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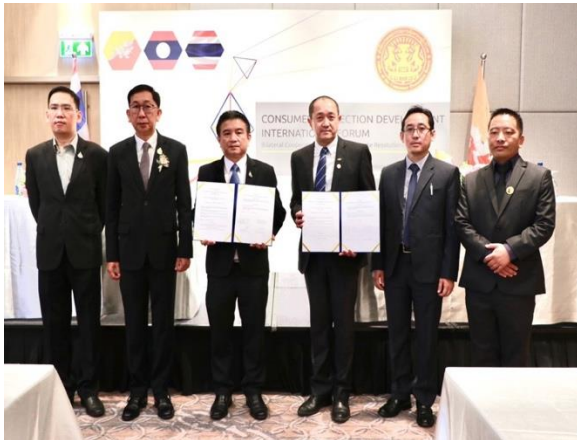
COMPETITION & CONSUMER AFFAIRS AUTHORITY  
MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE & EMPLOYMENT  
Thimphu: Bhutan



## Press Release

### Signing of Memorandum of Understanding Between Competition and Consumer Affairs, Bhutan and Office of Consumer Protection Board, Thailand

With increasing trade between countries, disputes between businesses from one country and consumers from another country are also becoming more frequent. However, consumer protection agencies lack jurisdiction in foreign countries to address those grievances.



However, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Competition & Consumer Affairs Authority (CCAA) of Bhutan, and the Office of Consumer Protection Board (OCBP), Thailand, consumer grievance redressal is expected to become better.

Though the MOU is not legally binding, it will facilitate co-operation between the two agencies striving to resolve consumer disputes. This assurance of consumer protection can have a positive impact on

bilateral trade between Bhutan and Thailand, benefiting the economies of both nations. In 2022, Bhutan's imports from Thailand amounted to US \$3.3 billion, while exports to Thailand were valued at Nu. 16 million.

In addition to promoting consumer protection, the MOU will facilitate technical cooperation, information sharing and knowledge exchange between the two organizations. The OCBP will also provide logistical assistance to the CCAA to gain access to laboratories in Thailand product quality testing as and when requested.

The MOU was signed on May 31, 2023, at the Asawin Grand Convention Hotel in Bangkok between the Director General of the CCAA and the Secretary General of the OCBP.

Overall, the signing of this MOU signifies a commitment to strengthening consumer protection measures and fostering closer ties between businesses and consumers in Bhutan and Thailand. It is a positive step towards ensuring a fair and secure environment for consumers to engage in trade; which will benefit the economy of both countries.

The areas of cooperation and collaboration outlined under MOU include:



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དོ་འགྲན་དང་ཉོ་ལྷོད་དབང་འཛིན།

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- a) Exchange of information on prevalent consumer issues including transboundary unfair trade practices that are detrimental and prejudicial to the interests and rights of the general consumers in both the countries;
- b) Consult and support to amicably resolve any consumer disputes between the consumers of one country and business entities of another and where the cost involve, the concerned party will bear it;
- c) Identification of appropriate laboratories in Thailand along with relevant advice by the OCPB, on the request of CCAA, as and when product testing and quality evaluation is required for consumer dispute settlement;
- d) The OCPB will endeavor to provide support on training and exchange program related to consumer protection. An action plan will be determined jointly by the parties on this;
- e) The OCPB will endeavor to provide capacity building programs mutually developed by the parties for CCAA in the field of technical, professional and technological relating to consumer protection services. Where CCAA has the expertise, the same could be availed by the OCPB;
- f) Both parties may endeavor to facilitate funds for projects and networking between parties in the field of consumer protection;
- g) Both parties may invite resource persons for institutional workshop/ seminars;
- h) Where possible, organize an exchange program between the parties to enable employees of both parties to learn new skills and knowledge. The host organization will not charge fee for such arrangement. However, the daily allowance and airfare involved shall be the responsibility of the concerned party;
- i) The Parties will mutually exchange good practices of consumer protection; and
- j) Any other areas of cooperation that are mutually identified from time to time.