

**9th United Nations Conference on Competition and Consumer Protection
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ESCWA – UNCTAD Knowledge-Sharing Forums

Advancing Competition Policy in the Arab Region

Presentation

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Advancing Competition Policy in the Arab Region

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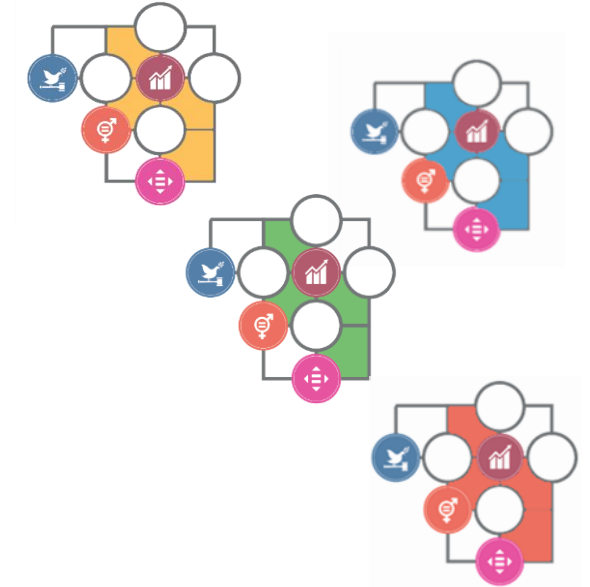
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Six Forums, One Mission

The Arab Competition Forum (2020–2025)

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-  2020 – 1st Forum (Beirut): Foundations & Frameworks
 -  2021 – 2nd Forum (Virtual): Competition & COVID Response
 -  2022 – 3rd Forum (Oman): Linking Competition to Growth
 -  2023 – 4th Forum (Saudi Arabia): Policy, Enforcement & Regional Dialogue
 -  2024 – 5th Forum (Tunisia): Markets & Institutional Development
 -  2025 – 6th Forum (Iraq): Mergers, Digital Markets & Regional Roadmaps



From Dialogue to Direction (1st to 4th Forums)

Forum	Location	Highlights
1st (2020)	Beirut	Framed competition as a pillar of development, governance & gender; set foundation for recurring forums
2nd (2021)	Virtual	Shared global + regional pandemic responses; proposed Arab Competition Network; highlighted TA & Arabic resources
3rd (2022)	Oman	Introduced trade & SME focus; launched Student Challenge; set roadmap on M&A, bid rigging, neutrality
4th (2023)	Saudi Arabia	Deep dive into M&A + digital dominance; expanded youth engagement; emphasized regional cooperation & gender inclusion



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Spotlight: 5th Forum – Tunisia (2024)

Theme: Advocacy for Stronger Competition

- Highlighted the role of advocacy in fostering fair markets
- Deepened dialogue on regional convergence and cooperation
- Linked competition with industrial policy and competitive neutrality
- Featured 3rd Arab Student Challenge (local universities)
- Co-organized with ESCWA, UNCTAD, OECD, COMESA & Tunisia's Competition Council



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Spotlight: 6th Forum – BAGHDAD (2025)

Theme: Competition Law Enforcement in the Arab Region

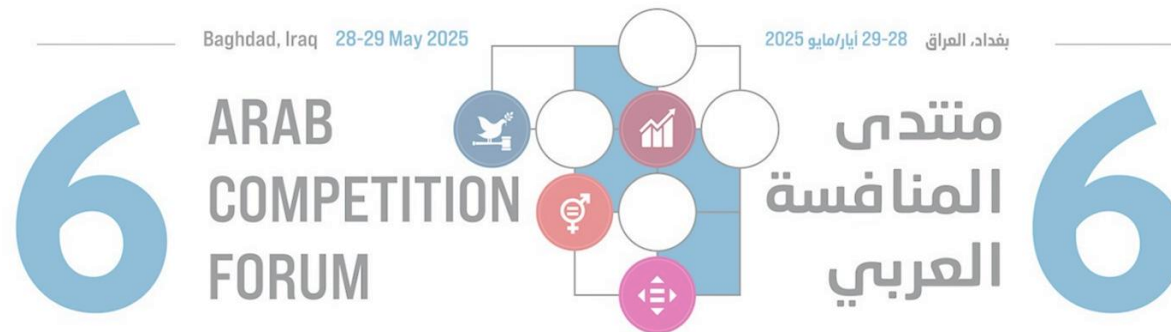
- Deep dive on M&A, abuse of dominance, market studies, and legal standards
- Featured the 4th Arab Student Challenge (Iraqi universities)
- Advanced call to merge ACF and ACN into a unified regional platform
- Co-organized with ESCWA, UNCTAD, OECD, and Iraq's Competition Council
- Closed with clear priorities for stronger, faster, cross-border enforcement



■ Spotlight: 6th Forum – BAGHDAD (2025)

UNCTAD's Role in Regional Enforcement Dialogue

- Co-led technical sessions on:
 - Market studies
 - Abuse of dominance
 - Legal standards and burden of proof
- Brought comparative insights from EU, COMESA, Korea, and the US
- Positioned the Arab region within global enforcement discourse
- Reinforced the policy-science link between analysis and action



First Arab Consumer Protection Forum: Expanding the Ecosystem

1st Arab Consumer Protection Forum – Manama, 2024

- First regional platform for consumer protection policy dialogue
- Co-organized by ESCWA, UNCTAD & the Government of Bahrain
- Sessions on sustainability, legal frameworks, e-commerce, and redress
- Promoted integration of consumer rights with SDGs & digital policy
- Built a foundation for annual consumer-focused regional collaboration

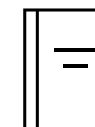


Other Joint ESCWA–UNCTAD Initiatives



E-learning Course

Fighting Bid Rigging in Public Procurement, in Arabic & English.



[Access to the course](#) ►

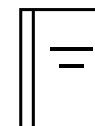
ESCWA contributed to regional dialogue and the global report on MSME access to platforms.

UNDA Project

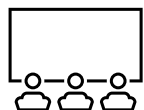


Peer Review

ESCWA reports such as the Arab Business Legislative Framework reviewed by UNCTAD.



[Access to the report](#) ►



Webinars on competition and consumer protection during and post-COVID-19.

Joint Webinars



[Watch the webinar](#) ►



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ESCWA–UNCTAD Collaboration: Impact & the Road Ahead

Competition Law Development in the Arab Region



New Laws and Amendments

Nine new laws and amendments are enacted



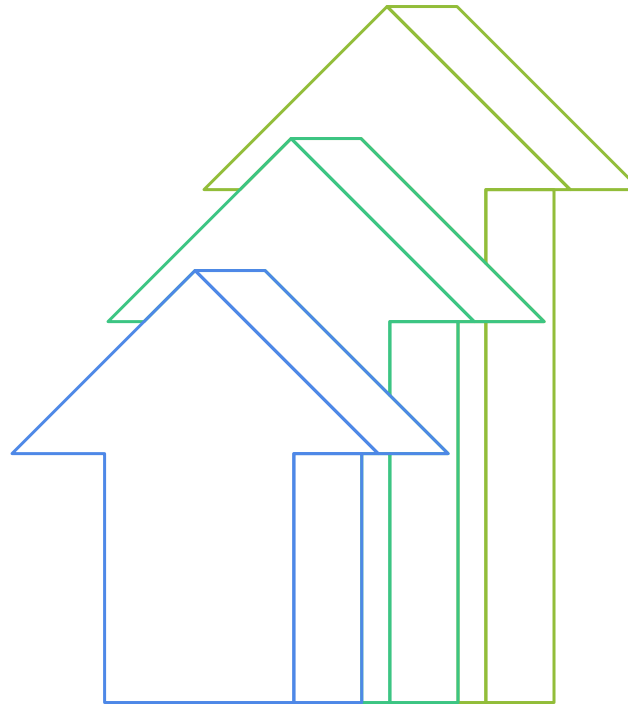
Establishment of Competition Bodies

Multiple competition bodies and authorities are established



Score Increase on ABLF Assessment

The ABLF legislative assessment score increases from 3.7/7 to 4.1/7



[Access to the Portal ►](#)



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ESCWA–UNCTAD Collaboration: Impact & the Road Ahead

How it strengthened institutions:

- Built sustained national capacities through six Forums and hands-on peer exchange
- Triggered legal reform and institutional upgrades in several Arab countries
- Fostered informal coordination and year-round expert networks

How it fostered convergence:

- Introduced shared language on M&A, market studies, and dominance
- Linked policy with practice through joint toolkits, case studies, and student challenges

Looking ahead:

- Deeper integration of consumer protection into regional priorities
- Support enforcement in digital markets & sustainability transitions
- Institutionalize youth and gender participation in competition policy



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Thank You



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