



Foundation for Civil Society (FCS) and Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority Consumer Consultative Council (TCRA-CCC) Partner to Advance Consumer Protection and Rights in Tanzania.

August 6th 2024, Dar es salaam. – Foundation for Civil Society (FCS) and the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority Consumer Consultative Council (TCRA-CCC) have signed a three year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at advancing consumer protection and rights in the communication sector of Tanzania. The collaboration recognizes the importance of protecting consumers against the unfair trade practices in the marketplace. It ensures fair and responsible treatment of customers. It allows customers to make informed, unbiased decisions when purchasing and using products and services. Consumer protection contributes to dynamic and effective markets for businesses to grow. Businesses that comply with consumer protection policies and prioritise the wellbeing of their customers not only establish a positive reputation but also gain a competitive advantage, making them highly sought after in the marketplace, which in turn will lead to economic growth.

In today's dynamic marketplace, ensuring the integrity of trade and commerce relies on protection of consumers from unfair and deceptive practices. Businesses play a pivotal role in ensuring transparency and accuracy in their marketing endeavors, refraining from false representations or misleading claims about their products and services. Recognizing this imperative, FCS and TCRA-CCC have joined efforts to strategically co-create and implement a programme focused on consumer protection and rights of regulated communications goods and services in Tanzania. The joint effort seeks to promote consumer protection through consumer empowerment, advocacy and effective engagement with key stakeholders of regulated communications goods and services.

This partnership underscores the commitment to empower consumers, and promote fair market practices. By working together, FCS and TCRA-CCC aim to create a more informed and protected consumer environment in Tanzania.

During the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signing ceremony, FCS Executive Director, Justice Rutenge, emphasized the significance of CSOs strengthening consumer protection mechanisms and advocating for consumer rights. He also highlighted FCS's interest in consumer protection stating, "Over the years, FCS has maintained a citizen-centred approach to development, focused on enhancing citizen agency. Our commitment to consumer protection stems from this foundational concept. As FCS is working in the

consumer protection space, we seek to cultivate an effective consumer protection framework driven by active civil society engagement. Through our consumer protection program, we will strengthen CSOs to improve the alignment between policy and grassroots action, especially in contexts where stakeholders and consumers have limited awareness of their rights and responsibilities. To achieve consumer protection awareness in Tanzania, we rely on the active voices of civil society to advocate for consumers and bring about meaningful change in consumer protection. CSOs, being close to citizens, play a pivotal role in actively engaging and influencing key issues nationwide."

Mr Rutenge added that Consumers have rights, including the right to a fair settlement for just claims; education and empowerment about products, services and their rights; and quality assurance for goods and services, amongst others.

"We have partnered with TCRA-CC, a key stakeholder in advancing communications consumer protection. In this collaboration, FCS will leverage its expertise in capacity building to enhance the capacity of TCRA-CCC and its secretariat in implementing initiatives geared towards advancing consumer protection and rights. Moreover, FCS will extend support to TCRA-CCC in mobilizing resources essential for the effective implementation of consumer-centric initiatives", he expressed enthusiasm.

On the other hand, the Executive Secretary of TCRA-CCC Ms Mary Shao Msuya said the establishment of TCRA CCC aims to safeguard rights and interests of consumers of regulated communications goods and services in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Broadcasting and Postal Services, emphasized consumers' fundamental rights, including access to regulated communication services at reasonable prices, transparent information for informed decision-making, and protection against deceptive advertising practices.

Ms Mary highlighted the significance of the collaboration between FCS and TCRAA-CC stating that by working together, the organizations will enhance consumer protection mechanisms, ensuring robust protection for consumers.

"Consumers have the right to choose from a variety of products and services that meet their needs, with the assurance of safety and quality," the TCRA-CCC representative reiterated. "Our collaboration with FCS underscores our commitment to safeguarding consumer interests and ensuring a fair and transparent marketplace,"

As Tanzania strides towards fostering a conducive environment for consumer rights, the partnership between FCS and TCRA-CCC stands as a testament to collective efforts in promoting equitable trade practices and empowering consumers with knowledge on their rights and avenues of consumer recourse.

Consumer protection is a strategic focus area for FCS, underscored by their recent signing of a three-year grant agreement with Trademark Africa to support establishment of a robust consumer protection framework, funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), Ireland, and Norway. Hence, the partnership between FCS and TCRA-CCC aligns with the objectives of this grant agreement, seeking to strengthen the

establishment of a robust consumer protection framework through identifying and resolving consumer protection issues, increasing awareness to consumers, and empowering civil societies and regulatory councils through engagement with high-level stakeholders and the establishment of regional and sector-specific consumer committees.

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About Foundation for Civil Society

Foundation for Civil Society (FCS) is a leading Tanzanian not-for-profit development organization that provides grants and capacity building support to local civil society organizations (CSOs). Established in September 2002, FCS has become one of the largest sources of funding for small and medium-sized Tanzanian CSOs and one of the most prominent and credible civil society institutions in Africa. FCS aims to create a Tanzanian society where empowered, resilient, and responsible citizens realize social and economic justice and improved quality of life. We believe in sustainable and inclusive development in Tanzania through strengthening capabilities and sharing resources by partnering with civil society, community groups, and other development actors. Our approach to bring about change includes:

- Strengthening capabilities of CSOs and local community groups.
- Leveraging resources and managing development grants.
- Catalyzing strategic linkages, convenings, and partnerships.
- Co-creation and management of projects.
- Strengthening internal systems and capabilities

About Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority Consumer Consultative Council (TCRA-CCC)

The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority Consumer Consultative Council (TCRA-CCC) serves as a consultative body representing consumers of communication services in Tanzania. Established under the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority Act, TCRA-CCC plays a vital role in advocating for consumer rights and promoting fair practices within the communication industry.