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PRESS RELEASE

COMMEMORATION OF WORLD COMPETITION DAY, 2021

The COMESA Competition Commission ('the Commission') today joins the rest of the world in commemorating World Competition Day under the theme '*Competition policy for an inclusive and resilient economy*'.

There is no doubt that open and competitive markets are key drivers of economic growth and development. Enforcing competition law leads to lowering of the costs for goods and services, improving their quality, increasing consumer choices, enhancing innovation, increasing efficiency and productivity thereby contributing to economic development and growth.

With the understanding of the role of fair competition in ensuring an inclusive and resilient economy, the Commission has been undertaking a number of activities with the aim of enforcing competition law while at the same time being alive to the dynamics of markets and constant changing environment in markets and the world at large.

Notable issues the Commission has handled include Resale Price Maintenance (RPM) and exclusive agreements. RPM practices do not only reduce distributor competitiveness, but they also force customers to pay higher prices while exclusive agreements create entry barriers, decrease the rivalry competition among existing firms.

Furthermore, the Commission in partnership with the Centre for Competition, Regulation and Economic Development (CCRED) of the University of Johannesburg, is conducting a market observatory on how markets are working for small-scale food producers and consumers in Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The market observatory is expected to identify key trends in the region in real time, focusing on issues such as market access, border and transport related problems, and other anti-competitive behaviors. This will support initiatives at national and regional level to improve storage, logistics, competition, infrastructure development and policy formulation for market integration and inclusive growth.

The Commission continues to take proactive measures that promote compliance with the law in addition to investigations of cases. Some of these measures include issuing guidance to businesses on how the Commission applies the provisions of the law. This was the case with the Practice Note issued by the Commission on procedures relating to cases where companies and the Commission have agreed on commitments. It is in the same spirit that guidelines are issued.

The Commission has also taken the leading role in supporting National Competition Authorities in developing and reviewing national competition laws with the aim of harmonizing and fostering the implementation of effective competition policies and laws in the Common Market. This has been done with a number of jurisdictions and will continue to provide support to Member States in the development of such laws as well as operationalizing the institutions to enforce the laws.

Focus Areas for 2022

The Commission in 2022 will continue focusing on hard enforcement specifically targeting cartels and other concerted practices. The Commission will therefore enhance its market surveillance to identify areas of concern in the Common Market regarding prohibited conduct. The Commission will continue to deepen cooperation with National Competition Authorities within and outside the Common Market as well as cooperation with other regional and international stakeholders.

Dr. Willard Mwemba
Director and Chief Executive Officer