

**Press Release**

**8th March 2024**

**WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY 2024**  
**THEME: MY CONSUMER RIGHTS, MY RESPONSIBILITY.**

Botswana will once again join the global community in commemorating World Consumer Rights Day on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The commemoration will be held in Shoshong Village in the Mahalapye District under the Theme - '**My Consumer Rights, My Responsibility.**'

This national theme intends to encourage consumers in Botswana to take a more active role in exercising their rights and responsibilities under the Consumer Protection Act. By claiming their rights enshrined in the law, Consumers can tackle unfair business practices head-on, hold unscrupulous businesses to account, and ensure that they are treated fairly.

As it pursues its mandate of protecting consumers against unfair business practices, the Competition and Consumer Authority (CCA) has observed that most consumers ignore, or don't know their rights. Therefore, an occasion such as the commemoration of World Consumer Rights Day is one of the platforms to increase awareness of consumer rights as enshrined in the Consumer Protection Act.

The Authority continues to undertake awareness creation activities on consumer rights under the law. However, it takes a keen and interested consumer to play an active role in safeguarding their rights.

The rights of Consumers stipulated in the Consumer Protection Act include:

- *Right to Information on Goods and Services:* Businesses must provide consumers with clear, and accurate information, and the price of goods and services must be displayed in Pula currency.
- *Right to Demand Quality Service:* The consumer has a right to demand quality service which includes timeliness and completion of those services.
- *Right to Safe and Good Quality Goods and Services:* A consumer is entitled to receive goods which are safe and in good quality.

- *Right to Fair Contracts:* The law prohibits unfair, unreasonable or unjust contract terms.
- *Right to Repair/Replace/Refund:* A consumer may return goods to a supplier within six months in their original state, and the supplier is mandated to *Repair* or *Replace* the defective goods, or *Refund* the consumer.
- *Right to be Heard:* A consumer has the right to lodge a complaint with the business concerned, or with the CCA, against any violations of the Act. The Right to be Heard is one of the cardinal rights in consumer protection.

To fulfil this fundamental Right to be Heard means that businesses should put in place **Complaints Management Processes** for resolution of consumer complaints. Businesses which establish complaints management mechanisms will also be complying with international best practice.

The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection stipulate that “Businesses should make available complaints-handling mechanisms that provide consumers with expeditious, fair, transparent, inexpensive, accessible, speedy and effective dispute resolution without unnecessary cost or burden.”

The CCA recorded **1,628** consumer complaints from April 2023 to January 2024. About 50% of these complaints, consumers were not accorded the opportunity to be heard by the businesses.

Businesses have a responsibility to hear, and timeously resolve consumer complaints.



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