OECD Organises First Global Forum on Competition, Paris, 17-18 October

Technological innovation and global integration create valuable opportunities for efficiency and growth in all economies. To realise these benefits, however, governments must create the right framework for encouraging efficient competition while deterring abuses. The OECD’s new Global Forum on Competition, which will hold its first meeting in Paris on 17-18 October 2001, is designed to help governments develop such frameworks.

For decades, the OECD's Committee on Competition Law and Policy (CLP) has provided a forum for discussing ways of countering anti-competitive government regulations and corporate behaviour in order to ensure that markets benefit society as a whole. But today's opportunities also bring new challenges for experienced competition officials as it becomes more common that competition problems in one country or region have effects in other areas.

These same challenges also confront officials in economies with new competition authorities and those that do not have such authorities. While OECD and other capacity-building programmes assist such officials as they begin competition enforcement programmes or prepare competition laws, the new need for more widespread co-operation and other emerging challenges require higher-level policy dialogue.

The OECD Global Forum on Competition will stimulate such policy dialogue within a greatly expanded network of government officials with competition-related responsibilities. For the first time ever, high-level officials from approximately 20 transition and developing economies will start a regular, informal, interactive dialogue with their counterparts from 30 OECD Members (plus the European Union) and the five Observers to the CLP Committee -- Argentina, Brazil, Israel, Lithuania, and Russia. The invited economies are: Bulgaria, Chile, China, Egypt, Estonia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Latvia, Malaysia, Morocco, Peru, Romania, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Zambia.

The Forum will open at 9.00 am on 17 October with keynote speeches by EU Competition Commissioner Mario Monti; the Chief of the Antitrust Division of the US Department of Justice, Charles James; and the Secretary General of UNCTAD, Rubens Ricupero. The rest of the morning will focus on the role of competition policy in economic reform, the roles and tools of competition authorities in implementing reform, and instruments of international co-operation. The Business and Industry Advisory Committee, which provides the OECD’s official link to the business community, Consumers International, and the International Bar Association will participate in these sessions. Subsequent sessions will be restricted to representatives of governments and international organisations and will address specific law enforcement issues -- Hard Core Cartels, and Merger Enforcement -- and the topics, organisation, etc. of future meetings, including the next Forum which is expected to take place in February 2002.
The Forum will be open to the media on 17 October from 9.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. At 1.00 p.m., keynote speakers and OECD officials will be available to respond to journalists’ questions at a Media Briefing, after which journalists are also invited to the buffet lunch for all participants. The Chairman of the OECD Committee on Competition Law and Policy, Frédéric Jenny, will brief journalists at the end of the two-day Forum at 1.00 p.m. on 18 October.

For further information and to register for the briefings, journalists are invited to contact Nicholas Bray in the OECD’s Media Relations Division (tel. 33 1 45 24 80 90 or nicholas.bray@oecd.org).