Relevance of Competition and Regulatory Reforms in Pursuing the Post-2015 Development Agenda in Developing Countries

Nairobi, 12-13 December 2015

CALL FOR PAPERS

1. Introduction

1.1 The CUTS/CIRC 4th Biennial Competition Conference aims to raise key pointers that can help developing country (DC) policymakers, opinion leaders and development actors understand the importance of according greater attention to competition and regulatory reforms - as a tool for achieving developmental objectives based upon economic democracy principles, especially some of the challenges that the post-2015 agenda presents. It is expected that the discussions in the sessions would throw light on how governments and development partners should design competition and regulatory reforms in order to enable proper functioning of markets to enable the poor to benefit, thus better achieving some of the 17 sustainable development goals (refer Annex 1). Discussions from the conference would be distilled into a short Policy Brief with key recommendations so that busy policy makers can read and absorb the same. The Paper will be disseminated across the world by CUTS and its partners, and also formally submit the Paper to the United Nations.

1.2 The Conference programme is sub-divided into four Knowledge Sessions, as elucidated in the following section. 3-4 invited speakers are expected to present papers (for 15 minutes) in each Session, to be followed by a panel comprising 2-3 discussants (each to make their observations in 10 minutes). The Chair and the Discussants would be drawn from developed and developing countries and comprise experts and practitioners with thorough knowledge of competition and regulatory reforms, especially their implications on consumers and producers, particularly those at the bottom of the pyramid.

1.3 The organisers are now inviting interested scholars/practitioners to submit a 500 word abstract, if interested to participate in this conference. The abstract can be based on any of the four knowledge sessions of the conference and should be submitted to Mr Kshitiz Sharma (ks@cuts.org) by 15th June 2015 (2300hrs India Standard Time, IST) along with a

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brief 2-page CV of the author. Authors are requested to mention the specific ‘Knowledge Session’ their paper is based on.

1.4 Authors of selected abstracts would be invited to submit full conference papers (3,000 to 4,000 words) for a chance to participate in this conference. Authors of selected papers would be supported by the organisers to participate in the conference. Support would be available in terms of: air travel, accommodation and meals at the conference venue.

2. Conference Programme

2.1 The two day conference would consist of four knowledge sessions, as elucidated below. Specific questions/issues have been enumerated under each knowledge session to help the authors develop the abstract/papers for the submission.

Knowledge Session I

Role of Government in promoting sustainable economic growth through competition reforms (exploring how competition can help promote healthy markets, create employment, promote innovation and industrialisation)

For competition reforms to receive adequate attention, it is crucial that key organs of the government are convinced (and taken into confidence) about the role of competition and regulatory reforms in contributing towards sustainable economic growth through better functioning markets, industrialisation and innovation – thereby creating jobs in DCs. Industrial policy is often designed to promote and protect certain domestic sectors in DCs. This presents considerable challenge for promoting competition and regulatory reforms. New thinking and direction about how this has been done in some countries (sector/country specific case studies) would provide crucial lessons.

Papers in this session would try to address one or more of the following ‘key questions’.
Key Questions

- What are the critical steps for convincing Governments especially in developing countries about the importance of competition and regulatory reforms in public policy discourses?
- How does a competition reforms agenda get linked with the various government agendas, priorities, preoccupations and concerns, both at the national and international levels?
- How can industrial policy and competition policy co-exist? What lessons can be derived from countries where sectors with considerable public engagement (SoE) have embraced competition?
- What needs to be done to sustain the momentum of competition reforms? Is any institutional reform required for making competition reforms a key component of economic management in developing countries? What roles should be played by politicians, policymakers, civil servants and regulatory institutions in this regard?
- How can competitive markets create jobs? Are there certain sectors that could be prioritised by governments for this purpose, particularly the informal sector which is often the largest employer in the DCs?
- What evidence exists to highlight contribution of competition policy towards promoting sustainable development (economy, equity, and environment) especially in the developing county context?

Knowledge Session II

How can competition reforms in developing and least developed countries be designed to better contribute to inclusive economic growth, especially by creating greater scope for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) in the economy?

To promote a culture of competition in an economy, it is critical to communicate effectively to business, how competition reforms can help promote business welfare. In view of the fact that majority of businesses in developing countries are small and medium, it is critical to
make MSMEs a partner in the process of competition reforms. Creating opportunities for MSMEs remains a key hallmark of inclusive economic growth in developing and least developed countries – and this session aims to explore to what extent competition reforms can contribute towards this end.

*Papers in this session would try to address one or more of the following ‘key questions’.*

**Key Questions**

- Why it is important to get business buy-in for competition reforms? Do MSMEs in DCs react differently to competition reforms, compared to big businesses? Why and how?
- What are the characteristics of businesses in developing and least developed countries, especially MSMEs that make it difficult for them to benefit from competition reforms? What potential exists for educating MSMEs of the benefits from competition reforms?
- How can businesses be roped in to contribute to/partake in sharing the costs of competition reforms in developing countries? What experience/evidence exists, especially of ‘competition champions’ within the business community?
- What methodologies/tools/anecdotes exist to demonstrate the likely positive impact of competition reforms to MSMEs in developing countries?
- What measures can ensure that business associations/syndicates (in key sectors) stay away from ‘collusive’ tendencies? How can business associations (including MSMEs) be better engaged to be part of competition compliance in DCs?
- What can government do to incubate/encourage MSMEs and promote innovation, while simultaneously ensuring fair competition?

**Knowledge Session III**

*Competition reforms as a component of sectoral/economic reforms to enable DC consumers and producers derive benefits from key sectors.*

Considerable evidence has now been gathered by various scholars, institutions, practitioners and advocates of competition reforms to explain how fair competition in sectors can help consumers and small producers, particularly in developing (and least
developed) countries. In this session case studies covering key sectors are expected to help competition reforms to be better linked with goals of sustainable development and inclusive growth. Case studies from sectors like staple food, transportation, pharmaceuticals, telecom, water, energy, education, etc. would be encouraged.

Papers in this session would try to address one or more of the following ‘key questions’

**Key Questions**

- Can competition and regulatory reforms act as tools for making certain sectors inclusive and equitable for consumers and/or producers especially in developing countries? What experience exists especially in the energy, water, education and agriculture sectors?
- How do political economy factors affect competition reforms in developing countries? What are some of the methods to analyse this? How can such political economy constraints be overcome? What incentives/measures are needed to do so?
- How can competition reforms be better marketed to politicians? What are some of the benefits of competition reforms that can help drive political decisions and processes towards pro-competitive policy reforms?
- To what extent has the DC civil society been successful in rallying for the need to promote fair markets in DCs? What are some of the benefits of competition reforms that have helped civil society to take interest for promoting competition reforms in DCs?

**Knowledge Session IV**

**Infusing competition and promoting regulatory reforms to make trade agreements and regional integration impactful in developing countries**

It has been established now that benefits of trade liberalisation can be better derived by countries that possess effective market regulatory framework and instruments. Competition law is one such instrument that has become a feature of liberalising market economies. Apart from the multilateral process, the process of trade liberalisation has also been driven
across many developing regions through regional trade integration processes. Development of national and regional competition reforms processes are often part of such processes, but seem to be effective only if they are well-aligned with domestic policies/processes and have stakeholder support. This session throws light on some such evidence especially from the developing world.

_Papers in this session would try to address one or more of the following ‘key questions’_

**Key Questions**

- **Regional integration and competition**: How can ‘principles of fair competition’ be adequately integrated in regional trade agreements in an expanding market? What are some of the existing ‘good practices’ (what has worked and how and what output has been generated?)

- What pitfalls have been witnessed when domestic competition reforms were pushed purely through Trade Agreements without a clear domestic agenda or support? How can such situations be better handled in current/future Trade Agreements?

- Using trade liberalisation to develop pro-competitive markets – what are some of the lessons for DCs?

- International trade agreements impacting competition – what can small countries do (regional and multilateral levels)? How can the ‘voice’ of such small countries be better heard at these platforms? How can international cooperation on competition be strengthened?

- Sometimes, pursuit of FDI can thwart competition in markets? What can be done to balance the need for investment and maintaining a level-playing field, especially in markets driving economic growth of developing countries?

- What are some of the key priorities in DCs for effective regulation of markets, especially to ensure that international trade can contribute towards effective economic transformation?
3. Important Dates & Deadlines

- Last date for submission of Abstract (500 words) by 15th June 2015, 2300hrs IST
- Selection of Abstract by 30th June 2015, 2300hrs IST
- Last date of submission of Full paper (3,000 to 4,000 words) by 31st August 2015, 2300hrs IST
- Selection of successful papers (for presentation and participation in the conference) by 31st October 2015, 2300hrs IST

For further information/questions, please email Mr. Kshitiz Sharma (ks@cuts.org)

4. Volume of Selected papers

4.1 Candidates whose papers are selected would be supported by the organisers to participate in the conference and present their paper. Further, all selected papers would be compiled into a published volume by CUTS and disseminated globally.
Annexure 1

**Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

- End hunger in all its forms everywhere
- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
- Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation
- Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
• Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development