



Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy
20th Session, 21 July 2022, Geneva, Switzerland and online

**Session on:
Rethinking competition law enforcement: Lessons learnt from the
COVID-19 pandemic**

**Thursday, 21 July 2022 (10:00 - 13:00)
Palais des Nations, Room XVII (First Floor) and online**

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak led Competition Authorities to take immediate action to meet enforcement and operational challenges. In addition, other responses include market monitoring, targeted investigations, and guidance to business. The advocacy work carried out by Competition authorities advising Governments on the economic recovery packages has been also extremely important.

Competition Authorities can leverage on the operational and substantive enforcement challenges faced during the pandemic and learn lessons for the future which considering the economic recovery post pandemic. One key lesson was the need of investing in digital means and data tools to adapt to the new normal in an effective manner. Lessons from the pandemic prompts enforcers and market operators to rethink competition law enforcement and the need to adjust and align with the dynamics of changing markets.

The economic challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic required urgent and decisive government action to make markets and the economy work. State intervention in the markets affected by the crisis was and is necessary and a legitimate means to respond quickly to the economic impact of the pandemic, to support markets and to promote and ensure economic recovery. In the long term, however, effective competition in markets must be restored. Markets need to be made more resilient, inclusive, and climate-friendly so that economies are better prepared for different types of crises. Competition authorities played a crucial role in balancing state intervention with effective competition.

To achieve these legitimate policy goals, policymakers are encouraged to collaborate more closely, explore different policy alternatives and where possible and adopt options that minimise constraints and distortions to competition. This may require new legislative initiatives, such as those already introduced by some countries. Given the difficulty of these challenges, it is necessary to ensure the exchange of information between authorities and to envisage further cooperation within existing networks

To facilitate this interactive discussion, the secretariat raises the following questions:

- How did Competition Authorities balance enforcement and monitoring activities in digital markets, namely vis-à-vis digital platforms throughout the COVID-19 period?
- How did COVID19 challenge international cooperation among competition authorities and what tools can be applied in the future?

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WORK PROGRAMME

10:00 - 10:10 **Presentation by UNCTAD secretariat**

10:10 - 11:45 **Speakers**

- Mr. Francis Kariuki, Director General, Competition Authority, Kenya
- Ms. Ana María Resendiz Mora, Commissioner, Federal Economic Competition Commission (COFECE), Mexico
- Mr. Gegham Gevorgyan, Chairman, Competition Protection Commission, Armenia
- Mr. Tembinkosi Bonakele, Commissioner, Competition Commission, South Africa
- Ms. Irène Luc, Vice-President, French Competition Authority, France
- Mr. Ioannis Lianos, President, Hellenic Competition Commission, Greece

11:45- 13:00 **Questions and Comments from the floor**

Delegates wishing to speak during the session are invited to inform the UNCTAD secretariat accordingly by contacting Ms. Elizabeth Gachuri (elizabeth.gachuri@un.org).