



Guidelines on the Rights and Obligations of Consumers Using Telecommunications Services

WATRA Working Group on Consumer
Access and Experience

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1 GENERAL CONDITIONS

1.1 Preamble

This document, entitled "Rights and Obligations of Users of Telecommunications Services," consolidates and harmonizes our sub-regional approach to the rights and responsibilities of the populations of all member states of West Africa (WATRA).

Under the auspices of the West Africa Telecommunications Regulators Association (WATRA), this policy was developed to regulate the relationships among consumers, operators, and other actors in the aforementioned sector.

1.2 Terminology

In this document, unless otherwise indicated by the context, the following terms shall have the meanings assigned to them:

"Consumer **rights**" refers to a moral or legal right.

"**Consumer obligation**": refers to the course of action that the consumer is required to take, whether legal or moral.

" **Unsolicited communication** " refers to any call or text message to which the consumer is not subscribed.

"Service activated in error" refers to any unsolicited ringtone, game, or service charged to the detriment of the consumer.

"**Consumer**" is any natural person who acquires Telecom goods and services for end use.

" **NRA** ": refers to the National Regulatory Authority.

1.3 Goals

a) main objective

The document stipulates consumer rights and minimum standards for licensed service providers.

b) impacts

These consumer rights and obligations aim to:

- Define acceptable service quality standards
- Promoting consumer rights and interests in the region
- Facilitating the sharing of best practices in the WATRA area.
- Guiding the terms of contracts between licensees and consumers

1.4 Methodology

Experience of Member States:

A collection of all the trends and measures that aim to protect people in their role as *consumers* of goods or services from professionals by guaranteeing clear information, transparent services, and fair business practices.

1.5 Provisions

Indeed, the national regulatory authorities (NRAs) are responsible for monitoring the application of regulations in force and ensuring compliance with legal provisions established in the area.

We have identified several concepts that make up our regulations:

- the development and modernization of networks and services;
- the exercise of effective competition;
- the protection of consumer interests;
- the guarantee to people with reduced mobility and people with specific social needs for equivalent access;

2 Consumer Rights and Obligations

2.1 Consumer rights (14 points listed)

- **Right to be informed**
A consumer has the right to obtain clear, accurate, and complete information to make an informed choice and to be protected against dishonest or misleading information;
- **Right to choose -**
The consumer has the right to choose among several service options.
- **Right to representation/consultation/be heard**
The consumer has the right to representation in decisions concerning them.
- **Right to quality of service**
A consumer has the right to access reliable, high-quality products and services everywhere, at all times, without interruption.
- **Right to fairness**
A consumer has the right to fair treatment without undue discrimination and to equal opportunities for access to the same type and quality of services;
- **Right to file a complaint/justice**
A consumer has the right to file a complaint and receive prompt and effective redress, free of charge.
- **Right to safety and security**
A consumer has the right to receive or consume products and services that adequately meet established health and safety standards;
- **Right to education**
A consumer has a right to education about goods and services;
- **Right to Privacy/confidentiality**
A consumer has the right to privacy, the security of their private data, and protection against unauthorized use of personal information and unsolicited communications;
- **Right to an accurate invoice**
A consumer has the right to receive accurate, understandable, and detailed billing for products and services;
- **Right to a "fair" contract**
The consumer has the right to a fair contract.
- **Right of access**

A consumer has the right to access basic goods and services at a reasonable price throughout the territory. Everywhere and at any time;

- **The right to peace of mind or to be forgotten**
(DND) Do Not Disturb: The consumer has the right not to be disturbed in the use of these services;
- **Right to unsubscribe from unsolicited electronic messages;**
He has the right not to receive unwanted messages. He has the right to request that he not receive unsolicited messages.

2.2 Consumer obligations (5 points listed)

- **Bill payments**
A consumer is obligated to pay their bill on the due date if it is a post-paid service.
- **Environmental protection**
Consumers have an obligation to provide an enabling environment for the deployment of communication infrastructures and protected telecommunication infrastructures (CNII in Nigeria).
- **Self-Awareness**
The consumer is responsible for seeking information about the telecom products and services offered.
- **Accountability**
Consumers are expected to act proactively and demonstrate due diligence when seeking compensation/redress
- **Integrity**
Consumers are required to provide accurate and truthful personal information.

3 Revision

These consumer rights and obligations may be reviewed and revised periodically by WATRA, as necessary.

4 Annexes

Meeting minutes: Banjul, Gambia, June 10–13, 2024

Reference: WATRA/WG/CAE/2024/001

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