

## **CONSUMERS DEMAND MORE EFFECTIVE COMPETITION**

Sydney, October 29, 2007

Consumer groups meeting here today reaffirmed the need for an effective competition law & policy to ensure that markets function in a fair manner. The meeting stressed the significant costs borne by consumers from price fixing agreements and other anti-competitive practices.

The meeting was organized by the India-based CUTS International, International Network of Civil Society Organisations on Competition (INCSOC) and the Consumers Federation of Australia on the fringes of the 18<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Consumers International.

The spread of competition law around the world was noted, but the meeting stressed the importance of effective legislation and vigorous enforcement, the absence of which can lead to consumer organizations and the wider public becoming disillusioned with competition authorities. The role of government in restricting competition to the benefit of a few powerful firms was highlighted by a number of developing and transition country delegates.

The meeting stressed that effective competition enforcement had to be centred on a balanced and focused assessment of real consumer behaviour in markets, rather than a theoretical view of how consumers 'should' behave. Delegates were also keen to ensure that best practice and lessons from different countries were passed between organizations. The delegates also stressed the need to have an effective consumer voice in the various transnational competition fora and support INCSOC in this process.

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