



Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy
18th Session, 10 - 12 July 2019, Geneva, Switzerland

**Roundtable on:
Competition issues in the digital economy**

**Thursday, 11 July 2019 (10:00 - 13:00 and 15:00 - 16:00)
Palais des Nations, Room XVII (First Floor)**

The seventeenth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGE) on Competition Law and Policy requested UNCTAD to prepare a study on this issue.¹ Developments in technology and innovation have facilitated our lives in various ways, making everything just “a click away”. Big technology companies, which dominate the digital economy, have penetrated all spheres of our lives from shopping to social interaction. Apple, Alphabet (Google), Amazon and Facebook replaced big oil and gas, and telecommunications firms in the top ten global companies based on market capitalization by 2018. Despite their benefits, digital platforms have gained great control over consumers’ data, which have conferred them market power. This has raised not only competition but also consumer protection and privacy concerns. Many countries have been looking into these platforms’ market power and looking for ways to deal with the challenges arising therefrom.

This background note focuses on the features specific to digital platforms and their implications for competition law and policy. It identifies the areas, where there is need for adapting competition laws or tools to deal with the challenges arising from dominant digital platforms. The note presents some policy options for protecting and promoting competition in the digital economy.

This roundtable session will discuss the following questions:

- a) What are the features specific to digital platform and their business models? What makes them different from offline businesses?
- b) Are the existing competition laws and competition tools adequate to address the competition concerns, related to abuse of market power and merger control, arising from dominant online platforms?
- c) Do competition authorities need to change their approach to competition law analysis and enforcement?
- d) Should online platforms be regulated to ensure their neutrality as well as open and fair access for all businesses, and to provide for a level playing field?
- e) What are competition law enforcement challenges faced by and experiences of developing countries’ competition authorities?

¹ TD/B/C.I/CLP/57

**Roundtable on:
Competition issues in the digital economy**

Thursday, 11 July 2019 (10:00 - 13:00 and 15:00 - 16:00)
Palais des Nations, Room XVII (First Floor)

WORK PROGRAMME

10:00 - 10:10 **Presentation by the UNCTAD secretariat**

10:10 - 12:00 **Panel Discussion:**

Competition law and policy in the digital era – Need for change?

Panelists

- Mr. Francis Kariuki, Director General, Competition Authority of Kenya
- Mr. Johannes Benjamin R. Bernabe, Commissioner, Philippines Competition Commission
- Mr. Henri Piffaut, Vice-President, French Competition Authority
- Mr. Massimiliano Kadar, Deputy Head of Unit C.1 (antitrust in telecoms), Directorate General for Competition, European Commission
- Ms. Silke Hossenfelder, Head, General Policy Division, Federal Cartel Office, Germany
- Mr. Frederic Jenny, Chairman, Competition Committee, OECD
- Mr. Philip Marsden, Professor, College of Europe; Deputy Chair, Enforcement Decision Making Committee Bank of England, United Kingdom
- Mr. Russell Damtoft, Associate Director, Office of International Affairs, Federal Trade Commission, United States of America
- Ms. Gabrielle Ford, General Manager, Advocacy, International and Agriculture, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

12:00 - 13:00 **Interactive debate**

13:00 – 15:00 **Lunch break**

15:00 – 15:30 **Panel Discussion (cont'd)**

15:30 – 16:00 **Interactive debate**

Delegates who would like to speak during the session are invited to inform the UNCTAD secretariat by contacting Ms. Ebru Gokce Dessemond (ebru.gokce@un.org).