

**GLOBAL FORUM ON COMPETITION**  
**Paris, 10 February 2003**

**Opening remarks of**  
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**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development**

**Introduction**

1. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am pleased to welcome you all to the third Global Forum on Competition, bringing together competition law and policy leaders of some 70 economies, from all regions of the world, along with representatives of UNCTAD, the WTO and several regional organisations. I am also pleased that the Business and Industry Advisory Committee, Consumers International, the International Bar Association and the Trade Union Advisory Committee will be participating in the Forum, as we are striving to increase the level of our interaction with the business community, civil society and other stakeholders in the competition law and policy field. The presence of the Inter-American Development Bank is also most welcome and confirms the growing importance of the OECD's co-operation with the international donor community. And we greatly appreciate the financial support that the Chinese Taipei Fair Trade Commission and the United Kingdom Department for International Development have provided for this event.

2. The OECD's Global Forum programme is intended to deepen policy dialogue with economies from around the world in eight fields in which the issues are truly global, are a high priority within the OECD, and are a matter of particular OECD expertise. The importance of competition law and policy within the OECD was recently underscored by a prioritisation process in which delegates to the OECD's Committee on Co-operation with Non-Members consistently ranked competition law and policy very highly within the CCNM's overall work programme, including strong recognition of this Global Forum on Competition.

3. Many of you here today were also in attendance at the initial launch of the Global Forum on Competition, in October 2001. The hope I expressed on that occasion was that this new model of OECD-style dialogue would be flexible and evolve to meet the expectations of participants, allowing them to bring home new ideas, increased mutual understanding and an expanded commitment to promoting and defending competitive economies. The significant increase in the number of economies and organisations represented here today, relative to our initial meeting in October 2001, is a strong signal of the growing interest and support for this approach.

4. However, if we wish to maintain this momentum, we must continue to listen to your interests and to take them into account as this dialogue continues. With this in mind, you will all be invited to express your opinions and convey your ideas to the OECD Secretariat by means of a questionnaire in the final session of this meeting tomorrow. This feedback will help us to continue to adapt and evolve to better meet your expectations in our future work.

5. This third meeting of the Global Forum on Competition will take us down some new paths. The first two meetings to a large extent built upon work performed in the OECD's Competition Committee: the first meeting addressed the traditional cornerstones of competition law and policy, namely: (a) the role of competition policy in economic reform, (b) the fight against hard core cartels, (c) merger control, and (d) co-operation between enforcement authorities. In the second meeting in February 2002, there was a stronger emphasis on development issues, discussing how competition policy may foster economic growth and how developing countries may benefit from capacity building and technical assistance in the field of competition law and policy. The discussions on international co-operation continued, with special focus on information sharing.

6. We will now approach two topics that are special to this Forum. The first one deals with the institutions responsible for competition law enforcement and other tasks within the competition policy area - how they may be designed and how the objectives of competition law and policy may influence that design. Tomorrow, we will discuss whether competition policy should be special in small economies and, if so, in what way. This third meeting of the Competition Forum will also offer another novelty: for the first time we will perform a peer review of a participating country's competition institutions, using the model that has successfully been applied in the Competition Committee. South Africa has offered to take the pioneer's role here, and we look forward to a most interesting session tomorrow morning. You may be interested to learn that Russia, including its competition ministry, will go through an OECD peer-review this year and next. Holding the competition review in next year's Global Forum would fit our schedule perfectly. And I understand that during the course of this Forum another country may also seek to be peer reviewed by you next February.

7. And I do see all Forum participants as peers. In spite of differences in the level of development of participants' economies and institutions, I believe competition leaders share many common challenges and seek solutions to many similar problems. So, there is a clear need to come together as equals, to share experiences and learn together as peers.

8. I would also like to highlight the broad scope of the OECD's work and how that can benefit future Forums. Competition policy doesn't exist in a vacuum; it has strong links with other basic pillars of economic development and important policy areas that we have been exploring. The Global Forum on Competition provides an opportunity to share this cross-cutting experience. Thus, you should know that a paper recently issued by our Economics Department suggests that competition in markets has a beneficial effect on the rate of productivity growth and increases overall employment. That paper, reprinted from our Economic Outlook publication, is available to you all. This may have implications for your future work.

9. As the head of the OECD's cluster dealing with development issues, I am particularly interested to enhance co-operation between different policy communities. Along those lines, I would welcome increased contact and dialogue between development agencies responsible for promoting development co-operation, and competition authorities, to enhance mutual understanding of the role that effective competition policy can play in promoting economic growth for developing as well as most developed countries. The OECD is working to promote what we call "policy coherence for development," which means working to promote mutual reinforcement among a range of policies, such as trade, investment, and competition, in the interest of enhancing the economies of developing countries to ensure that the benefits of globalisation are shared by all. When you reply to the questionnaire, I would be interested to hear your feedback on this question as well: whether the Global Forum on Competition can be used to enhance this

kind of cross-cutting thinking. You may also wish to bring this to the attention of bilateral donors, perhaps through co-operation with our Development Assistance Committee.

10. Looking forward, I believe the importance of what we will be discussing in the coming two days cannot be over-estimated. We live in a world with enormous potential. However, we face ever increasing threats to a sustainable social, environmental and economic development. Political instability and poverty may reinforce each other in a vicious circle. Fortunately, the developed world has begun to come together to forge an international development agenda that reflects the input of the developing world. In this regard, there appears to be broad acceptance of the proposition that economic growth spearheaded by competition, investment and entrepreneurship is the way to fight poverty and enhance public welfare. Economic reform guided by competition principles creates competitive markets, and effective competition law enforcement prevents attempts to eliminate or undermine the benefits of market reform and trade liberalisation through private anti-competitive conduct.

11. With that observation, I will conclude my remarks and wish you all a fruitful meeting, hoping that the presentations and discussions will be of relevance to you in your important work promoting competition in your countries. I also hope that you in return will help us with suggestions on the future work of the Global Forum on Competition, to the benefit of the global economy, your national economies, and all of your citizens.

10. I would like to emphasise that the OECD is more and more opened to economies beyond its membership. We value the dialogue with non Members and mutual learnings. Peer review is a very successful way to discuss policy options and challenges against benchmarks and best practices we have established. I wish you good luck and very productive discussions.