ECOWAS REGIONAL COMPETITION AUTHORITY
AUTORITÉ RÉGIONALE DE LA CONCURRENCE DE LA CEDEAO
AUTORIDADE RÉGIONAL DA CONCORRÊNCIA DA CEDEAO

OIC Highway
Bijilo, The Gambia
P.O Box 4470
+2202330006/3486966
info@erca-arcc.org

INAUGURAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ECOWAS REGIONAL COMPETITION AUTHORITY (ERCA)

Theme: "Competition Policy and Market Integration in ECOWAS: Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities"

Date & venue: 15 - 17 September 2026 at the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Centre, Bijilo, The Gambia

PROGRAMME

Duration: 3 days

08:30 – 09:00: Registration of Participants

09:00 – 10:00: Official Opening Ceremony

- Address by H.E. General Birame Diop, President of the ECOWAS Commission.
- Opening keynote by H.E. Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia.
- Cultural events / Official Group Photograph.

10:00 – 10:30: Break/ Networking

DAY 1 – INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

10:30 – 11:20: High-Level Opening Panel: Competition Policy as a Pillar of Regional Economic Integration: Issues, Perspectives and Opportunities

Moderator: Dr. Juliette Twumasi-Anokye, Chairperson of ERCA Council.

Panelists: Mr. Dehpue Zou, Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture, ECOWAS Commission
Mr. Mod K. Ceesay, Hon. Minister of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment of The Gambia
Prof. Eleonor Fox, professor emerita at New York University School of Law

11:20 – 13:00: Plenary Session 1 - Regional and Cross-Border Cooperation in Competition Enforcement

Moderator: Mr. Saïd Kechida, Competition Expert, OECD Competition Division.

Keynote Address (10 mins): Strengthening Cross-Border Enforcement Mechanisms

Speaker: Dr. Simeon Konan Koffi, Executive Director of ERCA.

Panel Discussion: Cooperation**,** Coordination tools, institutional asymmetries, data sharing

Panelists: Dr. Troy Waterman, Executive Director of CARICOM Competition Commission ◆ Dr. Willard Mwemba CEO of CCCC ◆ Mr. Malick Diallo AfCFTA Head of Competition Division ◆ Mr. Sudesh Puran, Head of Investigation of Competition Commission of Mauritius ◆ Mr. Yves Kenfack, Competition Expert UNCTAD

13:00 – 14:15: Lunch Break

14:30 – 15:30: Plenary Session 2 - Harmonisation of National and Regional Competition Frameworks

Moderator: Mr. Basiru Njie, Executive Secretary of GCCPC

Keynote Address (10 mins): Harmonisation of Competition Laws in Africa

Speaker: Marisa Tierno Centella, Head of Unit for International Relations, Directorate General for Competition, European Union

Panel Discussion: Alignment of national frameworks, Challenges of convergence, International best practices

Panelists: Mr. Gaye Sowe, Director of Legal Affairs of ECOWAS Commission ◆ Prof. Alban Ahouré, Commissioner of Côte d'Ivoire National Competition Commission ◆ Mr. Melaine Tchokponhoue, Director of Competition – UEMOA ◆ Mrs. Annie L. Nyama Ortiz, Director of Trade and Competition CEMAC.

15:30 – 16:30: Breakout Group Session

Group 1: Harmonisation of Legal Frameworks.

Chair: Mr. Adama Diomande - ERCA Council member.

Speakers:

- Nuha Ali, Sandia Booluck and Lizel Blignaut, ENS Executives: "*One Market, Many Watchdogs Regional Primacy and National Autonomy in African Competition Enforcement*"
- Isaac Tausha - Chief Economist - CCCC and Ms. Ninette K. Mwarania Manager - Planning, Policy & Research – CAK: "*Relations between ERCA, UEMOA, COMESA, EAC and AfCFTA"*
- Griffins Gero - Kabarak University – Kenya: "*Strengthening Regional Competition Governance for Market Integration in ECOWAS*"
- Dr. Jaimentino Có - Minister of Trade and Industry of Guinea Bissau: "*Harmonisation of Guinea-Bissau's Legislative and Institutional Framework with Regional Frameworks*

Group 2: Governance and Independence of Competition Authorities.

Chair: Dr. Talime Abe, Chairperson of the Consultative Competition Committee of ERCA.

Speakers:

- Dr. Alfred Mahamadu Braimah - University of Ghana *"Good Governance as a Catalyst for Fair Competition: Strengthening Competitive Markets and Regional Integration in ECOWAS"*
- Gabriel Ambrósio Umabano - Faculty of Law - University of Lisbon, "*Os Poderes de Investigação da ARCC e os Direitos de Defesa das Empresas Visadas / The Investigative Powers of ERCA and the Rights of Defence of the Companies Concerned*"
- Esther Opoku - Barrister and Solicitor - Supreme Court of Ghana; Associate - F-X Law and Associates, Accra: "*Independence and Autonomy of Competition Authorities"*
- Yeye *Nwidaa* - Partner at Jackson, Etti & Edu Head: *"Competition Compliance and Legal certainty in ECOWAS: aligning effective enforcement with business compliance"*

Group 3: Regional Cooperation and Information Exchange.

Chair: Mr. Yahya Samateh, Head of Competition and Economic Research Division, ERCA.

Speakers:

- Nana Kwasi Asuman-Frimpong, Iustum Centre for Democracy and Governance – ICEDEG Africa LBG: *"The Role of CSOs in the Enforcement of Consumer Rights under the ECOWAS Regional Competition Framework"*
- Monica Nang'ayo Werimo, Monica Werimo Advocates - Nairobi, Kenya: *"Undisclosed influencer advertisement on Social Media and emerging consumer protection issue in digital market"*
- Prof. Francois Nkoa - University of Yaoundé: "*Community Competition Policy and Information Sharing: Lessons for ECOWAS"*

Group 4: Strengthening Technical and Operational Capacities.

Chair: Ms. Thembelihle Dlamini - Legal Adviser and Company Secretary –
Eswatini Competition Commission

Speakers:

- Fredrick Mwenje, and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology / Broad Borders Hope Foundation, "*Enhancing Inclusivity in Digital Advisory Services*: *Addressing Market Power and Structural Barriers to Economic Inclusion in Sub-Saharan Agriculture"*
- Azeezah Muse-Sadiq, Partner, Banwo & Ighodalo, Nigeria "*Competition Enforcement and the Informal Economy in ECOWAS"*
- Faloore Samuel Ayomide, Independent Consultant "*Structural Substitution and Market Competition: The Impact of Offshore Private Credit on Financial Integration in Sub-Saharan Africa"*
- Jane Nzenwa, Ph.D., WAVE-Gambian and Magnus Nnaemeka Nzenwa, Psychosocial Specialist and Social Policy Researcher at the Chartered Institute of Social Work Practitioners of Nigeria: "*Beyond the Informal Margins: A Social Work and Indigenous Perspective on Gender, Competition Policy, and Market Integration in ECOWAS*"

16:30 – 17:15: Report Back from Working Groups

17:15 – 17:30: Key Message/Reflection from Day 1: Professor Marek Martyniszyn, Chair of Competition Law and Policy, Queen's University Belfast, School of Law, "*Closing the Gaps: International Cooperation Across the Competition Enforcement Chain*".

DAY 2 – COMPETITION, MARKET TRANSFORMATION AND STRATEGIC SECTORS

09:00 – 10:00: Plenary Session 3: Competition Policy and Regional Value Chain Integration

Moderator: *Dr. Seydou Sacko, Fmr. Competition Officer of ECOWAS Commission*

Keynote Address (10 mins): Competition as an Enabler of Integrated Markets.

Speaker: Dr. Mor Bakhoum, ERCA Council Member.

Panel Discussion: How competition policy reduces market fragmentation; The role of competitive markets in strengthening regional production systems; Linking competition enforcement with trade facilitation and industrial development; Why open and contestable markets are essential for attracting investment into regional value chains.

Panelists: Prof. Bamba N'galadjo Lambert, Fmr. Commissioner of Macroeconomic Policy of the ECOWAS Commission ◆ Mr. Makhfou Mahecor Diouf, Competition Division of African Development Bank ◆ Mr. Christian Lasser, Industrial Development Expert, UNIDO ◆ Ms. Sonia Plaza, Program Manager, World Bank.

10:00 – 11:15: Plenary Session 4: Competition in Digital Markets: Emerging Challenges and Regulatory Responses

Moderator: Dr. Chilufya Sampa, Expert at Shamba Centre for Food & Climate and Fmr. Executive Director of Zambia Competition Authority.

Keynote Address (10 mins): Competition Enforcement in the Digital Economy.

*Speaker***:** Mr. Babatunde Irukera, Fmr. Executive-Vice Chairman of FCCPC, Partner, Simon Cooper.

Panel Discussion: Digital platforms and market power, Fintech and e-commerce, Data governance and competition, Innovation and consumer welfare.

Panelists: Mr. Yongama Njisane, South Africa Competition Commission ◆ Mr. Leonard Ugbajah, ERCA Council member ◆ Dr. Vellah Kigwiru, Research Fellow - University of Munich ◆ Mr. Uche Alison, Jumia Nigeria ◆ Pren-Tsilya Boa-Guehe, Head of Pan-African Institutions (AU, AfCFTA, UNECA, AfDB) of Google Government Affairs & Public Policy

11:15 – 11:45: Coffee Break

11:45 – 13:00: Plenary Session 5: Competition Enforcement in Strategic Sectors

Moderator: Mr. Appiah Kusi Adomako, West Africa Director, CUTS International.

Keynote Address (10 mins): New Challenges in the Regulation of Strategic Markets.

Speaker: Dr. MacDonald Saye Goanue, Coordinator, Vice-President of ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID).

Panel Discussion: Telecommunications, Energy, Transport, Agribusiness, Health.

Panelists: Mr. Charles Ndiaye, Ag. President of ERERA ◆ Ms. Adefunke ADEYEMI - Secretary General AFCAC ◆ Mr. Lanciné Fofana – Director of Studies and prospects - ARTCI ◆ Mr. Dave Anderson, Brussels Office Managing Partner - BCLP LLP ◆ Mr Hussein Diab Ghanem, Chief Executive Officer, Africell

13:00 – 14:30: Lunch

14:30 – 16:00: Sectoral Breakout Session

Group 1: Addressing competition challenges in the digital economy and platform-driven markets.

Chair: Dr. Vellah Kedogo Kigwiru, Research Fellow - Hochschule Für Politik, Technical University of Munich.

Speakers:

- Awuku Larbi, Georgette Francoise Chambers / Star Oil Limited / UPSA, "*Data as Market Power: Rethinking Competition Law Enforcement in ECOWAS Digital Markets"*
- Dr. Oluchukwu Precious Obioma, Faculty of Law, University of Nigeria, "*Taming Digital Gatekeepers in ECOWAS: Competition Law Responses to AI-Driven Platform Power*"
- Lawrence Landi Bassie and Mr Brima Kandeh, Regional Manager – NCPC – Sierra Leone, "*Digital Market in Sierra Leone: Assessing Competition Dynamics, Regulatory Challenges and Enforcement Strategies (2011-2026)*"
- Barrack Ogada, University of Nairobi, Kenya*, "Artificial Intelligence, Data Governance, and Competition Policy: The Influence of AI Driven Digital Platforms on Market Competition and Consumer Welfare in ECOWAS"*

Group 2: Strengthening productive integration and cross-border trade through competition policy.

Chair: Mr. Lawrence Bassie, CEO NCPC, Sierra Leone.

Speakers:

- Nomvula Chasakara, Thato Motau, Esona Jara & Tshegofatso Mello, Competition Commission, South Africa, "*Regulatory Responses to Market Power in African Agricultural Commodity Markets: An Integrated Competition Policy and Governance Framework for Global Commodity Traders*."
- Kossi Sambigou Nanika, Président Fédération Entreprises du Tourisme et Hôtellerie *"L'industrie touristique, levier de sécurité et de paix pour un accès au marché et une intégration économique de la CEDEAO''.*
- Koffi Dovene Gnadjosse Koffi Dovene, Juriste at ULB, "*Protection du consommateur et intégration des marchés regards croisés sur l'union européenne et la CEDEAO à l'épreuve du droit de la concurrence*''
- Evans Osabuohien, Covenant University *"ECOWAS Competition Policy, Agricultural Value Chains and Regional Integration: Implications for AfCFTA Implementation"*

Group 3: Ensuring effective competition in heavily regulated or concentrated sectors.

Chair: Prof. Namuano Dias, Legal Practitioner, Francis Services SARL, Guinea Bissau

Speakers:

- Onyekachi Nwafor, CEO KatexPower Limited *"Competition Policy, Decentralized Energy Markets and Inclusive Market Integration in ECOWAS: Unlocking SME-Led Clean Energy Value Chains in West Africa"*
- Saye Domason Gbeakeh, Coordinator/ERCA CCC Focal Point/Liberia "*Competition Policy and Informality: Empirical Insights from Liberia's Cement and Rice Markets"*
- Appiah Kusi Adomako, Regional Director, West Africa, CUTS International, "*Telecommunications market concentration and consumer welfare in ECOWAS"*
- Madugu, Antele. Phd Student University of Leicester ''*Consumer Protection, Competition or Both? The Case Against Meta and Its Lessons for Other African Jurisdictions"*

Group 4: Addressing Market Concentration and Barriers to Entry

Chair: Mr. Baboucarr Ceesay, Director of Competition, GCCPC

Speakers:

- Andreu Iranzo Navarro, Responsable de l'analyse et des études, REDIT – Red de Institutos Tecnológicos de la Comunitat Valenciana, Espagne, "*Politique de concurrence et intégration effective des marchés dans la CEDEAO : barrières à l'entrée, PME et commerce transfrontalier* "
- Chilufya Sampa, Shamba Centre for Food and Climate, "*Market Concentration and Barriers to Entry in Agriculture and Food Markets*"
- Peter Damilare Idowu, Assistant Lecturer, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Osun State Polytechnic, Iree; Federal University of Technology, Akure, "*Regulating the Unregulated: Platform-Mediated Transport Markets and Competition Governance in Nigerian Secondary Cities*"
- Folasade Olusanya, Jackson, Representatives of Etti & Edu, "*Effective control of market power: merger review and abuse of dominance*"
- Michael-James Currie, Joshua Eveleigh and Jannes van der Merwe, Primerio "R*egulating regional telecommunications markets: balancing investment against competition practices"*

16:00 – 17:15: Report Back from Working Groups

17:15 – 17:30: Key Message/Reflection from Day 2 - Dr Henry E. Emejuo, Director General & CEO of PAOSMI: *"How competition can help small and medium-size enterprises to overcome their constraints: market-entry barriers, market concentration, access to finance, procurement opportunities, standards compliance, technology gaps, distribution constraints, cross-border trade barriers, and unequal access to regional value chains*",

DAY 3 – REFORMS, COMPLIANCE, AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETITION LAW

09:00 – 10:00: Plenary Session 6: - Effective Control of Market Power: Merger Review and Abuse of Dominance in Practice

Moderator: Mr. Isiekwwena Ikem, Managing Partner - Simon Cooper.

Keynote Address (10 mins): Navigating Dynamic Markets: Modernizing Merger Controls and Addressing Abuse of Dominance across Regional African Jurisdictions.

Speaker: Prof. Festus Okechukwu Ukwueze, Dean Emeritus, Faculty of Law, University of Nigeria.

Panel Discussion: Merger control standards and economic assessment; Abuse of dominance: pricing, exclusionary practices, and platform dominance; Remedies and structural vs behavioural interventions; Challenges in proving market power in dynamic markets; Case experiences from different jurisdictions.

Panelists: Mr. Boniface Makongo, Director of Competition COMESA CCC ◆ Ms. Florence Abebe Head, Anti-Competitive Practices Department FCCPC ◆ Ms. Stellah Onyancha Ag. Registrar EACCA ◆ Mr. Raphael Mburu, Manager M&A of Competition Authority of Kenya

10:00 – 11:00: Plenary Session 7: Ensuring Compliance and Legal Certainty in Competition Enforcement

Moderator: Mrs. Mariana Tavares, Lawyer - Antas da Unha Ecija.

Keynote Address (10 mins): Predictability, transparency, and how firms and advisors navigate competition rules.

Speaker: Prof. Gabriel Ambrosio Umabano, Faculty of Law of the University of Lisbon (CIDEFF)

Panel Discussion: Compliance programmes and corporate governance; Role of legal advisers in preventing anti-competitive conduct; Procedural fairness and rights of defense; Consistency of enforcement decisions; Settlement procedures, leniency, and cooperation tools.

Panelists: Mr. Michael James Curie, Primerio ◆ Mr. Wangombe Kariuki, Senior Consultant – Bowmans ◆ Fatoumatta A. Camara, Gambia Bar Association

11:00 – 11:20: Coffee Break

11:20 – 12:20: Plenary Session 8: Perspectives on Competition Enforcement: Bridging Regulators, Businesses and Legal Practitioners

Moderator: Ms. Sandya Booluck, Executive Competition, ENS.

Keynote Address (10 mins): A multi-stakeholder dialogue on how competition law is experienced in practice.

Speaker: Mr. Vivien Terrien, Vice-President of Autorité de la Concurrence France.

Panel Discussion: Business perspective: regulatory burden vs predictability, Lawyers' perspective: clarity of rules and enforcement procedures, Regulators' perspective: enforcement challenges and market realities; Building trust between authorities and market participants; Reform priorities to improve effectiveness and cooperation.

Panelists: Mr. Ignace Mossou Niamkey, Regional Director Legal & Ethics of Olam group ◆ Mr. Aminou Akadiri, Executive Director of FEWACCI ◆ Ms. Carin Smaller, Executive Director Shamba Centre ◆ Dr. Ken Ukoha, President of NANTS.

12:20 – 13:20: Plenary 9: Strengthening Judicial Enforcement of Competition Law for Fair and Competitive markets.

Moderator: Dr. Julius Spencer, Fmr. Minister of Information, Communication, Tourism and Culture of Sierra Leone.

Keynote address (10 mn): How courts interpret and apply competition rules to address anti-competitive practices such as cartels, abuse of dominant positions, and other market distortions that undermine fair trade and consumer welfare.

Speaker: Prof. Frederic Jenny, Emeritus Professor of Economics, ESSEC Business School

Panel Discussion: Examining how courts understand and apply core competition principles such as cartels, abuse of dominance, and mergers; Addressing the challenges of assessing complex economic and technical evidence in competition cases, Balancing independent adjudication with effective coordination between regulators and the courts.

Panelists: Hon. Justice Nnamdi Dimgba, PhD, Court of Appeal, Nigeria ◆ Hon. Justice Henrietta Didigu, Judge, ECOWAS Court of Justice ◆ Dr. Euloge Akpo, Fmr. Judge at UEMOA Court of Justice ◆ Hon. Justice David Unterhalter, Judge of Appeal at the Supreme Court of Appeal, South Africa

13:20 – 13:50: Closing Panel

The Future of Competition Policy and Market Integration in ECOWAS - Priorities for Action

Moderator: Dr. Francisca Kusi-Appiah, Vice-Dean, School of Law, University of Professional Studies, Accra, Ghana.

Key lessons from the conference and emerging consensus (5 to 8 mins):

Priority reforms for strengthening competition enforcement in ECOWAS; Enhancing cooperation between ERCA, national competition authorities, and sector regulators; Building effective institutions, technical capacity, and compliance cultures; Competition policy as a driver of regional integration, investment, and economic transformation; The ERCA roadmap: immediate, medium-term, and long-term priorities.

Panelists: Ms. Teresa Morera, Fmr. Head of UNCTAD Competition Division ◆ Mr. Said Kechida, OECD ◆ Dr. Simeon Konan Koffi, Executive Director of ERCA.

13:50 – 14:15: Official Closing Ceremony

- Conference Declaration by Dr. Simeon Konan Koffi, Executive Director of ERCA.
- Address by Mr. Dehpue Zou, Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture.
- Remarks by Mr. Mod K. Ceesay Hon. Minister of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration, and Employment.

14:15 – 15:00: Lunch.

15:00 – 17:00: Cultural and Tourist Site Visit

End of Conference

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Description
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
ARTCI	Autorité de Régulation des Télécommunications de Côte d'Ivoire
AU	African Union
BCLP	Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner (International Law Firm)
CARICOM CC	Caribbean Community Competition Commission
CCC	Consultative Competition Committee (of ERCA)
CEMAC	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
CIDEFF	Research Center in Economic, Financial and Tax Law of the Faculty of Law of the University of Lisbon
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMESA CCC	COMESA Competition and Consumer Commission
EACCA	East African Community Competition Authority
EBID	ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ENS	ENSafrica (Pan-African Law Firm)
ERCA / ARCC	ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority / Autorité Régionale de la Concurrence de la CEDEAO
ERERA	ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority
ESSEC	École Supérieure des Sciences Économiques et Commerciales – Business School
EU	European Union
FCCPC	Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (Nigeria)
FEWACCI	Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry
GCCPC	Gambia Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
GLN	Gide Loyrette Nouel (International Law Firm)
ICN	International Competition Network
NANTS	National Association of Nigerian Traders
NCP	National Commission for Privatisation (Sierra Leone)
NCPC	National Consumer Protection Commission of Sierra Leone
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAOSMI	Pan African Alliance of Small & Medium Industries
SDKJ-ICC	Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Centre
UEMOA	Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine

UNCTAD	United Nations Trade and Development
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
AfDB	African Development Bank
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AFCAC	African Civil Aviation Commission
M&A	Mergers and Acquisitions
NCPC	National Consumer Protection Commission (Sierra Leone)
NCA	National Competition Authority
PME	Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (SMEs)
RCA	Regional Competition Authority
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
ULB	Université Libre de Bruxelles
UPSA	University of Professional Studies, Accra
WAVE	Women's Association for Women and Victims' Empowerment (The Gambia)