15 March is World Consumer Rights Day. It is annual occasion for celebration and solidarity within the international consumer movement. WCRD sees the global consumer movement unite for a day of action around a common campaign theme. The Global theme in conjunction with WCRD 2017 is &#65533;Building a Digital World Consumers can Trust&#65533;. In Malaysia, FOMCA has chosen the theme &#65533;Protecting Consumers Rights in E-Commerce&#65533;. Globally, in 2015, more than a billion people were e-shoppers with an average 20% e-commerce turnover growth from 2014 to 2015 and subsequently 2016.
In Malaysia, the local e-commerce is expected to hit RM 13.3 billion by 2018. The industry&#65533;s outlook is positive with initiatives and support system that currently exist and underway. While e-commerce brings about many benefits, consumers are exposed to risks due to the nature of online shopping. E-commerce/ online shopping constitutes the largest number of complaints received by the National Consumer Complaints Centre (NCCC) in 2014 & 2015 with losses doubled over these years. &#65533; The complaints received by NCCC with relation to e-commerce purchasing include: &#65533;&#65533;&#65533;&#65533; Insufficient information disclosure on business terms and conditions, for example on refund policies, goods received are in a bad condition / damaged; &#65533;&#65533;&#65533;&#65533; Poor quality of products; &#65533;&#65533;&#65533;&#65533; Inconsistent return policies; &#65533;&#65533;&#65533;&#65533; Poor customer service associated with electronic retailers, &#65533;&#65533;&#65533;&#65533; Items received does not tally with the item ordered; and, &#65533;&#65533;&#65533;&#65533; Problems with returning wrongly described or faulty products. FOMCA believes that e-commerce requires more regulatory and enforcement attention and changes should be made from time to time in order to keep up with the rapid changes in the technology that is taking place. FOMCA together with NCCC have sent a memorandum to the Government to suggest changes in order to further strengthen and safeguard the interest of e-consumers in Malaysia.

Some of the proposals to further strengthen and safeguard the interest of e-consumers in Malaysia are: &#65533;&#65533;&#65533;&#65533; Implement cooling off period (up to 14 days); &#65533;&#65533;&#65533;&#65533; Increasing awareness program to educating the public of their rights; and, &#65533;&#65533;&#65533;&#65533; Online consumer reviews are increasingly being relied upon by consumers as a low cost means of making more informed purchasing decisions. Therefore such a platform should be created in Malaysia to allow buyers to comment about the product purchased rather than using social Medias to express their dissatisfaction. Apart from the Memorandum, FOMCA and NCCC continue to represent Malaysian consumers in various committees and task-force to give feedback to government to enhance consumer protection in the e-commerce industry. Further, FOMCA and NCCC also continue to advocate through the print and electronic media for regulatory change and consumer empowerment in relation to e-commerce. To farther enhance consumer protection across borders, FOMCA and NCCC have signed Memorandum of Understanding with the National Consumer Organisations of Japan (National Consumer Affairs Center- NCAC) and Singapore (Consumer Association of Singapore - CASE). Thus consumers and tourists from these two countries can seek for better redress when purchasing or visiting in these 3 countries. E-commerce is the future for Malaysia. The number of Internet users has grown rapidly over the past decade, and consumers are increasingly dependent on the internet to shop and conduct other activities in their lives. The manner in which online shopping is conducted is different from the traditional transaction whereby it has become more complex and sophisticated, thus exposing and increasing consumer vulnerability to unfair trade practices. WCRD is an opportunity to promote the basic rights of all consumers, for demanding that those rights are respected and protected, and for protesting the market abuses and social injustices which undermine them.

Federation of Malaysian

Consumers Association (FOMCA) • CI member
Era Consumer • CI member
Selangor Consumers Association (SCA) • CI member
National Consumer Complaints Centre (NCCC) • FOMCA Partner

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