



## Press Release

### ***ESCWA and partners hold 2nd Competition Forum for the Arab region***

**Beirut, 23 March 2021 (ESCWA)**--To support Arab countries in improving their national competition frameworks, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia ([ESCWA](#)), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development ([UNCTAD](#)) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development ([OECD](#)) kick off today the second [Competition Forum for the Arab Region](#), co-hosted virtually by ESCWA and the Government of Egypt.

“The Competition Forum provides the opportunity of building a regional network that can help enhance economic growth and improve governance in the Arab region for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)),” Rola Dashti, ESCWA Executive Secretary, said in her opening remarks.

Arab competition authorities and policymakers will discuss the latest competition developments and reforms, as well as measures taken during the COVID-19 pandemic, sharing insights and lessons learned.

Delivering Egypt’s statement, Nivine Jameh, Minister of Trade and Industry, stressed the importance of achieving regional economic integration and all-out cooperation, namely in the fields of trade, industry and investments, to provide a better future for Arab populations.

A number of competition authorities from different parts of the world will also propose best practices in competition institutional design, related laws and policies, and their effective enforcement.

“Competition authorities need to be actively involved in the design, the drafting and the implementation of sector-specific measures to ensure that markets will remain open and fair, and to prepare for the transition to the post-COVID-19 situation,” said Teresa Moreira, Head of the Competition and Consumer Policies Branch at UNCTAD.

For their part, regional and international organizations will present their latest work and projects in Arab countries. All participants will then work together to agree on an action plan to improve competition in the Arab region.

“The link between competition and many of the public policies has to become stronger,” said Frédéric Jenny, Chairman of the OECD Competition Committee. “Spreading a competition culture among government officials but also in the general public is usually important. This is a major challenge,” he added.

Competition policy and law need to be supported in all countries,” stressed Antonio Capobianco, OECD Acting Head of Competition. “This is because of the newness of competition law enforcement and policy in the region and the fact that many of the competition authorities are still young and may feel the need for technical assistance,” he

underscored. He also highlighted the many layers of complexities created by the pandemic and the need to spread a competition culture among government officials and the public at large.

The Forum is an annual knowledge-sharing platform for the Arab region on competition law and policy. Its [first](#) edition was held in January 2020. This year, open Arab Competition Dialogues, consisting of a series of webinars on distinct competition topics, will follow the main Forum event.

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### **About ESCWA**

One of five United Nations regional commissions, ESCWA supports inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Arab States, and works on enhancing regional integration.

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