**Consumer Council News**

**Consumers International announces theme for World Consumer Rights Day 2022 “Fair Digital Finance”**

The Consumers International (CI) announces this year’s World Consumer Rights Day to be themed Fair Digital Finance and calls for access to safe and fair financial service for all consumers around the world.

**Concern over consumer rights of vulnerable consumers**

The Consumers International indicates that digital financial services have improved the consumer experience in several ways, according to researches, digital banking consumers are expected to exceed 3.6 billion by 2024. Digital financial services offer new opportunities to consumers, but a wide range of consumer challenges are evident, such as terms not explained at point of sale, hidden or inflated charges or fees and unfair contract terms and conditions, as well as scams and frauds; data protection challenges, artificial intelligence decision-making that can lead to unfair outcomes, and the risk of vulnerable consumers being left behind in a cashless society are also emerging, although certain digital financial service providers have been providing vulnerable consumers with access to a bank account and empowering them with financial independence and savings in recent years.

The Consumers International has defined fair digital finance as products and services that are inclusive, safe, data protected and private, meaning all consumers, including the most vulnerable, must be provided access to manage their finances, and that they must be protected from scams, fraud, and phishing and must have their data safeguarded.

**Consumer education to complement with World Consumer Rights Day theme**

In Macau, digital financial services have progressed greatly in recent years, a number of convenient online financial services have been launched by the related department, including money transfer service which aims to make interbank transfer more convenient for local residents. The Council will continue its work to complement with the measure and strengthen consumers’ awareness in protecting their own rights when using financial services.

The Consumers International is an independent and non-governmental organization, with over 200 Member organizations in over 100 countries, Macao Consumer Council became a full member of the CI in 1997.

**National theme of “Jointly promote consumption fairness”**

The China Consumers’ Association (CCA) announces a national theme annually to complement national policies and actual status of society, the annual theme of this year, “Jointly promote consumption fairness” consists of four directions:

1. To achieve secured consumption fairness by strictly implementing laws and regulations;
2. To achieve in-depth consumption fairness by actively guiding “Tech for Social Good”;
3. To achieve large-scale consumption fairness by strengthening protection on groups of special needs;
4. To achieve sustainable consumption fairness by putting green consumption into practice.

The CCA requires all consumer protection organisations in the country to achieve the following four objectives by carrying out works in accordance with the annual theme:

1. Gather social powers, promote social consensus, and build the foundation of a society of consumption fairness;
2. Strengthen theory research, promote system improvement, and secure protection of rule of law of consumption fairness;
3. Highlight problem orientation, uphold the protection of consumer rights, and empower the scope of relief of consumption fairness;
4. Enhance consumer education, reinforce promotion, and strengthen the force of supervision of consumption fairness.

The Consumer Council, the CCA, and consumer protection organisations in the Mainland have been cooperating closely, the Council will positively support the advocacy of the CCA and carry out various educational and promotional works to let consumers know about the importance of consumption fairness.

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