

5TH DECEMBER 2024 - WORLD COMPETITION DAY 15TH CALL FROM CUTS INTERNATIONAL

THEME: COMPETITION POLICY AND INEQUALITY

World Competition Day

On December 05, 1980, the United Nations General Assembly approved the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices (the UN Set), thus marking a milestone in the history of Competition Law and Policy. CUTS International requests all stakeholders (such as national governments, competition agencies, civil society organisations, academia, media, etc.) to extend their support to its annual endeavour of observing December 05 as World Competition Day (WCD), and its formal adoption by the United Nations.

We are entering the 15th year of this journey and happy to be joined by COMESA Competition Commission. We are grateful to have received support from several stakeholders on our path.

Competition Policy and Inequality

World is witnessing rise in economic inequality within and between countries. Competition policy can be a part of the solution, however, it may require some course corrections. Competition advocacy is as important as competition enforcement in this regard.

Noted global expert Prof. Eleanor Fox has made some pointed suggestions to the competition community for mitigating inequality.¹ First step would be to understand the correlation between market competition and attenuating inequalities. Some rethinking on competition economics and goals will also be needed, such as moving away from narrow 'consumer welfare as mere consumer surpluses' approach to larger economic welfare.

Market power, a major cause of creating inequalities, need to be dealt more vigorously by authorities and policymakers. Shifting the burden of proofs and bestowing more weightage to market harms to upstream players like workers, farmers and small suppliers may be needed.

More vigorous enforcement and advocacy in priority areas (like health care, medicines, food, transport, energy, communications, information, financial services etc.) can help push back the inequalities. Easing of entry and market participation as well as ensuring competitive wages and opportunities for labour will be important.

How can you contribute?

CUTS International and COMESA Competition Commission suggest a few tools or methods, which could be adopted for celebrating the WCD. These comprise: organising webinars/seminars; preparing advocacy materials like pamphlets and posters; publishing newspaper articles and press releases; and undertaking social media campaigns, short videos, etc.

Alternatively, countries and competition authorities are free to choose their own themes and modes to celebrate the WCD. The goal is to spread awareness among citizens regarding the benefits of a competitive market structure and the harmful effects of anticompetitive practices both at a national and international level.

CUTS International and COMESA Competition Commission would appreciate if you could intimate us of your respective activities on this occasion.

¹ OECD; DAF/COMP/GF(2024)5