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Report of the Team of Bangladesh Competition Commission headed by the Chairperson on its Tour to the Asian Development Bank, Philippines from 22 to 25 March 2023

A two-member team of Bangladesh Competition Commission, having conducted an international tour to the Republic of the Philippines from 22 to 25 March 2023, reports as follows:

1. INTRODUCTION

The chairperson of Bangladesh Competition Commission was invited along with an officer to attend the international workshop on 'Designing Competition Policy for Economic Development in Asia' jointly arranged by Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) from 23-24 March 2023 at the premises of Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines. Delegates from the Competition Commission of other countries like Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Thailand, Pakistan and Philippines were invited to this workshop. Apart from the representatives of the Competition Commission of some Asian countries, high officials of Asian Development Bank like **Mr. Bruce Gosper**, Vice President (Administration and Corporate Management), Asian Development Bank; **Mr. Albert Park**, Chief Economist, Asian Development Bank; **Mr. Yasuyuki Sawada**, Ex-Chief Economist, Asian Development Bank and **Mr. Tetsushi Sonobe**, Dean and CEO, Asian Development Bank Institute were present at the workshop.

ADB and ADBI jointly conducted some research activities on some prominent issues related to competition policy and Competition Commission. These researches have been conducted by the emeritus professor/faculty members of renowned universities, officers and professionals of several competition commissions and senior economist/economist/research assistant of ADB and ADBI. The universities which involved in the research are Duke University, CalTech, Australian National University, University of Hawaii Manoa, University of Tokyo, University of the Philippines, East China Normal University and San Sebastian College Recoletos Manila. Japan Fair Trade Commission and Philippines Competition Commission were engaged in this research activities. Output of these research papers were put together and was published as a book which has thirteen chapters. Each chapter contains the article of a single research paper.

1.1. Delegation

The delegation comprised of the following individuals:

Mr. Pradip Ranjan Chakraborty, Chairperson, Bangladesh Competition Commission
Mr. RHM Alaol Kabir, Deputy Director (Senior Assistant Secretary)

We attended the workshop at the headquarters of ADB from 23 to 24 March 2023.

1.2. Purpose of the Workshop of ADB-ADBI

- The workshop on competition policy serves the purpose of providing a forum for experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to exchange ideas, discuss current challenges and opportunities, and explore best practices in the field of competition policy;
- The primary goal of competition policy is to promote and maintain a competitive market environment, which is essential for fostering innovation, improving efficiency, and promoting consumer welfare. A workshop on competition policy can help participants better understand the economic principles that underlie competition policy, as well as the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern competition policy in different jurisdictions;
- In this workshop on competition policy, participants can share their experiences and insights on various aspects of competition policy, such as market definition, market power, anti-competitive practices, mergers and acquisitions, and competition advocacy. Participants can also explore the challenges posed by emerging digital technologies, globalization, and other factors that affect competition in different sectors;
- By bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise, a workshop on competition policy can help participants develop a deeper understanding of the complexities of competition policy and identify effective strategies for promoting competition and innovation in different markets. The insights gained from a workshop on competition policy can inform policy development and implementation, and ultimately contribute to the promotion of consumer welfare and economic growth.

One of the prime objectives of this workshop was to take comment and feedback from the representatives of the competition commissions of some Asian countries. The workshop was designed in a very productive where specific time was allocated to have discussions on each chapter. At the beginning of the discussion of each chapter, the authors of the chapter were allowed twenty minutes to present the paper in front of the audience followed by a panel discussion by the delegation of the competition commission of two countries to have some inciteful thoughts and comments on that chapter. After that the floor was opened for the audience to put questions to raise concerns and to provide specific comments and feedbacks.

The design of the workshop is as follows-



ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK



**Designing Competition Policy for Economic Development in Asia
Manila Workshop
23-24 March 2023 | Auditoriums 1 and 2
Asian Development Bank Headquarters, Philippines**

PROGRAM

March 23 – Day 1		
Time	Presentation	Speaker
Welcome Panel		
09:00am – 09:05am	Welcome Remarks	Bruce Gosper Vice President Administration and Corporate Management Asian Development Bank
09:05am – 09:15am	Opening Remarks	Albert Park Chief Economist and Director General Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department (ERCD) Asian Development Bank Tetsushi Sonobe Dean and CEO Asian Development Bank Institute
09:15am – 09:25am	Project Overview	Arsenio Balisacan Secretary National Economic and Development Authority
09:25am – 09:35am	Group Photo (Venue: Courtyard)	
Session 1	Moderator: Joseph Zveglic Deputy Chief Economist, ERCD, Asian Development Bank	
09:35am – 09:55am	Competition Policy in Theory and Practice (Chapter 2)	James Roumasset , Majah-Leah Ravago, and Arsenio Balisacan
09:55am – 10:15am	Diffusion and Adaptation of Competition Policy in Asia (Chapter 3)	Reiko Aoki, Toshiko Igarashi, Takayuki Kai, Eri Satake, Tetsushi Sonobe , Yasuyuki Sawada , and Shintaro Ueda
10:15am – 10:45am	Discussant for Chapter 2 (7 mins) Discussant for Chapter 3 (7 mins) Open Discussion (16 mins)	Timothy Ker (online) Principal Adviser, Advisory & International Affairs Hong Kong Competition Commission Tigran Markosyan Member Competition Protection Commission Republic of Armenia
10:45am – 10:55am	Coffee Break	

March 23 – Day 1		
Time	Presentation	Speaker
10:55am – 11:15am	Should Competition Laws in Asia be Redesigned to Improve Economic Outcomes? (Chapter 4)	Robert Ian McEwin
11:15am – 11:35am	Pillars of Competition Policy (Chapter 5)	Arsenio Balisacan, Danilo Lorenzo Atanacio , and Leonila Papa
11:35am – 12:05pm	Discussant for Chapter 4 (7 mins) Discussant for Chapter 5 (7 mins) Open Discussion (16 mins)	Mulyawan Ranamenggala Director of Economy Indonesia Competition Commission Rahat Kaunain Hassan Chairperson Competition Commission of Pakistan
12:05pm – 01:30pm	Lunch (Venue: Private Dining Room, 2nd floor)	
Session 2	Moderator: Yesim Elhan-Kayalar Advisor, ERCD, Asian Development Bank	
01:35pm – 01:55pm	The Structure, Conduct and Performance of Competition Agencies (Chapter 6)	Majah-Leah Ravago , James Roumasset, Arsenio Balisacan, and J. Kathleen Magadia
01:55pm – 02:15pm	An Effective Regulatory Environment to Foster Domestic Market Competition in Asia (Chapter 7)	Graciela Miralles Murciego and Roberto Galang
02:15pm – 02:45pm	Discussant for Chapter 6 (7 mins) Discussant for Chapter 7 (7 mins) Open Discussion (16 mins)	Isikeli Tikoduadua Chairperson Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission Lolibeth Ramit-Medrano Commissioner Philippine Competition Commission
02:45pm – 03:05pm	Competition, Digitalization & Innovation, and Economic Performance in Asia (Chapter 8)	Atsuko Izumi, Yasuyuki Sawada , Yasutora Watanabe , and Yesim Elhan-Kayalar
03:05pm – 03:25pm	The Impact of Competition on Poverty and Inequality: The Philippine Case using a Microsimulation Method (Chapter 9)	Karl Jandoc , Geoffrey Ducanes, and Irene Jo Arzadon
03:25pm – 03:55pm	Discussant for Chapter 8 (7 mins)	Suglegmaa Javchigdamba Head of Administration Department Authority for Fair Competition and Consumer Protection of Mongolia

March 23 – Day 1		
Time	Presentation	Speaker
	Discussant for Chapter 9 (7 mins) Open Discussion (16 mins)	Pradip Ranjan Chakraborty Chairperson Bangladesh Competition Commission
03:55pm – 04:10pm	Coffee break	
Panel Discussion	Moderator: Yasuyuki Sawada Professor, University of Tokyo	
04:10pm – 05:30pm	Competition Policy: Perspectives from Policymakers and Regulators <i>Panelists: (in alphabetical order)</i> Atty. Michael Aguinaldo Chairperson Philippine Competition Commission Hon. Arsenio Balisacan Secretary National Economic and Development Authority Hon. Stella Luz Quimbo Representative Marikina City 2 nd District and former PCC Commissioner Tetsushi Sonobe Dean and CEO Asian Development Bank Institute	
05:30pm – 07:30pm	Reception (Venue: Courtyard)	

March 24 – Day 2		
Time	Presentation	Speaker
Session 3	Moderator: Peter Morgan Senior Consulting Economist and Advisor to the Dean, Asian Development Bank Institute	
09:00am – 09:10am	Overview of Day 1 discussions	
09:10am – 09:30am	E-Commerce Dynamics and its Role during COVID-19 Pandemic (Chapter 13)	Yasuyuki Sawada, Yesim Elhan-Kayalar, Matthew Shum, and Daniel Xu
09:30am – 09:50am	Competition Issues in the Financial Sector in Asia (Chapter 11)	Peter Morgan (online)
09:50am – 10:20am	Discussant for Chapter 13 (7 mins)	Pattama Teanravisitsagool Commissioner Trade Competition Commission of Thailand

March 24 – Day 2		
Time	Presentation	Speaker
	Discussant for Ch 11 (7 mins) Open Discussion (16 mins)	Iskandar Ismail (online) Chief Executive Officer Malaysia Competition Commission
10:20am – 10:30am	Coffee Break	
10:30am – 10:50am	E-Commerce, COVID-19 Pandemic, and Industry Dynamics in Two-Sided Market: A Case of a Digital Food Delivery Platform in PRC (Chapter 12)	Xiaolan Zhou, Yasuyuki Sawada , Matthew Shum, and Elaine Tan
10:50am – 11:10am	Concentration in the Food Market: Studies in South & Southeast Asia (Chapter 10)	Tetsushi Sonobe and Takayuki Kai
11:10am – 11:40am	Discussant for Ch 12 (7 mins) Discussant for Chapter 10 (7 mins) Open Discussion (16 mins)	Albert Park Chief Economist and Director General, ERCD Asian Development Bank Sopanha Sroy Director, Department of Halal Consumer Protection Competition and Fraud Repression Directorate-General of Cambodia
11:40am – 11:50am	Concluding Remarks	Yasuyuki Sawada Professor University of Tokyo
12:00pm – 01:30pm	Lunch (Venue: Private Dining Room, 2nd floor)	

Note: The workshop will be conducted in hybrid format, in ADB Auditoriums 1-2 and on Zoom platform. The language of the workshop will be English.

List of Chapter Authors (in alphabetical order)

	Name	Chapter	Institutional Affiliation	Title
1	Aoki, Reiko	3	Japan Fair Trade Commission	Commissioner
2	Atanacio, Danilo Lorenzo	5	National Economic and Development Authority	Technical Assistant to the Secretary
3	Balisacan, Arsenio	1,2,5,6	National Economic and Development Authority	Secretary
4	Ducanes, Geoffrey	9	Ateneo de Manila University	Associate Professor
5	Elhan-Kayalar, Yesim	1, 8, 13	Asian Development Bank	Advisor, Office of the Chief Economist and Director General, ERCD
6	Galang, Roberto	7	Ateneo de Manila University	Dean, John Gokongwei School of Management
7	Honda, Jun	3	Japan Fair Trade Commission	Deputy Director, Economic Analysis Office
8	Igarashi, Toshiko	3	Japan Fair Trade Commission	Director, Economic Analysis Office
9	Izumi, Atsuko	8	UTokyo Economic Consulting	Senior Economist
10	Jandoc, Karl	9	University of the Philippines	Associate Professor
11	Kai, Takayuki	10	Asian Development Bank Institute	Research Assistant
12	Magadia, J.Kathleen	6	Asian Development Bank	Consultant
13	McEwin, Robert Ian	4	Australian National University	Professor
14	Morgan, Peter	11	Asian Development Bank Institute	Senior Consulting Economist and Advisor to the Dean
15	Murciego, Graciela Miralles	7	World Bank Group	Senior Economist
16	Papa, Leonila	5	Graduate School of Law, San Sebastian College Recoletos Manila	Assistant Professor
17	Ravago, Majah-Leah	1,2,6	Ateneo de Manila University	Associate Professor
18	Roumasset, James	1,2,6	University of Hawaii Manoa	Professor Emeritus
19	Satake, Eri		University of Tokyo	Research Assistant
20	Sawada, Yasuyuki	1,3,8,12,13	University of Tokyo	Professor
21	Shimada, Etsusaku	3	Japan Fair Trade Commission	Assistant Director, Economic Analysis Office
22	Shum, Matthew	13	CalTech	Professor
23	Sonobe, Tetsushi	1,3,10	Asian Development Bank Institute	Dean and CEO
24	Tan, Elaine	12	Asian Development Bank	Advisor, ERCD and Head, Statistics and Data Innovation Unit

	Name	Chapter	Institutional Affiliation	Title
25	Watanabe, Yasutora	8	UTokyo Economic Consulting	Director
26	Xu, Daniel	13	Duke University	Professor
27	Zhou, Xiaolan	12	East China Normal University	Zijiang Endorsed Researcher
28	Ueda, Shintaro	3	Japan Fair Trade Commission	Deputy Director, Economic Analysis Office

2. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE WORKSHOP

Chapter 9 titled ‘The Impact of Competition on Poverty and Inequality: The Philippine Case using a Microsimulation Method’ was the assigned topic to us for providing prudent comment. Comments of hon’ble chairperson of Bangladesh Competition Commission are as follows-

In Chapter 9, the Welfare and Competition (WELCOM) microsimulation tool is used to examine the case of two products, rice and telecommunications of Philippine, how changes in market concentration affect distribution i.e. to quantify how poverty and inequality changes by moving from an oligopolistic structure to perfect competition.

First of all, I want to share my views regarding WELCOM tool. According to the poverty and equity note number 27 of July 2022 of World Bank, WELCOM, an easy-to-use Stata-based package with minimum data requirements, was conceived as part of larger World Bank efforts to better understand how competition policy can improve market efficiency and reduce poverty, especially in developing countries (WB, Poverty and Equity Notes, July 2022, Number 27). Though this tool has some disadvantages, firstly it only concentrates on the impact on households and secondly it only examines price channels, but it is proved as effective tool to find the correlation between poverty-inequality and perfect competition of the market.

2.1. The Philippine Rice Industry

I would like to draw your kind attention to the current scenario of Philippine Rice Industry. Rice is one of the most essential commodities of Filipinos. About 93.4% of households reported its consumption. Generally, the rice market involves small-scale farmers who sell their produce directly to local traders or middlemen, then sold to wholesalers to connect with the retail market. Some areas have cooperatives to manage the system. And in recent years, large-scale rice traders and processors entered the market to manage the supply domestically and internationally.

2.2. Challenges of Philippine Rice Farmers

1. 69% of farming households were above the poverty threshold, and the average age of farmers was already 56 years old.
2. Farmers face high input costs (i.e., seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation, and machinery), land rent (43% of farmers do not own their land), climate change, and market forces.
3. As Rice from Thailand and Vietnam being cheaper compared to the Philippine local market, rice importation has increased since 2019.
4. The existence of rice cartels among mill operators and wholesalers results in anti-competitive outcomes such as supply tightness and price fixing.
5. High barriers to entry in palay and rice trading, which resulted in market concentration increasing over time.
6. The gross marketing margin is higher in the Philippines compared to Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

2.3. Government Intervention to Address the Challenges

It is categorically mentioned in the chapter that to curb the cartel of the rice market, the government has taken some concrete steps through different government institutions. The following are the initiatives taken by the Filipino government to address the existing market challenges which lead to the concentration of the market and to imperfect competition. The key government interventions are as follows

1. The Department of Agriculture (DA) provides fertilizer and seeds subsidies, machinery, and insurance for farmers during dry and wet seasons.
2. The DA manages the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), which is funded from tariff collections and is dedicated to programs enhancing the yield and production of farmers.
3. The National Food Authority (NFA) is the agency responsible for maintaining sufficient rice buffer stocks to be sourced only from local farmers.
4. The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) and Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) provide technical assistance to help develop high-yielding and cost-reducing technologies for farmers.
5. Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC), and Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) provides Financing support.

6. The PCC probes the rice market system to ensure fairness in competition among suppliers.
7. The Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 includes the sector's improvement of mechanization and infrastructure-building as part of the national agenda.

2.4. The Philippine Telecom Industry

Duopoly existed in the telecom market of Philippine till March 2021. In March 2021, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) gave the nod to third major telco firm in the Philippines, Dito Telecommunity, to roll out its operation commercially. With this landmark development, the Philippines' global ranking for mobile internet speed moved up to 86th from 111th, according to market research firm Ookla. In May 2021, Philippine mobile internet speed was documented at 31.98 Mbps (global average of 54.53 Mbps) and fixed broadband speed at 58.73 Mbps (global average of 105.15 Mbps). By 2025, the number of mobile subscribers in the Philippines will reach 159 million, and broadband subscribers will number 10.8 million. Legacy players Globe and PLDT-Smart will lead the 5G rollout with already a combined 3,669 5G sites in country-wide locations.

Filipino government has adopted some policies towards ensuring competition among three major telco players. Government brought significant change in Philippine telecom regulations. In May 2020, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) published its first guidelines for independent cell tower construction (Common Tower Policy). Besides, government passed amendments in key legislations like the Public Services Act, the Foreign Investments Act, and Retail Liberalization Law, which could all attract more investors in this sector to ensure free market competition.

2.5. Challenges of Philippine Telecom Industry

Until last year, the telecom market in the Philippines was split between the two players that offered similar pricing. Given the dominance of the two telco giants, new entrants did not dare enter the market and challenge Globe Telecom and PLDT. Foreign telco giants too were hesitant due to restrictions on foreign ownership. Due to the lack of competition in the sector, Filipinos have often suffered from disruptive networks and slow internet connections. It is also worth mentioning that the Philippines has the highest number of social media users in the world. Hence, moderate internet speed is sought after by the tech-savvy Philippine population. In terms of internet speed, the Philippines ranked 107 with an average mobile internet speed of around 15 Mbps. This is significantly slower than the global average.

The entry of Dito Telecommunity into the Philippines telecom sector is expected to help better the telecom services in the country. Both Globe Telecom and PDLT will ramp up their services to stay competitive and not lose customers to the new entrant. Also, the introduction of 5G in the Philippines is welcoming news for Filipinos, however, accessibility is going to be an issue, given the country's geography.

2.6. Impact and Price Reduction in Rice

Rice is a staple food where the poor devote a large portion of their budgets. The tool quantifies the change in purchasing power from the decrease in consumer prices brought about by moving from a concentrated market to a hypothetical perfect competition structure. Since rice takes a larger share of total spending for the poor, the distributional impacts are substantial—an upper bound of a 4.85 percentage point drop in poverty headcount and a 1.96 point drop in the Gini index.

2.7. Impact and Price Reduction in Telecommunications

Telecommunications services, are mainly consumed by the richer population. The tool quantifies the change in purchasing power from the decrease in consumer prices brought about by moving from a concentrated market to a hypothetical perfect competition structure. Telecommunications services are mainly consumed by the rich and therefore the price decrease brought about by improvements in competition is found to have a modest impact on poverty reduction and has even marginally increased inequality.

2.8. Impact of Competition Policy

The promotion of overall welfare should be the goal of competition policy and overall or total welfare takes into account interactions of many markets and channels. Since the tool only examines the effect on poverty and inequality propagated through change in prices, it is silent on other factors or channels such as those that affect the labor or product markets. For instance, excessive market power may constrain the development of alternative goods and services, as is the case when shopping platform algorithms restrict the choice of consumers or when a group of firms shut out the development of cheaper product substitutes. Better competition policy could therefore facilitate the development of new and cheaper products as it limits anti-competitive practices. Hence, in the context of the telecommunications sector, competition may spur more technological (e.g., better internet speed) or marketing (e.g. value added services such as digital finance) changes that could benefit consumers—even the poor—in the long run.

Better competition can affect employment and wages, which could also affect income distribution beyond the price channel. In the case of telecommunications, better service quality from increased competition can affect the entry of entrepreneurs, decrease costs of existing businesses, or even improve human capital through more efficient communication, as well as through faster acquisition and processing of information.

2.9. Rice Industry of Bangladesh

The story of rice industry of Philippines' is almost similar to the story of rice industry of Bangladesh. Rice is not just the staple food of Bangladesh it is also the center of the overall life of Bangladeshis. Rice contributes two-thirds of the total caloric need of the country and is the source of half of the country's protein intake. It provides nearly 48% of rural employment, about two-third of total calorie supply and about one-half of the total protein intake of an average person in the country. Rice sector contributes one-half of the agricultural GDP and one-sixth of the national income in Bangladesh.

1. According to the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, the country's annual consumption requirement of rice is 35 million tons. where Bangladesh produce 37.4 million tons in 2020 as per an official figure which means Bangladesh is self-dependent in rice.
2. According to a study of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the government buys significant portion of paddy directly from farmers to ensure fair price. This initiative eventually contributes to stabilizing the price as and when necessary and help people in the low-income bracket.
3. The government has taken the initiative to digitalize the whole system of rice stocking which will bring transparency and will provide real-time information about the stock, both at the public and private level.
4. Through Department of Food run several schemes for lower tier people of the society to protect them from price vulnerability. Open market sale (OMS) of rice is being sold to the poor and marginal people at huge discounted price. Besides Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) scheme is there for the vulnerable group of the society. These initiatives contribute to the price control of the food prices in local market specially the price of rice.
5. The Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) went for huge procurement and marketing of fertilizers, small-scale agricultural equipment, and production and marketing of improved varieties of seeds which significantly contributes to eliminate market oligopoly of fertilizer and seed market and also the market of small-scale agricultural equipment.
6. Fertilizers are distributed to the farmers with heavy subsidies in order to promote food productions specially rice productions. Fertilizer subsidy accounted for a third of the public-sector agriculture development budget.

7. Government is heavily facilitating the expansion of irrigation to the high yielding area specially to the drought area. They have been successful in protecting coastal and river belt areas from flooding and saline water intrusion but have played a minor role in irrigation development. The liberalization of the market for small-scale irrigation equipment contributed to

- a) mobilization of private savings for investment in irrigation,
- b) elimination of delays in installing equipment and repair and maintenance that the farmers experienced earlier due to bureaucratic procedures and rent-seeking in the public sector,
- c) increased competition in the water market leading to a decline in water charges, and
- d) expansion in capacity utilization of machines in years of favourable rice prices.

2.10. Telecom Industry of Bangladesh

The mobile market in Bangladesh has proliferated over the last ten years. The last ten years have seen a dramatic shift in consumer needs. These years have seen a rise in the demand for high-specification gadgets due to the rapid adoption of smartphones. According to a GSMA report, the number of unique users rose to 90 million in 2020 from 47 million in 2010 (an increase of over 90%). By the end of last year, Bangladesh had a penetration rate of 54% for unique subscribers and 101% for all connections, with some users holding multiple connections.

Mobile connectivity positively affects the country's GDP and productivity. Millions of people use their mobile devices as their main method of internet access. The mobile industry delivers life-improving advantages, including access to educational institutions and financial services. Agricultural production is getting increased with the use of mobile services. The rising dependence on mobile phones and internet access, the number of mobile phone connections has been growing by more than 10 million in the most recent last calendar year, the highest in three years. According to data from the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, there were around 181 million active mobile phone connections at the end of December 2021 compared to 170.1 million a year earlier. The total active mobile phone connections of four major mobile phone providers grew by 10.9 million in 2021. There are more than 180 million mobile phone connections, which is about the same as the country's total population. More new connections are expected as the nation enters the age of the internet of things. The launch of fifth-generation, or 5G, mobile phone services might speed up the growth of mobile phone connections across the nation.

3. Discussions on the Competition Policy

It was one of the significant discussions that how the competition policy should look like. Some excellent comments have been provided by the resource persons and a

healthy discussion took place where almost everyone put emphasis on the important of the competition policy and its implementation. The speakers pointed out that why competition policy is crucial for the welfare of the people. According to the voice of the resource persons competition policy is important in countries for several reasons:

1. Encourages innovation and efficiency: Competition policy ensures that firms are not able to monopolize markets or collude with competitors, which encourages them to innovate and increase efficiency. This benefits consumers by providing them with better products and services at lower prices.
2. Promotes fair trade: Competition policy ensures that businesses compete fairly, which promotes fair trade and helps prevent anti-competitive practices such as price-fixing, bid-rigging, and market allocation.
3. Fosters economic growth: Competition policy can foster economic growth by promoting competition and creating a level playing field for businesses. This can lead to increased productivity, investment, and employment opportunities.
4. Protects consumers: Competition policy helps protect consumers from exploitation by firms with market power. It can prevent businesses from charging excessive prices or engaging in other anti-competitive behavior that harms consumers.
5. Encourages foreign investment: A strong competition policy can encourage foreign investment by creating a predictable and stable business environment. This can lead to increased economic activity and job creation.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Quality discussions took place in this workshop where resources persons emphasized on the active role of the competition commission. It was suggested that the key role of the competition commission should be the enforcement of competition law and promotion of competition in the market. One of the other key roles is to ensure that firms compete fairly and that consumers are not harmed by anti-competitive behavior. Following are some concrete recommendations which drew our attention in the workshop-

- Investigating anti-competitive behavior: The competition commission investigates cases of anti-competitive behavior such as price-fixing, market allocation, bid-rigging, abuse of dominance, and mergers and acquisitions that may harm competition.

- Enforcing competition law: The competition commission enforces competition law by taking appropriate action against firms engaged in anti-competitive behavior, such as imposing fines, prohibiting mergers or acquisitions, and ordering the divestiture of assets.
- Promoting competition: The competition commission promotes competition in the market by educating businesses and consumers about competition law and encouraging fair competition practices.
- Conducting market studies: The competition commission may conduct market studies to identify competition issues in specific markets and make recommendations for improvements.
- Advising government: The competition commission may advise the government on competition policy and regulatory issues, including the development of new legislation and regulations.

Overall, the role of the competition commission is to promote competition in the market, protect consumers from anti-competitive behavior, and ensure a level playing field for businesses to compete fairly.