

By email: edward.brown@fco.gov.uk, joe.mcclintock@fco.gov.uk

Edward Brown, First Secretary Trade and Development, and
Joe McClintock, Second Secretary Trade and Development,
UK Mission to the United Nations
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Switzerland

23 March 2010

Dear Mr Brown and Mr McClintock

Call by CUTS International for a World Competition Day

I am writing in relation to the call made by CUTS International (Consumer Unity & Trust Society) for the introduction of a World Competition Day under the auspices of UNCTAD.

CUTS is a non-profit and non-governmental organisation pursuing social justice and economic equity, and its Centre for Competition, Investment & Economic Regulation was created to give focused attention to CUTS' work on competition, investment and economic regulation.

CUTS' proposal is that 5 December be marked as World Competition Day. 5 December is the anniversary of the adoption in 1980 of the United Nations Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices (UN Set), which recognises the importance of competition law and policy to developing countries.

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Open competitive markets are a key component of enhancing consumer welfare, raising economic growth and ensuring that economic power is not concentrated. Many studies have shown that over the long term, competition, through improving the efficiency of firms and encouraging investment in innovation, generates higher rates of productivity growth resulting in increased economic growth and greater prosperity.¹

While more than 100 countries worldwide now have a competition law system in one form or another, the voices of those with vested interests in relaxing competition policy can often be louder than those of consumers, who ultimately stand to benefit from an effective competition policy. Even in the UK, which is seen as fairly advanced in terms of competition policy, a big part of the OFT's work is fostering a consumer and competition culture through advocacy to government, businesses and the public. This is equally true, if not more so, for younger and/or smaller authorities in countries which have only recently introduced competition law, or are yet to do so.

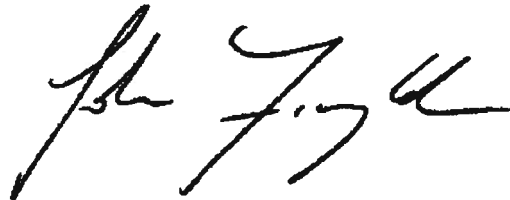
CUTS has already received a number of messages of support of its proposal from stakeholders in the developing world. A World Competition Day would support international competition advocacy initiatives by raising awareness and focusing attention on competition policy.

I hope that you will also support this proposal, and remain at your disposal should you wish to discuss it further. I have also sent a copy of this letter to Hassan Qaqaya, Head of the Competition Policy Branch of UNCTAD.

¹ See, for example, Aghion et al. (2008).

For more information please refer to CUTS' 2nd Call for a World Competition Day, available at www.cuts-ccier.org/pdf/Call_for_World_Competition_Day.pdf; the UN Set, available at www.unctad.org/en/docs/tdrbpconf10r2.en.pdf; and DFID's 2001 briefing on competition policy, law and developing countries, available at www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/itdcompetitionbrief.pdf, which explains the importance of competition policy for developing countries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Fingleton', written in a cursive style.

John Fingleton

**Chief Executive, Office of Fair Trading
Chair, Steering Group of the International Competition Network**