

SUSTAINABLE LIVING FOR ALL

BRINGING CONSUMPTION INTO CLIMATE ACTION

Dear Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),

At COP29 in Baku, the global consumer movement is calling on governments to ensure that the next round of Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs), due by March 2025, include commitments to transform consumption as well as production. Sustainable lifestyles must be made more accessible and affordable for all consumers; and environmental action must be aligned with people's rights and needs, in order to build resilience and protect vulnerable communities.

It is recognised in the Paris Agreement that “sustainable lifestyles and sustainable patterns of consumption and production ... play an important role in addressing climate change”. In a Globescan survey of 30,000 consumers across 31 countries, [94% supported a shift to more sustainable lifestyles](#), but 83% said they need support from government to make the transition possible. The upcoming revision of NDCs represents a crucial opportunity to provide this support.

THE POWER OF PEOPLE-CENTRED ACTION

Addressing consumption in NDCs is essential to:

- a. **mitigate the environmental impact** of unsustainable lifestyles;
- b. **adapt to the challenges** that environmental crisis will pose to meeting people's basic needs, such as access to food and energy;
- c. take advantage of the **economic and social co-benefits** of transforming consumption.

The mitigation potential of advancing sustainable consumption is clear. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), by 2050, [demand-side strategies](#) (those

addressing consumption) can reduce emissions from the food sector by 44.2% (equivalent to 8 billion tonnes of CO₂); from the land transport sector by 66.8% (equivalent to 4.6 billion tonnes of CO₂); and from the buildings sector by 66% (equivalent to 6.8 billion tonnes of CO₂).

Additionally, including consumption in environmental strategies will help to minimise consumer harm. Environmental shocks and changing climates are a major driver of rising food and energy prices, forcing hundreds of millions of people into hunger and malnutrition; while pollution (including air, chemical, and plastic pollution) is already responsible for [at least 9 million premature deaths](#) each year. If our environmental strategies fail to recognise and react to this threat, the situation will deteriorate further.

Shifting consumption can also bring strong economic and social co-benefits, building thriving economies that are capable of financing the transition. For example, the Food Systems Economics Commission have highlighted that food systems transformation could add [up to US\\$10 trillion](#) to the global economy each year – and that 70% of this benefit can be attributed to dietary shifts. Meanwhile, the benefits of the energy transition are already being established; per the International Energy Agency, clean energy accounted for [around 10% of global economic growth](#) in 2023.

A PATHWAY TO ACTION ON CONSUMPTION

There is a wealth of evidence and expertise available to support governments to identify and implement the actions needed to support consumers in this shift, and to integrate these commitments into NDCs. Some key examples, both cross-cutting and sector-specific, include:

- IPCC policy guidance, in particular on '[Demand, Services and Social Aspects of Mitigation](#)'
- The NDC Partnership and UNFCCC's '[NDC 3.0 Navigator](#)'
- The UN Climate Change High-Level Champions' '[2030 Climate Solutions](#)' implementation roadmap
- Consumers International's recommendations for [consumer-centred climate action](#)
- Project Drawdown's '[Table of Solutions](#)'
- The World Resources Institute's 'Next Generation NDCs' initiative, especially the analysis of '[Sustainable Behavior in Climate Pledges](#)'
- The World Health Organization's '[Quality criteria for integrating health into NDCs](#)'
- The World Wide Fund for Nature and Climate Focus' '[Food Forward NDCs](#)' tool
- CLASP's '[Net Zero Appliances NDC Toolkit](#)'
- The UN One Planet Network's '[Building Circularity into Nationally Determined Contributions](#)' toolbox

The specific measures required to empower consumers towards sustainable lifestyles will vary by country, but key actions will include:

1. **Putting rights and needs first**, engaging directly with cross-cutting issues of safety, health, access to energy, food and nutrition security, and gender equality.
2. **Mainstreaming availability, accessibility, and affordability** to address the critical barriers to sustainable choices, and ensure people are protected throughout the transition.
3. **Removing incentives for harmful choices**, such as subsidies for unhealthy and unsustainable production and consumption, and misleading marketing practices.
4. **Supercharging energy efficiency** by strengthening performance standards and subsidising access to energy efficient technologies.
5. **Diversifying diets** by making healthy and sustainable food choices more available, accessible, and affordable.
6. **Delivering safe and sustainable transport** through investment in infrastructure to make public transport a viable and attractive option for consumers.
7. **Building a circular economy** by realigning incentives in order to reduce waste (especially of food and plastics) and tackle overconsumption.
8. **Scaling up finance for sustainable consumption**, to bridge the funding gap for people-centred action, including decentralised and consumer-led initiatives.

It is essential that the voices of consumers are engaged and included in the process of revising and implementing NDCs. Without understanding consumers' rights and needs, transformative action on consumption will not be possible, and the goals of the Paris Agreement will remain out of reach.

Consumers International – together with our Members, representing consumers in over 100 countries – would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss the solutions needed to empower consumers towards sustainable lifestyles.

Sincerely, Consumers International

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