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# UNIT 31 INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

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## 31.0 OBJECTIVES

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This Unit deals with a particular international organisation, the activities of which are focused on consumer welfare. This organisation was formerly known as the International Organisation of Consumers' Unions (IOCU). At present, the organisation has adopted a new name — Consumers International (CI).

A study of this unit on the organization with regard to its structure, functions, programmes and its contribution to the consumer movement in India should enable you to:

- trace the formation of the organisation at the international level,
- know the functions and programmes of the organisation,
- become familiar with the Indian members of the organisation,
- appreciate its role of coordination with other international organisations,
- know about Consumer Interpol and its significance, and
- become aware of the organisation's branches working in this part of Indian sub-continent and its contribution to the spread of consumer movement in India.

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## 31.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the second unit of Block 2 'Consumer Movement in India' you have learnt about the various consumer organisations in India. Later in the second unit of Block 7 the role of these consumer organisations in educating the consumer in obtaining redressal of his grievances and in the settling of consumer disputes were also explained.

As you are aware, consumers in every country have their own unique problems and an exchange and sharing of information between the countries about the ways and means of tackling such problems would benefit the consumers of the world as a whole. Also, multi-national companies from developed countries try to enter the markets of other countries by forming joint ventures, collaborations and also by direct marketing of their products and services. It has, therefore, become necessary for consumer groups and organisations of the world to come together to defend and protect their own interests. An International Consumer Organisation would contribute not only to coordinate the efforts and activities of the various consumer organisations of the world, but also help

them in tackling their problems by sharing their experiences and information. An attempt has been made in this unit to discuss the presence of the international body of consumers in the form of the Consumers International. An attempt has also been made to explain its structure, functions and programmes. Information on the Consumer Interpol and the constituent Indian members on these organisations are also given in this unit.

## 31.2 CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL

Initially, a consumer organisation at the international level was set up with the name of International Organisation of Consumers Unions (IOCU), in the year 1960. The founding groups were only from five countries i.e. USA, Britain, Australia, Netherlands (then Holland) and Belgium.

After founding the organisation, they formulated four guidelines for conducting the activities of their member organisations. These guidelines are given below:

- That the members should act in consumer interests.
- That the members should be free from commercial or party or political pressure.
- The organisation should be non-profit making.
- The members should not let their advice and information be used commercially.

Began with five members in the year 1960, the International Federation of Consumers Unions, was registered as an independent non-profit making and non-political foundation. The Central Office of the organisation was located at the Hague, Holland. Later a regional office was established at Penang, Malaysia.

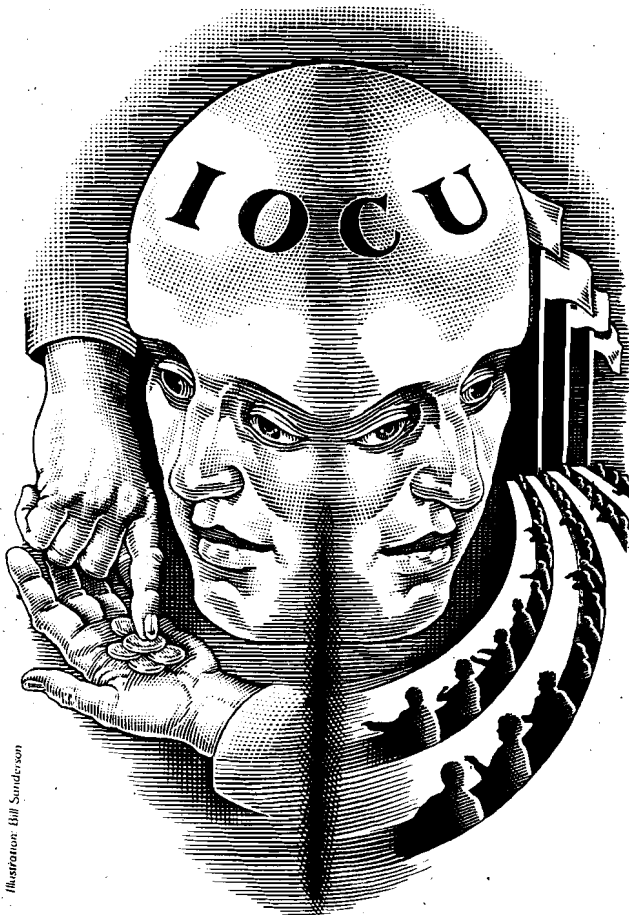


Illustration: Bill Sanderson

*IOCU's unique relationship with hundreds of grass-roots consumer organizations means it can speak out with authority at international forums on local market conditions and sharp practice.*

At the time when the IOCU was established, it had focused its activities on the welfare of its founder members. To formulate guidelines for its activities, there main goals were set for achievement. They were:

- to support its members
- to expand consumer movement
- to represent consumer interests at the international level.

IOCU also emphasised the need to recognise the rights of the consumers all over the world. Therefore, the over-riding concern of the IOCU and its members was to promote and protect the rights of consumers all over the world and also to promote social justice and fairness in the market place. It had not only enumerated the consumer rights, but also defined them clearly, so that it became easier for the consumers of the world to understand and follow them.

### THE CONSUMER RIGHTS

#### THE RIGHT TO SAFETY

1. Which means the right to be protected against products, production process and services which are hazardous to health or life. The right to safety has been broadened to include the concern for consumers long-term interest, not only their immediate desires.

#### THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED

2. Which means the right to be given the facts needed to make an informed choice or decision.

The right to be informed now goes beyond avoiding deception and the protection against misleading advertising. Labelling or other practices. Consumers should be provided with adequate information, enabling them to act wisely and responsibly.

#### THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

3. Which means the right to have access to a variety of products and services at competitive prices and in the case of monopolies, to have an assurance of satisfactory quality and service at a fair price.

The right to choose has been reformulated to read : the right to basic goods and services. This is because the unrestrained right of a minority to choose can mean for the majority a denial of its fair share.

#### THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD

4. Which means the right to be represented so that consumers' interests receive full and sympathetic consideration in the formulation and execution of economic policy.

This right is being broadened to include the right to be heard and represented in the development of products and services before they are produced or set up: it also implies a representation, not only in government policies, but also in those of other economic powers.

#### THE RIGHT TO BE REDRESSED

5. Which means the right to a fair settlement of just claims. This right has been generally accepted since the early 1970s. It involves the right to receive compensation for misrepresentation or shoddy goods or services, and where needed, free legal aid or an accepted form of redress for small claims should be available.

#### THE RIGHT TO CONSUMER EDUCATION

5. Which means the right to acquire the knowledge and skills to be an informed consumer throughout life.

The right to consumer education incorporates the right to the knowledge and skills needed for taking action to influence factors which affect consumer decisions.

#### THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

7. Which means the right to a physical environment that will enhance the quality of life.

This right involves protection against environmental problems over which the individual consumer has no control. It acknowledges the need to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations.

These rights defined by IOCU

With an expansion in its membership and activities, the organisations name of IOCU was changed to Consumers International (CI). It became effective from 1995 with the official opening of the head office in London. The number of regional offices had grown from one to three with the opening of offices at Penang (Malaysia, Harare (Zimbabwe) and Santiago (Chile). In 1996, the CI linked the activities of 208 large and small consumer groups representing 87 countries throughout the world.

The activities of the regional offices are now being coordinated by the Director General's office in London. This marked an important stage in the re-defining of its role and objectives and also in establishing a structure to provide an effective base for its future programmes and messages. The emblem of CI will give you an idea of how it tries to unite the consumers worldwide.

### CI EMBLEM



**Consumers International**  
(Formerly IOCU)

#### 31.2.1 Structure and Purpose of Consumers International (CI)

With its renewed and elevated setting as mentioned earlier, CI works on a worldwide programme, and a commitment to represent the consumer effectively, on a global level.

The membership of the Consumers International has two categories — one, the full members and the other known as 'The Affiliates'. Full membership is given to those organisations which give a proportion of their gross annual income to help the Consumers International to make its budget. The other members — Affiliates — pay a membership fee. Besides these sources, CI also receives grants from outside sources for some of its activities, which includes government grants as well. For example, Consumers International used the grants received from the Norwegian Government for work in promoting the 1981 WHO code on breast feeding. CI also received funds from the European Economic community for sponsoring the activities of a consumer information and training centre.

Full members send their representatives to the organisation's parliament and its general assembly which is held every three years. The assembly elects the president and the members of the council and also decides on the international priorities. 15 members of the council are entrusted the work of charting the Consumers International's course of action. Six council members form executive which drafts the budget and policies for the council's approval.

Working Groups and Standing Committees engage themselves in carrying out the programmes and policies of the Consumers International. The President of the Consumers International is also the Chairman of the Assembly, the Council and the Executive and so he is in touch with each part of the organisation.

With such regulated membership and clear cut responsibilities, Consumers International is an organisation with a clear purpose. It keeps members informed and stimulated through its communications, information and research activities. In addition to this, it trains its member groups to sharpen their skills and to become self-reliant. It thus prepares its members to define and assert their power and to turn ideas into action.

#### Charter for Consumer Action

The spirit of consumer education is enshrined in the Charter for Consumer Action. The list of Attributes is demanding, wide-ranging and with none of the narrowness of 'consumer equals shopper'. It becomes an easy-to-remember mnemonic —  
CASES:

- C Critical awareness with consumers learning how to distinguish needs from wants, how to ask informed questions about price, availability and quality of goods and services.
- A Action and involvement, with consumers being able to act on their own behalf backed up by the confidence of knowledge and learning how to get a fair deal.
- S Social responsibility, consumers acting with concern and sensibility, aware of the impact of their actions on other citizens, particularly on disadvantaged groups.
- E Ecological responsibility with consumers thinking about the effects of their decisions on the physical environment, aware of the possible conflict between their desire to own things and the spoiling of this environment.
- S Solidarity with consumers realising that their most effective action is through the information of citizen groups. Together such groups can acquire the strength and influence to make sure that adequate attention is given to consumer interests.

This international organisation was initially established as an information centre. The organisation has now evolved itself to its present form in response to the rapidly increasing awareness among consumers all over the world. It has diversified and increased its activities by giving support to consumer organisations, both independent and government supported organisations. It believes in the fact that only strong and effective consumer organisations can transform the world into a more just and equitable one and make it more responsive to people's needs.

### 31.2.2 Indian Members at the Consumers International

India has a fast growing consumer movement. The enactment of the Consumer Protection Act in 1986 and the Indian Government's policy to liberalise the economy have accelerated progress in this area also. The arrival of multi-national corporations has created a change in the market scenario which is now more challenging than ever before. In this situation, developed countries have ample scope for dumping banned goods produced in their own countries into the developing countries. In the face of this challenge, the Indian consumer organisations have felt the need to expand their activities and to improve their international network.

Consumers International provides a clean platform where the Indian organisations can get the right guideline. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Indian representation in CI has grown from a mere three in the eighties to as many as 17 by the middle of the 90s. Some of the members are full members while other are Affiliates. The following list would give you an idea of these organisations.

#### INDIA

Association for Consumers Action on Safety and Health  
PO Box 2498  
Bombay  
India

#### Status Affiliate

Consumer Action Group  
No. 6  
11 Cross Street,  
Karpagam Gardens, Adayar  
Madras 600 202  
India

Tel. 91 44 491 4358  
FAX. 91 44 491 4358

#### Status Affiliate

Consumer Association  
Near Mahadev, Mahudha 387335  
Ta Nadia (Dist Kheda)  
Gujarat  
India

#### Status Affiliate

Consumer Education and Research Centre  
Suraksha Sankool  
Thaltej  
Ahmedabad - Gandhinagar Highway  
Ahmedabad 380 054  
India

Tel. 91 79 489 945  
FAX. 91 79 489 947  
**Status Affiliate**

Consumer Guidance Society of India  
J Block, Mahapalika Marg  
Opp Cama Hospital  
Bombay 400 001  
India

Tel. 91 22 262 1612/ 262 9715  
FAX. 91 22 285 0258  
**Status Full Member**

Consumer Protection Council  
501/B, 5th floor, "Shaily"  
Opp. Loha Bhavan, B/H Gujarat HG CRT  
Navrangpura  
Ahmedabad 380 009  
India

Tel. 91 272 440472  
FAX. 91 141 40 907  
**Status Affiliate**

Consumer Unity and Trust Society  
3-B Camac St.  
Calcutta 700 016  
India

Tel. 91 33 297391/ 91 33 292 786  
FAX. 91 33 297665  
E-Mail cut@1wbbs.com  
**Status Full Member**

Consumer Forum  
B-24, Maharani Bagh  
New Delhi 110065  
India

Tel. 91 11 684 1346  
FAX. 91 11 683 6049  
**Status Affiliate**

Dept. of Consumer Affairs & Public Distribution  
Krishi Bhavan  
New Delhi 110001  
India

Tel. 91 11 338 4882  
FAX. 91 11 338 7737  
**Status Government Affiliate**

**Consumer Organisations**

Federation of Consumer Organisations Tamilnadu  
General Secretary's Office  
No. 115/2 Kamaraj Avenue  
Adyar,  
Madras 600020  
India

Tel. 91 44 491 4892  
FAX. 91 44 491 0261  
**Status Affiliate**

Indian Federation of Consumer Organisations  
231, Jor Bagh  
New Delhi 110003  
India

Tel. 91 11 611 692/ 91 11 611 736  
**Status Affiliate**

Indian Institute of Consumer Studies  
31 A Benson Cross Road  
Bangalore 560 046  
Karnataka  
India

Tel. 91 812 556 0686/ 91 812 567 284  
FAX. 91 812 333 1713  
**Status Affiliate**

Jagrut Grahak  
Deepak Chambers  
2nd Floor, Nawabwada, Raopura  
Vadodara 390 001, Gujarat  
India

Tel. 91 265 553273  
**Status Affiliate**

Mumbai Grahak Panchayat  
Grahak Bhavan  
Sant Dnyaneshawar Marg, Vile Parle (West)  
Bombay 400 056  
India

Tel. 91 22 623 8124  
**Status Affiliate**

SMN-Consumer Protection Council 30, Teacher's Colony  
Adayar  
Madras 600 020  
India

Tel. 91 44 413104  
**Status Affiliate**

Voluntary Organisation in the Interest of Consumer Education (VOICE)  
F - 71 Lajpat Nagar II  
New Delhi 110024  
India

Tel. 91 11 691 8969  
FAX. 91 11 462 6189  
E. mail - s. r. khanna@giasde 1. vsnl.net.in  
**Status Affiliate**

The above mentioned list clearly indicates the strength of their representation in Consumers International, which has a distinct aim of serving the special concerns of consumer in a fast developing country like India. These consumer organisations avail the resources of CI in the areas of research, information and educational activities.

**Check Your Progress 1**

**Note:** i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Tick mark the following statements as True (T) or False (F).

a) It is not necessary for consumer organisations working for the Indian consumer to become a member of the International Organisation.

(T) (F)

b) Consumer Interpol is a part of Consumer International. (T) (F)

c) Consumers International is the new name of IOCU.

(T) (F)

d) IOCU was established in 1980. (T) (F)

e) Consumers International has membership from over 200 organisations from more than 80 countries.

(T) (F)

f) Consumers International has stated seven rights of the Consumer.

(T) (F)

g) Consumers International's Head office is in India.

(T) (F)

h) Consumers International has only one kind of membership

(T) (F)

i) The number of Indian member at Consumers International is 20.

(T) (F)

j) The general Assembly of Consumers International meets every three years.

(T) (F)

2) Give the names of any four consumer organisations represented at Consumers International. (Give the names of these organisations which are close to your place of residence.)

- 1) .....
- 2) .....
- 3) .....
- 4) .....

3) Give a brief account of some of the important activities of Consumers International.

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

4) State the seven rights as envisaged by IOCU.

.....  
 .....



Above all, CI makes efforts to pool and share resources from and between a number of countries for its activities of consumer interest all over the world. This job of Consumers International is made easy by sharing information through member publications from around the world.

### 31.3.2 Consumers International's Programmes and Campaigns

The Consumers International's programmes and campaigns mainly committed to consumers' interest. They include:

- promotion of consumer education and protection
- programme on trade, food, health and sustainable consumption.
- campaigns for proper controls on the marketing and use of pesticides, pharmaceuticals, tobacco and other hazardous products.
- lobbying in the international bodies for checking anti-consumer programmes (like the UN Guidelines for consumer protection).

In the developing countries, Consumers International makes efforts to protest consumers by checking unregulated markets rife with fraudulent trade practices, deceptive advertising and inferior and unsafe goods which are banned in developed countries. They also act as a 'watch dog' in monitoring and challenging the 'polluting' and 'dirty' industries, hazardous technologies and harmful products that threaten human and environmental well being. The CI member organisations in India are at present, planning a coordinated campaign on 'Access to Food — A Basic Need'.

An important part of CI's work is to channel information to its member organisations. As a part of its global activities, CI holds a World Congress every three years at which it debates the consumer issues of the day. So far 14 World Congresses have been held and the last one (the 14th Congress) was held in France in 1994. The theme of this Congress was 'The New Importance of Global Standards'.

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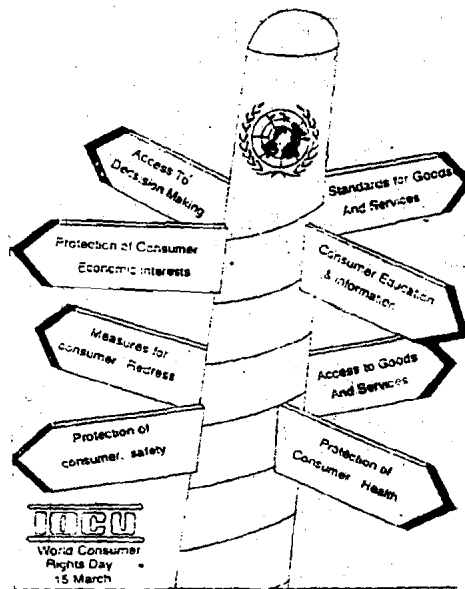
## 31.4 COORDINATION ACTIVITIES OF CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL WITH OTHER AGENCIES

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CI's activities are not confined to its own or to its member organisations. CI has taken necessary steps to represent the consumer in many of the international organisations. As the global federation of consumer organisations, CI represents the consumer interests in the following fora:

- U.N.
- International Standards Organisation
- U.S. Commission on Sustainable Development
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
- Codex Alimentarius Commission
- U.N. Economic and Social Committee
- U.N.I.C.E.F.
- U.N.E.S.C.O.
- U.N. Industrial Development Organisation
- F.A.O.
- W.H.O.

Consumers International's representation in these organisations is of great significance in the present day context of global trends which bring new challenges for consumer organisations. Many consumer problems are being solved because of CI's role in these organisations. The Consumers International's efforts had prompted the U.N. to adopt guidelines for consumer protection in 1985.



*UN Guidelines on Consumer Protection*  
*Source: Upbhogta Jagaran Vol. No: 2 (4/12).*

These guidelines have played a major role in the development, implementation and monitoring of consumer protection systems around the world. U.N. has also adopted:

March 15th as the World Consumer Rights Day

March 15th every year, therefore, is observed as World Consumer Rights Day all over the world.

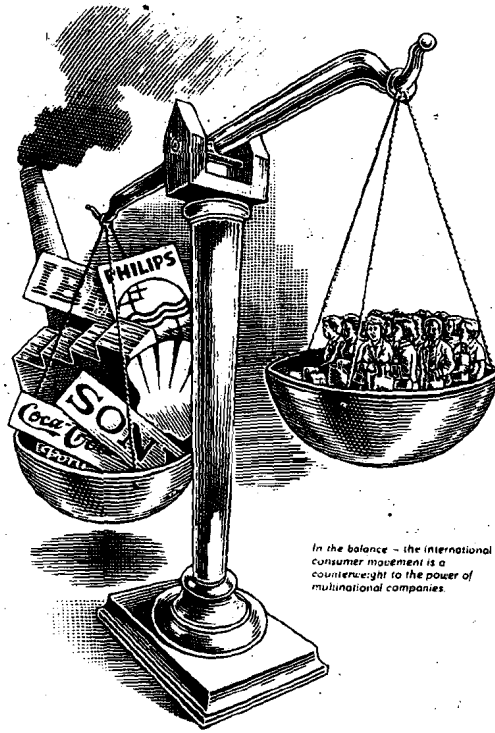
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### 31.5 CONSUMERS INTERPOL

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In 1981, Consumer Interpol was launched by IOCU as an international consumer policing network. Consumers Interpol's aim is to be "fast, comprehensive and truly international". Correspondents from a number of countries have joined this network to inform the Consumer Interpol of a suspected hazard or a product's withdrawal in their home market. The warnings are given along with evidence from press reports and laboratory tests. Worries about the product and the likelihood of its dumping are confirmed, alerts will be sent out to groups in the Consumer Interpol network. Both the importer and the governments are held accountable through representation as well as through newspaper reports. The controlling legislation is then demanded.

Consumer safety is the motive behind all the Consumer Interpol's activities



Dumping hazardous products, technologies and wastes on unwary consumers is a big business in the modern world market. Consumer Interpol has taken it as its responsibility to monitor and fight such fraudulent business practices. While doing so, Consumer Interpol works on the following lines:

- publishing specific and generic safety issues
- lobbying for relevant government controls and corporate accountability.
- sending out 'consumer alerts' on newly discovered or newly regulated hazards.
- publishing features and reports.
- supporting initiatives to check the global trends in hazardous substances.

In this context, Consumer Interpol's campaign had initiated the U.N. Assembly to pass a resolution in 1982 to prepare and make public a list of products whose consumption and/or sale has been banned, withdrawn or severely restricted. By early 1984, the list was completed and published with the help of U.N. member states. This document had more than 500 pages mentioning over a 1000 products and chemical substances and includes names of the manufacturers, generic and brand titles.

### Check Your Progress 2

**Note:** i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Tick mark the following statements as True (T) or False (F).
  - a) The main concern of Consumers International is only to protect consumers rights. (T) (F)
  - b) Consumers International has many publications. (T) (F)
  - c) Consumers International's activities include research activities. (T) (F)
  - d) Consumers International does not provide funds to its member organisations. (T) (F)

- e) Consumers International acts as a 'Watchdog' to polluting industries.  
(T) (F)
- f) CI advises governments on legislative measures.  
(T) (F)
- g) CI's activities are confined to its own and its member organisations.  
(T) (F)
- h) March 15th is observed every year as the World Consumer Rights Day.  
(T) (F)
- i) Consumer Interpol acts as a policing network.  
(T) (F)
- j) In 1984, a list of hazardous products was published by the U.N.  
(T) (F)

2) Name four organisations in which the CI has its representation:

- 1) .....
- 2) .....
- 3) .....
- 4) .....

3) Discuss some of the important activities of

i) Consumers International.

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ii) Consumer Interpol

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4) State the U.N. Guidelines on Consumer Protection.

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### 31.6 CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL'S ACTIVITIES AND THE INDIAN CONSUMERS

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The consumer movement in India has been growing fast since the early 1960s. The Indian consumers are becoming more and more aware and are making efforts to shed their apathy. The consumer power is further strengthened by the formation of many consumer organisations even in rural areas and their active participation in the national and international bodies is indicated by their representation in the Consumers International.

CI has recognised the significant role that India can play in spreading consumer movement at the international level. Therefore, while expanding its activities and while

opening new regional offices, a regional office was set up in 1974 at Penang, Malaysia. It was named the Consumers International Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (CI-ROAP). To give more attention to the sub-regions, the work in the Regional office in Penang is complemented with two sub-regions programmes in the South Pacific and India. The India Sub-Regional Programme is looked after by the sub-regional office located in Poona (Maharashtra). The Regional office at Penang and the sub-regional office at Poona coordinate the activities of Consumers International with those of the Indian consumer organisations. Through these organisations, Indian consumers are getting a lot of international attention.

### **31.6.1 Consumers International — Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific**

For many years the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), the first regional office to be set up acted as the contact point and the link between the Consumers International and its members.

The Consumers International Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (CI-ROAP) was set up in 1974 with the distinct purpose of serving the special concerns of consumers in developing countries. CI-ROAP serves over 70 members in 20 countries in the Asia Pacific region. The CI-ROAP office is located at:

CI – ROAP  
250 A Jalan Air Itam  
10460 Penang  
Malaysia

Tel. (604) 229 1396  
Fax. (604) 228 6506

E.Mail.: ciroap@pc.Jaring.my

The work of CI-ROAP is two fold :

- i) Institution building
- ii) Policy development

CI-ROAP activities also encompass a wide range of issues specific to meet the fast changing needs of consumers in the Asia-Pacific Region. The Mission objectives are to:

- support and serve CI members in the Asia-Pacific region so as to enhance their efficacy and effectiveness.
- encourage and facilitate the self-organisation and development of consumer groups in the Asia-Pacific region.
- foster NGO's and governmental efforts to enhance consumer protection, particularly in developing countries.
- promote national, regional and international cooperation and collaboration in all areas of consumer protection and interest, including critical awareness, information exchange, research, testing, legislation, consumer education and publishing.

CI-ROAP's activities cover a large number of issues concerning consumers. They include:

- Trade and economics
- Health and hazardous products
- Food and nutrition
- Environment
- Public utilities
- Standards
- Consumer legislation
- Consumer Education

CI-ROAP is actively involved in pursuing these issues. The Consumer Information and Documentation Centre (CIDOC) offers efficient service by answering consumer queries, compiling literature and research material, and expanding access to information via electronic media. Besides, it also publishes regularly a quarterly regional newsletter called 'Surya'.

### 31.6.2 India: Consumer Protection Programme of Consumers International

For many years, the CI-ROAP acted as a contact point and the link between CI and its members and activities. CI-ROAP was also covering the India region. Realising the potential significance of the fast growing consumer movement in India, CI-ROAP had felt the need to give more attention to this sub-region. Therefore, an office of a Coordinator was set up at Pune in 1995. This coordinating office was named as the India Consumer Protection Programme (ICPP).

The Coordinator, ICCP takes care of Consumers International membership development programmes, policy and information dissemination. The Coordinator also provides education, communication and networking services to CI members for their activities and programmes. The ICCP acts as a link between CI-ROAP and the relevant Government agencies, partners, NGOs and other consumer groups; the donor community and the mass media. The office of ICCP is located at:

India Consumer Protection Programme (ICPP)  
No. 11, Konark Villa  
Kalyani Nagar  
Pune 411 014

Maharashtra State

India

Tel./Fax 91 212 686 404

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## 31.7 CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL — ROAP IN INDIA

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As seen earlier, a lot of work has been carried out by CI and its regional office, the CI-ROAP. Besides the on-going programme, CI-ROAP in collaboration with the Consumer Unit and Trust Society (CUTS) organised an international conference on Consumer Protection in New Delhi from 22nd to 24th January, 1997. The theme of the Conference was 'Consumer in the Global Age'. Some 150 participant members of CI, representatives of NGOs, government officials, business leaders and journalists participated and contributed to the attainment of the conference objectives. The Conference outlined the following objectives :

- i) to discuss proposals for the U.N. Guidelines for consumer protection
- ii) to deliberate on a model law for consumer protection which can be used as a framework for governments in the region.
- iii) to establish a network of government officials who are responsible for consumer protection and welfare.

Such events are milestones in the history of consumer movement in India. A beginning had been made and efforts are on to continue to work for the benefit of the Indian consumer. Even though many of the consumers may not even be aware or might have heard of the existence of Consumers International or its regional offices, the good work being done by the Consumers International would benefit the consumers the world over

### Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Fill in the blanks.

- a) CI-ROAP was set up in ..... and its office is at .....
  - b) ICPP was set up in ..... and its office is at .....
  - c) Through these organisations, Indian consumers are getting a lot of ..... attention.
  - d) CI-ROAP acts as a link between ..... and its .....
  - e) CI-ROAP serves over ..... members in ..... countries.
- 2) Mention the two fold activities of CI.
- i) .....
  - ii) .....
- 3) State the objectives of CI-ROAP.
- i) .....
  - ii) .....
  - iii) .....
  - iv) .....
- 4) List any five issues for which CI-ROAP is working.
- i) .....
  - ii) .....
  - iii) .....
  - iv) .....
  - v) .....
- 5) Mention the theme of the Conference which was held in January, 1997 in New Delhi.
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

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### 31.8 LET US SUM UP

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Consumers in every country have their own problems. An exchange and sharing of information between various countries would benefit each other. The arrival of MNCs and their marketing strategies demand that the consumers and consumer groups from around the world come together to defend their interests.

IOCU was started as an international platform in 1960 by the consumer groups from five countries, as an independent, non-profit making and non-political foundation. In 1995, this organisation was named as the Consumers International and the present membership is 208 large and small consumer groups from 80 countries throughout the world. The over-riding concern of Consumers International is to protect the rights of the consumers.

The original structure of Consumers International is to have one Head Office and three regional offices. At present, the Head office is in London and the regional offices are at Penang (Malaysia), Harare (Zimbabwe) and Santiago (Chile). The membership of Consumers International has two categories — Full Members and Affiliates.

CI keeps its members informed and stimulated. It trains its members to sharpen their skills and to become self-reliant. CI believes that strong and effective consumer organisations can transform the world into a more just, equitable place and responsive to the people's needs.

17 consumer organisations from India are members of the CI. These organisations get benefited from CI in the areas of research, information and education.

The main function of CI is to raise issues of consumer interest at the international level. It shares its information with its members through its newsletter and other publications. It also maintains a library for ready reference.

With CI's funding, Consumer Guidance Society of India has repaired an easy-to-use kit for testing food adulteration. CI also advises governments while formulating legislation on food additives, pesticides, satellite advertising tobacco and other hazardous products. It also lobbys in international bodies for checking anit-consumer programmes. CI holds a world congress every three years; the most recent one was held in 1994.

CI coordinates its activities with international organisations like the UN, FAO, WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, ISO, etc. The continued efforts of CI had prompted the UN to adopt guidelines for consumer protection.

In 1981 Consumer Interpol was launched as an international consumer policing network to prevent the dumping of banned, hazardous products, technologies and wastes from one country to the other. Consumer safety is the motive behind the Consumer Interpol's activities. With CI's help, the UN Assembly brought out a document in 1984 with a list of over 1000 products and chemical substances whose consumption and sale has been banned, withdrawn or severely restricted.

CI has recognised the significant role that India can play in spreading the consumer movement at the international level.

One regional office was set up at Penang to cater to the needs of the Asia-Pacific region (CI-ROAP). For the benefit of the India sub-region, India Consumer Protection Programme (ICPP) has been set up in 1995 at Pune, Maharashtra. Through these two organisations, Indian consumers are getting a lot of international attention.

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## 31.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) a) F
- b) T
- c) F
- d) F
- e) T

- f) T
- g) F
- h) F
- i) F
- j) T

- 2) Important activities of CI are communication, information, education, training and research.
- 3) The 'Seven Rights of the Consumer' are rights to :
  - i) Safety
  - ii) Be informed
  - iii) Choose
  - iv) Be heard
  - v) Redress
  - vi) Consumer Education
  - vii) A healthy environment

**Check Your Progress 2**

- 1)
  - a) F
  - b) T
  - c) T
  - d) F
  - e) T
  - f) T
  - g) F
  - h) T
  - i) T
  - j) T
- 2) UN, FAO, WHO, UNICEF, ISO, UNESCO, UNIDO, UN ECO. & Social Committee, Codes Alimentarius Commission, organisation for Eco. Cooperation and Development, UN Commission on Sustainable Development — any four of these education, training and research.
- 3)
  - i) See Sub-section 31.3.2 and Section 31.4.
  - ii) See Section 31.5.
- 4)
  - i) Access to decision making
  - ii) Protection of consumers economic interests
  - iii) Measures for consumers' grievance redress
  - iv) Protection of consumers safety
  - v) Standards for goods and services
  - vi) Consumer education and information
  - vii) Access to goods and services
  - viii) Protection of consumers health

**Check Your Progress 3**

- 1)
  - a) 1974, Penang (Malaysia)
  - b) 1995, Pune (Maharashtra) India
  - c) International
  - d) CI, Members
  - e) 70; 19
- 2)
  - i) Institutional building
  - ii) Policy development
- 3) See Sub-section 31.6.1.
- 4) Any five of the following:
  - i) Trade and Economics
  - ii) Health and hazardous products
  - iii) Food and Nutrition
  - iv) Environment
  - v) Public Utilities
  - vi) Standards
  - vii) Consumer legislation
  - viii) Consumer education
- 5) Consumers in the Global Age