

7th CUTS-CIRC Biennial Conference on Competition, Regulation & Development

Building Blocks for an Inclusive and Resilient Economy

16-17 November 2021

Call for Papers

CUTS International and CUTS Institute for Regulation & Competition (CIRC) are now calling for papers for its 7th Biennial Conference on Competition, Regulation & Development to be organised virtually on 16-17 November 2021.

The papers should revolve around the main theme of the Biennial i.e., “*Building Blocks for an Inclusive and Resilient Economy*”. Specific focus can be given based on the themes of the four plenary sessions in the Conference (as outlined below).¹ A tentative agenda can be accessed [here](#) for better understanding of the subject matter.

The [CUTS-CIRC Biennial Competition Regulation and Development Conference](#) series started in 2007. Since then, the Conference has been organised every two years (except for 2009) after carefully choosing a theme by considering, among other things, its relevance to developing countries, its currency and its connection with development, competition and regulation. A brief note on previous biennials can be found [here](#).

The themes of the four plenary sessions are outlined below:

1. Growing Market Power and Concentration – Role of Competition and Regulation: The pandemic has hit the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) hard, while at the same time dominant firms seem to gain from this. This phenomenon has further added to the growing concentration and market power in many sectors and markets, particularly in the digital sector. At a time when job creation is the prime agenda for governments around the world, such growing market power and market concentration can pose big hurdles and consequently add to the growing economic inequality. How should competition policy respond to such a situation? Whether competition enforcement would be sufficient to deal with it, or we need a whole-of- government approach? What types of regulations could aid in solving this problem?

¹ Please note that the questions posed are not exclusive but indicative. Thus, deviation is acceptable and encouraged provided it is within the spirit of the given session themes.

2. Equitable Access to Covid-19 Healthcare: Equitable worldwide access to covid-19 vaccines is necessary for economic growth and trade to bounce back, says the WTO Chief. While initial trade restrictions during the pandemic have been largely rolled back, newer export controls related to vaccines and relevant drugs have surfaced. Further, the WHO has warned against ‘Vaccine Nationalism’ as the same can hinder wider equitable access. The age-old debate on ‘Intellectual Property (IP) and Access to Health’ is also in vogue, fuelled by the India-South Africa’s proposal in the WTO for temporary waiver of IP protections under TRIPs for the prevention, containment, or treatment of covid-19. Why equitable access to covid-19 healthcare is important for global economic recovery? What are the hurdles, IP and non-IP, to equitable access, and what are the ways to mitigate such hurdles? How can competition policy be used to enhance equitable access?
3. E-Commerce as a Vehicle for An Inclusive Global Economy: Not only has e-commerce benefited consumers during the pandemic, it has also been realised as an aid to build a resilient and inclusive economy. Since, e-commerce has the potential to expand the outreach, including exports, of small businesses and women entrepreneurs, it can bring-in much desired inclusivity in an economy. However, the prevailing digital divide – lack of internet access and digital capacity – could enhance inequality within and between countries. Growing concentration and market power in the digital space is also a concern. What are the contours of an inclusive e-commerce ecosystem? Whether competition concerns in the e-commerce space poses hurdles in achieving economic inclusivity? Is competition enforcement per se sufficient in dealing with prevailing competition concerns, or there is a need for ex ante regulation(s)? What are the barriers to cross-border e-commerce and how can they be addressed? Does promoting the creation of national champions in digital markets, including e-commerce, an optimal way forward?
4. Creating More Income Opportunities and Jobs: Hundreds of millions of people have lost their jobs and income opportunities due to pandemic, even more are predicted to be pushed into poverty. Thus, inequality is deepening and threatening not only to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, but also possible law and order problems in many parts of the world. ‘Jobs’ are also central argument for growing ‘nation first’ syndrome and consequent protectionism. What is the emerging global strategy to deal with job scenarios? How growing digitalisation of economies is going to affect job market? Is there a role of competition policy in enhancement of income opportunities?

Submission of Papers

An 800 to 1000 word extended abstract of the paper including research questions, methodology, data used, expected findings and contribution to literature and/or contemporary policy debate etc. along with one-page curriculum vitae and contact details should be submitted initially. Authors of selected abstracts will then be invited to submit full papers of not more than 5000 words (excluding footnotes and bibliography/references).

Publication/Paper Presentation

The selected full papers, after review, will be published as part of a compendium to the 7th Biennial Conference (The Compendium for the 5th Biennial can be accessed [here](#)). A select few papers may also qualify for presentation during the Biennial sessions (held virtually).

Preference will be given to forward looking, innovative and provocative ideas that challenge the status-quo, within the chosen themes. Papers grounded in research and evidence, offering novel insights, and suggesting out-of-box solutions will have greater possibility of selection.

Co-authorship is allowed. If a co-authored paper is selected for presentation, only one of the co- authors will be allowed to present the paper.

Original and published papers are invited. Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches are encouraged, with a focus on competition, regulation, and development.

CUTS and CIRC encourages young and emerging scholars from diverse backgrounds to submit their work. Proposals shall be submitted in English. There is no participation fee for the conference.

Important Dates

Last date for submission of abstracts	31 st July 2021
Review, selection, and intimation to authors	16 th August 2021
Last date for submission of full papers	30 th September 2021
Review and selection of papers for publication and/or presentation	15 th October 2021
7 th CUTS-CIRC Biennial Conference	16 th -17 th November 2021
Post-review submission of final papers	30 th November 2021
Publication of the biennial compendium	31 st December 2021

Contact Us

The abstract, along with the CV, should be sent to:

Ms. Sakhi Shah (skh@cuts.org) and

Mr. Akshay Sharma (aks@cuts.org).