

Introduction

Hello everybody. In this video, we will address the issue of international consumers and frameworks. We will address this issue from two angles :

- **the issue of consumer protection**
- **and the issue of the role of consumers within the consumption process, consumers who are responsible consumers.**

One after the other, we will discuss three very important international texts on the subject.

- **The first one is the United Nations' guiding principles for the protection of the consumer.**
- **The second is the OECD's guiding principles for multinational businesses.**
- **And the last one is the international standard ISO 26000 which offers guidelines concerning society's responsibility.**

1. The United Nations' guiding principles

Let's start with the United Nations' guiding principles. **The United Nations' guiding principles for the protection of the consumer were adopted by the UN's General Assembly in 1985.** On an international level, it's easy to see that consumer needs are needs which include both **the safety of the products** that they use, that these products are not dangerous to health, that **there is access to information** about these products, and that there is **the opportunity to make choices**, in other words, that they can choose between different products from the same range; also, something rather significant is access to information via consumer organisations; **and there is of course the possibility of obtaining compensation or an exchange if a product is faulty.**

These principles were extended in 1999 to incorporate terms associated with sustainable consumption. Indeed, after Rio, we started to talk about sustainable development and these guiding principles highlighted both **educational and informative programmes** which would be delivered at the level of teaching or of information provided by businesses, and then, generally speaking, the **promotion of sustainable consumption** enabling current and future generations to continue consuming in the long term.

2. The OECD's guiding principles

The second framework to be considered is the OECD's guiding principles for multinational businesses. The OECD is the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. It's an organisation which has twenty four Member States and twelve more Associate States. **These States make up 85% of the total investment abroad, something which is actually very significant.**

Through these guiding principles (which were first drafted in 1976, and were then subject to a series of revisions, the last one taking place in 2011), consumer interests are the subject of a chapter of this text which gives important recommendations on consumption in a globalised world. Just like with the UN's guiding principles, **customer satisfaction and the defence of their interests are central**. But this text also explains a little bit about the evolution of the world, how **these goods and services markets became globalised** and how consumer needs became diversified, particularly **in terms of demography**, since businesses nowadays have to target specific populations - children, teens, elderly people - and they have to adapt their products to these needs.

3. The ISO 26000 standard

Finally, we'll look at **the issue of the ISO 26000 standard, an international standard which was proposed to the ISO, the international standards organisation, in 2002 by the consumers themselves**. The idea was that these consumers wanted the products that they bought to be products which were environmentally friendly and which hadn't been produced in conditions which were not socially responsible. **This work took five years. Through these core issues which have arisen from ISO 26000 - the seven issues which were identified as being essential issues behind a business or organisation being socially responsible - alongside important issues like human rights, environmental protection, the relationship between local communities, and fair practices, there's a key issue which focuses on consumers**. Here, the issues we have seen in the two previous texts emerge more fully: these issues being those expected from a business in terms of information and protection. For example, the issue concerning the protection of personal data which, nowadays, is sometimes used by businesses in a rather roundabout way. And we find again, of course, those issues related to sustainable consumption or the education of consumers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, **I would say that through these three frameworks, we have seen how the international community works together both to guarantee the protection of consumers, but also to promote consumer patterns which are sustainable**. And these objectives come about through education, making consumers aware to help them to exercise their rights, but also to make consumption choices which are inspired by sustainable development principles.