



Regulatory Tools to Empower Consumers: A Zambian Perspective

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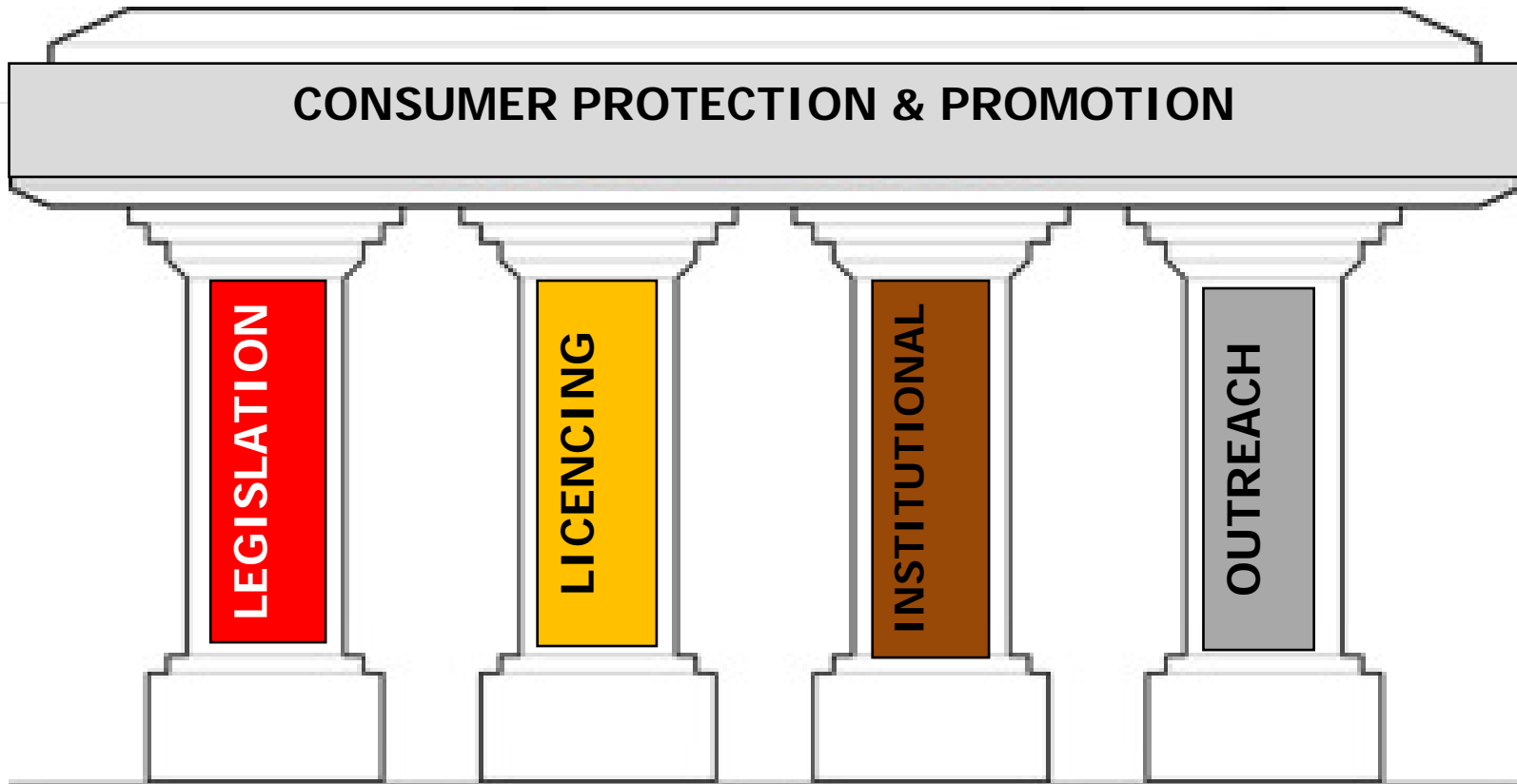
Outline of Presentation

- Introduction
- Pillars for Consumer Protection
- Legislation
- Licensing
- Institutional initiatives
- Outreach
- Future Outlook

INTRODUCTION

- Without protection, consumers are usually in a very weak position.
- They are always at risk of being sold poor quality goods and services and at higher prices than ought to be.
- In the energy sector which tends to be "*monopolistic*" in some parts of the world, Regulators can mirror competition

PILLARS FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION



LEGISLATION

Energy Regulation Act

- Receive & investigate complaints

Electricity Act

- Consumer input in tariff determination
- Utility entitled to cost recovery + / to provide service
- Consumer interests will not be served by a bankrupt utility
- Sanction against utility for non-performance

Collaboration with Consumer Protection Commission

- MOU

LICENSING

Utilities obligated to:

- Adhere to standards
 - KPIs
 - Safety
- For Customers Benefit
- Set up consumer complaints resolution mechanism
 - Co-operate in consumer association activities





INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES

Consumer Charter

- Developed with utility
- Rights & Obligations
- Pledge of trust
- Not legally binding

Establishment of a Consumer Affairs Committee of the Board

- To not lose sight of the Consumer Protection agenda

Collaboration with CCPC

- MOU
- Referral of Complaints



INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES

Social Media Policy

- Guide on conduct
- Guide to handling media queries
- Standard media procedures

Toll Free Line

- Channel of communication
- Broaden Interaction with consumers
- Expedite complaints resolution
- Sensitize on energy rights and obligations
- Eliminate financial cost of interaction with regulator



OUTREACH

☐ Media & Public education

- TV and Radio Programmes, Adverts, School Quiz
- District Focused Meetings

☐ Consumer Watch Groups (CWGs) – 11

- Eyes & Ears of ERB
- Volunteers
- Complaints Handling & Community Meetings
- Presence at all Provincial Centers and five other strategic locations

OUTREACH cont....

ERB IN THE COMMUNITY



Energy sensitization programs in schools



Typical scene at a CWG sensitization meeting

OUTREACH cont.....

☐ Mobile Office

- Accessibility
- Prompts utility into action
- Complaints
- Inquiries
- Sensitization



Reaching
out to
consumers
in far flung
areas

FUTURE OUTLOOK

- Continue raising profile of consumer issues through:
 - i. Increased collaboration with consumer organizations – CCPC, CUTs, ZACA
 - ii. Establishment of Consumer Information Booths
 - iii. Extending ERB community interventions through CWGs
 - iv. Recognition of CWGs/Consumer Councils in the Energy Regulation Act



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**
