

Competition at the heart of national development in Mali

30th September 2008, Bamako

“The Malian government is increasingly placing competition issues at the core of its economic and social programmes”, submitted a senior official of the DNCC (national competition authority in Mali), recently at an event in the University of Bamako. He was speaking at a national stakeholders’ meeting to discuss the prevailing competition regime in the country, jointly organised by the Department of Social Science (FLAHS), University of Bamako (Mali) and CUTS International (India).

This meeting was organised to share the objectives and approach of a recently launched project entitled, ‘*Strengthening Constituencies for Effective Competition Regimes in Select West African Countries*’ (referred to as the 7Up4 project). The project aims to identify factors hindering evolution of an effective competition regime in the country and assist national stakeholders to trace a path for its effective implementation. Right from a very early stage, this project aims to identify key constituencies in the country with an interest on competition issues and motivate them to engage closely with the process of evolving a functional competition regime by involving them in research, outreach and advocacy.

The Department of Social Science (FLAHS) scholars had developed a draft country essay on competition in Mali with inputs from DNCC to facilitate the discussions. The event provided a scope for sharing this paper with these stakeholders, and to subsequently refine it further. Speaking at the inaugural, Secretary General of FLAHS expressed the keen interest of the University in this project and his hope that the activities will improve understanding of competition issues in the country, and promote a culture of competition in the economy.

Representing the DNCC, Oumar Idriss Berthe reassured the participants that the legal framework related to competition has been thoroughly reformed in 2007 (by the adoption of a refined law); and that the Malian government is increasingly placing competition issues at the heart of its economic and social development programs. The 7UP4 project, he said, came at the right time and shall supplement the government’s efforts in prioritising competition issues in the national development agenda of the country.

In the preliminary paper an emphasis has been put on the main economic reforms undertaken in Mali and their interaction with competition. Salient provisions of the new law (2007) were also shared with the stakeholders, especially to underscore the role that the competition authority would play in dealing with anti-competitive behaviour in markets.

Representatives from sectoral regulators (telecommunication and electricity) and consumers associations (ASCOMA) and (REDECOMA) welcomed the project. The project envisages establishing a National Reference Group (NRG), comprising of national stakeholders with a keen interest on competition policy, regulatory issues and consumer protection. Many participants expressed their interest in joining this group and contributing towards operationalising competition in the Malian markets.