



Advancing Regional Integration
through Competitive Markets
and Empowered Consumers

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COMESA COMPETITION AND CONSUMER COMMISSION (CCCC) WARNS AGAINST ANTI - COMPETITIVE CONDUCT AND UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES AMID MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

PUBLIC STATEMENT BY CCCC, CEO, DR WILLARD MWEMBA.

The COMESA Competition and Consumer Commission (CCCC) notes, with deep concern, the ongoing disruptions to global supply chains arising from the unfortunate developments in the Middle East. We take note that conflict in any part of the world has ripple effects across global economies. CCCC recognises the severe humanitarian and economic consequences of this crisis and acknowledge that supply bottlenecks, higher logistics costs and commodity shortages may exert upward pressure on prices and inflation across the Common Market. We have already witnessed price shocks and supply deficits of crude oil with knock on effect on the prices of all other products and services.

The CCCC has been working tirelessly to ensure that it contributes to proper functioning of all markets including agriculture markets and alleviation of poverty not just in COMESA Member States, but Africa and the World over. The developments in the Middle East have the potential to negate these efforts and erode the progress made in this respect. Crude oil price shocks are likely to result in higher prices of fertiliser, with ripple effects on food prices and inflation creating an artificial exacerbation of poverty.

CCCC is concerned that the Middle East crisis is likely to result in some market operators abusing the situation and engage in anti-competitive conduct and unfair trade practices such as excessive pricing, collusion, hoarding, and price gauging.

All communication must be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer

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Nevertheless, CCCC unequivocally cautions all businesses operating in the COMESA region that these circumstances do not justify any form of anti-competitive conduct or unfair trade practices. We wish to warn undertakings especially those with business presence in COMESA that we shall unapologetically together with the Member States enforce competition and consumer laws to the letter and spirit to ensure that the durability and confidence in markets is not eroded. The CCCC will deploy its full powers to detect, investigate and penalise infringements of the law to protect consumers and ensure markets remain fair and competitive.

The CCCC, thus appeals to all consumers and businesses who may feel that their interaction with market actors is unfair and anti-competitive to reach out to the CCCC with information that would assist us to successfully investigate and remedy the situation.

The foregoing notwithstanding, the CCCC is cognisant that in times of crisis some business conduct while overtly anti-competitive may be condoned to address bigger public interest and policy concerns. In such circumstances, the law under regulation 39 of the COMESA Competition and Consumer Protection Regulations allows undertakings to make an application to the CCCC for authorisation to enter or give effect to agreements even if they are anti-competitive if the CCCC determines that benefits arising from the agreements outweigh the anti-competitive effects.

Our Commitment

The CCCC stands with honest businesses and consumers during this challenging period. The CCCC will not allow the crisis to be used as a pretext for collusion, exploitation, or deception. Maintaining trust in markets is essential to the region's resilience, recovery and enhanced consumer welfare.



Dr Willard Mwemba
Chief Executive Officer

COMESA Competition and Consumer Commission