

CUTS-CIRC Biennial Conference on Competition, Regulation and Development

A Brief Note

The CUTS-CIRC Biennial Competition Regulation and Development Conference series started in 2007. Since then, such Conference has been organised every two years, except for 2009, which was dropped due to resource constraints. Every time, the themes of the Biennial had been carefully chosen by considering, among other things, its relevance to developing countries, its currency and its connection with development, competition and regulation.

The idea for this Biennial series was conceived in the backdrop of developing countries concerns of frequent regulatory failures that undermine the capacity to achieve policies important to citizens and consumers. Such failures are due to persistent and common patterns of over-regulation, under-regulation, poorly designed regulation and implementation as well as weak institutional capacities.

The **1st Biennial** in 2007 discussed about political economy and governance constraints that developing countries face in implementing their competition and regulatory regimes. Two volumes of papers were also published; one of them is available on CUTS website.¹

The chosen theme for the **2nd Biennial** in 2011 was “Reviewing the Global Experience with Economic Regulation”, where the idea was to showcase the heterogeneity of approaches in different countries vis-à-vis the rationale for economic regulation and methodology for its evaluation; regulatory frameworks; and approaches for achieving regulatory coherence, etc.²

The **3rd Biennial** in 2013 deliberated upon “Competition Reforms: Emerging Challenges in a Globalising World”. CUTS strongly believes that competition reforms should be pursued to level the playing field and prevent interest groups and individuals from controlling the market.³ This Biennial triggered a lively global debate on “Should Competition Policy and Law be blind to equity?”, which was documented and later published in the form of a book.⁴

The **4th Biennial** in 2015 was held for the first-time outside India (all the previous were held in Delhi). It was held in Nairobi, Kenya. Its theme, “Competition Reforms in Key Markets for Enhancing Social & Economic Welfare in Developing Countries”, was basically the outcome

¹ http://www.cuts-international.org/pdf/Politics_Trumps_Economics.pdf

² <https://cuts-ccier.org/international-conference-on-reviewing-the-global-experience-with-economic-regulation/#>

³ <https://cuts-ccier.org/3rd-biennial-international-conference-on-competition-reformsemerging-challenges-in-a-globalising-world/>

⁴ https://cuts-ccier.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Should_Competition_Policy_and_Law-Full.pdf

of a project (CREW Project⁵), which was carried out in four countries: Ghana, India, The Philippines and Zambia across two common sectors: Staple Food and Passenger Transport. A publication came out from this Biennial, which is available on the CUTS website.⁶

The deliberations at Nairobi lead us into the Sustainable Development ecosystem – a baton that was carried into the **5th Biennial**, for which the theme was “Fostering Innovation for Sustainable Development – Revisiting Intellectual Property Rights and Competition from the Lens of Optimal Regulation”. This was held in 2017 in Jaipur, India. A compendium of papers presented during the Biennial was published in the form of a compendium.⁷

The **6th Biennial**, held in New Delhi in 2019, deliberated upon the theme “Making Competition and Regulatory Regimes Matter in Increasingly Online Developing World”. Taking into account the novel regulatory challenges that digitalisation of economies posed, the conference discussed the current state of competition and regulation regimes in developing economies, challenges posed and opportunities offered by such digitalisation, and policy and implementation innovations required to make them matter for sustainable development.⁸

Viewing the unprecedented socio-economic adverse effect around the world that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought exposing the already increasing inequalities within and between countries, the theme for **7th Biennial** was chosen as “Building Blocks for an Inclusive and Resilient Economy”. The Biennial, which for the first time was organised virtually on 16-17 November 2021, aimed to discuss about a development paradigm that would result in a resilient and inclusive economy. A conference volume was published during the Biennial⁹. The conference report is also available on the website¹⁰.

The polity and regulators in their endeavours, therefore, ought to prioritise socially sensitive sectors and issues, such as pharmaceuticals & healthcare, food & agriculture, information & communication, education, jobs etc. In socially sensitive sectors ‘equity’ is as important as ‘investment’ and ‘efficiency’. In this backdrop, the **8th edition** of the Biennial conference will deliberate upon some of the socially sensitive sectors and issues, from the perspective of the global south.

⁵ <https://cuts-ccier.org/competition-reforms-in-key-markets-for-enhancing-social-economic-welfare-in-developing-countries-crew-project-3/>

⁶ https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/Pursuing_Compensation_and_Regulatory_Reforms_for_achieving_SDGs.pdf

⁷ https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/Fostering_Innovation_for_Sustainable_Development.pdf

⁸ <https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/report-6th-biennial-conference.pdf>

⁹ <https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/building-blocks-for-an-inclusive-and-resilient-economy.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/report-7th-cuts-circ-biennial-conference-on-competition-regulation-and-development.pdf>