climate change*
- Disaster risk reduction for communities
- Sustainability
- Cross-border trade of second hand goods
- Traceability in the supply chain
- Market surveillance, counterfeiting
- E-commerce
- Ethical trade and related labelling
- Energy services
- Financial Services
What is a standard?

ISO/IEC Guide 2

Document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.
Why involve stakeholders? Who are they?

7 categories of stakeholders:

- Consumers
- Standards application
- Government
- NGOs
- Labour
- Industry and commerce
- Academic and research bodies
ISO 26000 – Guidance on social responsibility

- Origins with COPOLCO
- Elaborate consensus-building
- New, multi-stakeholder process
- Flexibility, adaptability
- Training programmes
What exactly is a “consumer representative”?

**Consumer**: individual member of the general public purchasing or using property, products or services for private purposes (ISO 26000, ISO/COPOLCO)

**Consumer representative**: designated representative of a consumer organization
Consumer rep vs. consumer: the essential difference

Standards are developed by relevant stakeholders. A consumer representative is officially the consumer stakeholder representing the views of all consumers.

Consumer representatives are usually nominated by an independent consumer organization.

Consumer reps positively impact consumers’ lives by:

- Lobbying for safer, fairer, better quality products and services that are easier to use.
- Advising on products and services that are more relevant and useful to real people.
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“Being a CPI Rep ... has given me the opportunity to participate in discussions about issues that affect people’s lives and to make a positive contribution to those issues.”

“..each meeting is an opportunity to learn something new”

..I joined CPIN in 2011, following my retirement from a career in engineering using standards in the creation of aircraft components ..Standards, worked on include safety requirements for ‘Audio, video and similar electronic apparatus’:

“Televisions are heavy objects that, without adequate stands or fixings, could fall on a child causing injury. The standard protects consumers by requiring manufacturers to conduct load and stability testing, which should significantly reduce the risk of such incidents.”
I have been a consumer rep at KEBS since 2011 as an appointed member of various TCs. As a consumer representative in standards development at KEBS, I have been able to bring into standards development process the expectations and needs of consumers that standards should address hence ensuring consumer rights protection. This has contributed to improving the quality lives of Kenyan consumers in ways such as safety, getting value for money, making life easy and increasing access to good and services.
What added value can consumer representatives bring?

Consumer representatives:

- Provide data on safety aspects
- Give examples of how goods and services are really used by consumers
- Check adequacy of performance requirements and test methods
- Give advice on communication issues
- Identifying priorities for standards
Consumer involvement: “win-win” for trade and consumers

Businesses are USERS of standards, but consumers are END USERS of goods and services

Promoting consumer involvement in standards development:

- Adds value to the quality of standards
- Results in safer, fairer, better quality products and services
- Helps businesses understand their products and services from the consumer perspective
Channelling Consumers’ views into International Standards
Consumers’ involvement in ISO
The Secretary General is a member of the President’s Committee, reports to the President and to Council and receives advice from the policy and advisory groups (who also advise Council). The Central Secretariat is responsible for supporting the governance and policy and advisory structure and the operations of ISO.
Consumer involvement in ISO (Governance)

- ISO Council and Technical Management Board (TMB) members represent their national standards bodies (NSBs)
- ISO COPOLCO Chair attends ISO Council meetings
- ISO COPOLCO Chair is a member of the ISO Council Strategy and Policy Committee.
Opportunities for Consumer Involvement through National Standards Bodies

**Governance and Policy**

- Consumer participation on governing councils
- Consumer advisory and policy committees

**Technical Committees**

- Standards development as members of national Technical Committees (NSBs and ISO experts)
- ISO encourages consumer and public interest participation on international TCs
Consumer Involvement in Mirror Committees

Mirror Committees
formed to provide input to the development of the international standards in which an NSB has an interest.

- Consumers can influence national priorities for the international work the NSB may wish to support.

- NSBs should try to ensure that Mirror Committees have a “balanced representation” of stakeholders including consumer representatives.
ISO/COPOLCO’s Terms of reference

– **Help consumers benefit** from standardization
– Provide a **consumers’ network** to exchange information
– **Advise ISO on policies** and actions to respond to consumers’ needs
– **Make recommendations** on current and potential standardization work
COPOLCO membership (July 2015)

Membership of COPOLCO is **124**
(There are 163 ISO members)

- Worldwide membership from Europe, Asia, Africa, Americas, Middle East and Oceania (Australia, New Zealand and Fiji)
- Integration of developing country members within COPOLCO: **84/124** total (70 P-members / 54 O-members).
  - In 2005: over 1/2
  - In 2015: over 2/3

Liaison Members:
- Consumers International (CI)
- OECD Committee on Consumer Policy (CCP)
- OIML (International Organization for Legal Metrology)
Consumers International
About Consumers International

- 240 member organisations in 120 countries
- Funded by membership fees and donors
- Advocate for consumer rights on the global stage
- Help national consumer groups advance their campaigns and capacity
Consumer organisations have been doing it for years. Providing consumers with the information they need to make an informed decision about the products and services they use.
Why is CI involved in standards?

- Standards contribute to accessing safe and sustainable goods and services.
- International standards should reflect the needs of all economies, regions, and stakeholders.
- Consumer issues such as environment, sustainability, CSR, and services are now being addressed by standards.
- Recognition of standards as a tool to provide consumer protection.
CI’s role in standards

- CI has liaison status with ISO, ISO/COPOLCO IEC and ITU
- CI’s members can participate fully in their country’s NSBs
- CI coordinates the work of its members to promote sharing of expertise and to target priority issues
- CI’s representatives can bring the global consumer voice direct to international standards meetings
First steps in standards representation: a guide for consumer organizations

CI works with agencies to provide training on consumer issues – ISO, UNIDO …
Recent CI activity in standards

- ISO COPOLCO and CAG
- ISO WGSR – developing ISO 26000 and PPO
- ISO TC68 Mobile payments
- ISO TS 20245 Second hand goods
- ISO 242 Energy services
- ISO 290 Online reputation
- ISO TC181 Toy safety
- IEC TC 61 Safety of household products
- IEC ACOS
- ITU WG Digital Financial services
Channeling consumers’ views
- The national level
“One size fits all” does not apply!
- Country cases
UK Consumer & Public Interest Network (CPIN)

• The UK consumer voice in standards development

• Our consumer representatives sit on hundreds of UK, European and international standards committees

• Working to: Give a voice to all consumers – including children, older people, those with disabilities;

• Ensure that standards address real issues that matter to real people.
CPIN facts

- Established 1951 as BSI Women’s Advisory Committee
- CPIN consists of:
  - Consumer Representatives (c.40) – who speak up for consumers on standards committees and working groups
  - Consumer Coordinators (8) – manage teams of Reps
  - Background experts – that give advice
  - Representatives from consumer & public interest organizations who also form CPISAC
- Managed by Consumer & Public Interest Unit at BSI HQ in Chiswick, London
- CPIU/CPIN are members of:
  - ANEC (European voice of consumers)
  - ISO/COPOLCO
  - Consumers International (Supporter members)
Current consumer priorities

- **Wellbeing** Child appealing products; Fire safety in buildings; Nanotechnology; Surface temperatures; Toys
- **Services** Adventurous activities; Customer service; Complaints handling; Contact centres; Dementia-friendly communities
- **Security, privacy & identity** Biometrics; Child safety on internet; RFIDs
- **Sustainability** Energy efficiency; Environmental labels & declarations; Smart meters; Social responsibility
- **Inclusivity** Buildings to meet needs of disabled people; Products & services used by ‘vulnerable’ people, including children; Websites
ISO/COPOLCO/ACADEMY TRAINING

• Sponsored Training
• Open to all COPOLCO members
• 11 May 2015 (before plenary events)
ISO/COPOLCO/ACADEMY TRAINING

- Small group with Interactive sessions
- Encourage engagement with COPOLCO and strengthen national consumer involvement with standards
- National cases considered and discussed
Kenya (KEBS)

Current strategy:

- Consumer representation in majority of TC’s at KEBS
- Consumer representatives can contribute ideas for new work items
- Initiatives to raise public awareness: Workshops and trainings

Examples of successful consumer representation in:

- National standard on fruit flavoured drinks: safety and quality parameters included; misleading labelling prohibited
- National standard on mobile money transfer services to ensure quality, interoperability, liability and redress
Botswana (BOBS)

Current strategy:
- National COPOLCO mirror committee: NaCOPOLCO
- **Dissemination activities** to increase public awareness: Articles in newspapers, hosting ISO training on consumer participation in standardization in 2006, presenting consumer issues at high schools on World Standards Day

Future aims:
- To increase nr. and activity of NaCOPOLCO members
- To increase collaboration/coordination with local stakeholders on consumer education and standardization
Current strategy:

- Consumer organizations like CONSENT, UCPA, UCAN, UICPA work with UNBS and are members in several TC’s
- Regularly organizes capacity building activities for consumer representatives (trainings) or commissions them to conduct awareness and baseline surveys (ex CONSENT)
- Participated in ISO COPOLCO’s consumers and standards initiative
- Partnered with Consumers International plus Codex AC requirement for NCC’s to involve, engage and bring on consumer interest organizations
- Engagement in developing Global Good Practices
Malawi (MBS)

Current Strategy:

- Consumers Association of Malawi (CAMA) represents Consumers in TC’s
- CAMA is a member of Consumers International
- In terms of membership, every Malawian is regarded as a member of CAMA and there is no membership fee
- CAMA is a member of the Standards Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), a higher level committee in the process of Malawi standards development structure
- CAMA informs MBS if there are complaints on goods on the market so that the MBS can take action
Encouraging consumer participation: the way forward
Barriers to effective consumer participation

- Not all NSBs have strong relationships with, or the active involvement of consumers
- Many (most) TCs do not understand or recognize the value of consumer participation
- Weak accountability for ensuring consumer participation
- A lack of involved consumers willing and able to participate in standardization activities
- Inadequate, inconsistent or unreliable funding for consumer participation
Ways to overcome those barriers: for NSBs

- Decide priority areas to engage consumer or PI representatives (not all are relevant)
- Identify and engage with one or several consumer organizations
- Provide support (funding, services in kind) for consumer representatives
- Consider consumer education, outreach to public
- Use ISO resources (publications, tools)
- Use available networks (COPOLCO, ACADEMY, Consumers International)
Ways to overcome those barriers: for consumer representatives

- Evaluate where consumer priorities overlap with national standards activities (review NSB action plan)
- Evaluate issues of greatest consumer detriment where standards may help
- Liaise with other COs and NGOs
- Review where consumer participation in priority standards issues would be most effective/useful (vs. legislation/relates to testing agenda)
- Provide realistic and practical information to NSB regarding consumer participation to facilitate a joint action plan
- Investigate funding and resource opportunities for participation
- Evaluate CO potential resources to participate (financial & human)
- Appoint a liaison person to co-ordinate with NSB and other COs/NGOs
Joint actions standards bodies and consumer organizations might consider:

- World Standards Day Activities, such as:
  https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/speakstandards
- Develop an ongoing dialogue (meetings, seminars)
- Involve each other in topics of mutual interest
- Promote good use of standards in consumer protection
- Develop mechanisms to enable consumer priorities for standards to be developed
- COPOLCO members meet with consumer reps to consider the papers, to brief delegates and/or submit e-mail comment.
ISO/COPOLCO
Education and outreach

Information brochures and training materials
www.iso.org “consumers”,
Electronic newsletter, ISO Consumer update

• for members and other interested organizations
• to encourage involvement in standardization

Social media: Facebook, Twitter (ISOConsumers)

E-learning module: Consumers and standards – Partnership for a better world
CI resources
Education and outreach

Website of Consumers International –
www.consumersinternational.org

• Our members
• Our resources – standards, social responsibility
• Social media: Facebook, Twitter (consumers_int)
Resources from the ISO TMB

- **Code of conduct**: Balanced stakeholder participation – INCLUDING CONSUMERS

- **Portal, "Engaging Stakeholders"**

- **Stakeholder engagement e-learning pilot**
Prospects and possibilities:

“Great things happen when the world agrees”
ISO/COPOLCO: Product safety

- ISO/IEC Guides 50, 51
- Child safety (toys, car seats, packaging)
- Food safety
- Cosmetics
Consumer-facing International Standards

- **ISO 10377**, *Consumer product safety -- Guidelines for suppliers*
- **ISO 10393**, *Consumer product recall -- Guidelines for suppliers*
- **ISO 14452**, *Network services billing — Requirements*
- **ISO/TS 20245**, *Cross-border trade of second-hand goods*
Customer satisfaction standards

- **ISO 10001**, *Quality management -- Customer satisfaction -- Guidelines for codes of conduct for organizations*
- **ISO 10002**, *Quality management – Customer satisfaction -- Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations*
- **ISO 10003**, *Quality management -- Customer satisfaction -- Guidelines for dispute resolution external to organizations*
- **ISO 10008**, *Quality management -- Customer satisfaction -- Guidelines for business-to-consumer electronic commerce transactions*
New projects

- **Customer contact centers (call centers)**, ISO 18295, *Customer contact centres -- Part 1: Requirements for Customer Contact Centres (CD)*
- **Energy services**, ISO 50007, *Assessment and improvement of energy services to users* (working draft)
- **Guidance on unit pricing** (New work item)
1 Scope
This International Standard provides guidance to all types of organizations, regardless of their size or location, on:

a) concepts, terms and definitions related to social responsibility;

b) the background, trends and characteristics of social responsibility;

c) principles and practices relating to social responsibility;

d) the core subjects and issues of social responsibility;

e) integrating, implementing and promoting socially responsible behaviour throughout the organization and, through its policies and practices, within its sphere of influence;

f) identifying and engaging with stakeholders; and

g) communicating commitments, performance and other information related to social responsibility.
ISO 26000 Core Subject

Consumer issues

Issue 1: Fair marketing, factual and unbiased information and fair contractual practices
Issue 2: Protecting consumers' health and safety
Issue 3: Sustainable consumption
Issue 4: Consumer service, support, and complaint and dispute resolution
Issue 5: Consumer data protection and privacy
Issue 6: Access to essential services
Issue 7: Education and awareness

References to Consumer Rights and UNCPG
Consumers and ISO 26000

Based on ISO 26000 – GUIDANCE ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
Implementing SR in Your Organisation

- Policy
- Lobbying
- Education
- Research
- Raise Awareness
- Act as a Watchdog
BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

MARKET SURVEILLANCE: THE MEETING POINT OF STANDARDS, REGULATIONS, CONSUMER INTERESTS AND CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT
Market Surveillance are the activities carried out by public authorities to ensure that products comply with the requirements set out in the relevant legislation. These actions strengthen health, safety and other aspects of the public interest, like consumer protection and a level playing field for businesses.

Standardization and conformity assessment are important elements of the market surveillance of technical products. - CEN Website
Resources for market surveillance

EAC Quality infrastructure

PROSAFE http://www.prosafe.org
ISO/CASCO, ISO/DEVCO www.iso.org

Test samples at UNBS laboratory
Consumer organizations

- Interface between consumers and authorities
- Interface between consumers and business
- Complaints and accident statistics
- Comparative testing and consumer surveys
- Media
- Supporting and advising consumers e.g. consumer advice centres
Case Study: Consumers International

Case:
• Two CI members in El Salvador and Peru help investigate access to drinking water supply
• Text messaging - communication tool of choice between people and providers (e.g. notification of service interruptions)
• Effective outreach to wide audience, especially young people

Results:
• In Peru, drinking water supplier and regulator more responsive to consumers’ comments and complaints
• In El Salvador, communities and water suppliers communicate better
• Consumer protection agency acts on messages if problem not resolved within fixed time
National case example: Kenya

Calor Gas Cylinder supplies not standardized or regulated

*No interoperability*  *No access*  *No competition*

*Only expensive/less safe alternatives*

CIN (Consumers Information Network) participated to raise and represent these consumer issues

The change was brought by the development and enforcement of a national standard on LPG (KS 2189:2009 - LPG regulator for use with unified valve – Specification). This standard specifies the requirements for LPG regulators to be able to fit in unified valves used on gas cylinders. Through this standard, LPG regulators and valves were unified so that they can fit in any gas cylinder. This promoted fair competition in the market; but above all consumer rights. **Consumer rights to access to basic needs, choice and sustainable environment were upheld.**
National case examples: Ethiopia

Presentation:

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Ethiopian Standards Agency (ESA)

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Consumer Protection Association