

SYMPOSIUM ON TRADE IN PRIMARY PRODUCTS AND COMPETITION POLICY

September 22, 2011, Geneva, Switzerland

OBJECTIVE

To enhance understanding about the existing challenges in the functioning of primary product markets so as to evolve a comprehensive economic governance regime to address anti-competitive behaviour and other related concerns.

BACKGROUND

Primary product markets are complex in their structure and susceptible to a variety of factors that are seen to cause volatilities in their prices. Not much has been understood about the factors determining such fluctuations as well as anti-competitive practices prevalent in such markets that ultimately raise the costs and adversely affect national economic development.

A sound theoretical understanding of the market structure and the distortions therein is critical in understanding market dysfunctions and governance challenges in the primary product markets. This is an imperative along with the objective of designing a sound domestic competition policy framework so as to successfully target such market imperfections. Such policy options should be looked at how they complement the relevant WTO agreements.

AGENDA

The following issues will be covered in different thematic sessions:

- Understanding how primary (agricultural and mineral) product markets work
- Anti-competitive practices and market structures in primary product markets
- Governance of primary product markets and its impact on developing countries
- Systemic issues and policy options for the future

CONTEXT

Against this background, on Thursday, the 22nd of September 2011, CUTS International will be organizing a Symposium on Trade in Primary Product Markets and Competition Policy in Room W of Centre William Rappard, Geneva. The event, being organized by CUTS International with the generous support of Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR) and Agence Française de Développement (AFD), will follow the annual WTO Public Symposium (to be held in Geneva on 19-21, September 2011).

The Symposium will witness a high-level participation of experts in trade and competition issues from different parts of the world representing multilateral institutions, governments, academic community and civil society. There are over 20 experts participating as speakers and discussants. The event and its outputs are targeted at the global trade and competition community, including the Geneva-based trade and development community.

The papers presented at the event will be published in the form of an E-book by CEPR, while the proceedings will be published by CUTS.

For further details and clarifications, please contact:

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