



**REMARKS BY
MR. LAWRENCE KIBET,
DIRECTOR-GENERAL, PUBLIC INVESTMENTS AND
PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT, THE NATIONAL TREASURY
AT THE COCKTAIL AND NETWORKING EVENT ON 17TH
OCTOBER 2024**

Prof. Reena das Nair, Executive Director, CCRED

**Mr. Boniface Makongo, Director Competition, COMESA
Competition Commission**

Ms. Faith Odhiambo, President, Law Society of Kenya

Distinguished Facilitators and participants

1. **Hamjambo?** That's Swahili for **How are you all doing?**
2. Good evening ladies & gentlemen. I am pleased to join you this as we unwind after serious deliberations on competition law matters during Day 1 of the Annual Symposium.
3. I would also like to thank the participants and representatives of the different agencies and institutions who are here today. Special recognition goes to Ms. Faith Odhiambo, President of the Law Society of Kenya, Prof. Reena das Nair, Executive Director of the Centre for Competition,



Regulation and Economic Development (CCRED), and Mr. Boniface Makongo from the COMESA Competition Commission.

4. Ladies and gentlemen, the role of effective competition in our respective economies cannot be overstated. It spurs innovation, ensures that businesses cost their goods and services competitively, and that consumers have a large pool of options to pick from. In addition, competitive markets attract FDI and inspire local companies to expand.
5. Markets where cartels run the show or those with high barriers to entry are unattractive to investors and injurious to everybody in the value chain, except of course benefitting a handful of big businesses in control of the sector. Indeed, consumer welfare is at its lowest in such markets.
6. The National Treasury prioritizes inclusive economic growth and recognizes the importance of competition in development. For instance, the Government has established robust policies, legislative and regulatory frameworks to address inefficiencies and inequities within our economy that can result in market failure. This is especially so with the proliferation of technology-based markets that are outpacing the existing laws and regulations.
7. This scenario calls for concerted efforts by all Government agencies to develop regulatory initiatives that address evolving market dynamics, including emerging technologies and industries. The initiatives need to accommodate the unique barriers of MSEs, which would ease their regulatory surveillance and enforcement mechanisms.
8. Today's event is significant since it coincides with the launch of the book *"Regulating for Rivalry: Development of Competition Regimes in Africa"* which has been co-authored by various experts. This body of work comes at an opportune time, given the growing need for markets that work in our continent.



9. It delves into the economic challenges faced by Africa and explores solutions proposed by industry experts. With the ongoing socio-economic difficulties in mind, the book's valuable perspectives will be crucial in shaping policy choices that foster competition across key sectors.
10. As you are aware, food security is one of the Governments' top priority under the BeTA Plan. We note that the mean monthly expenditure on food per adult equivalent is 54.3% and for non-food items is 45.7%. Therefore, effective competition in the food and agriculture markets is critical to ensure that everyone, and especially those in the lower income band, access food and nutrition.
11. Kenya and many countries across Africa continue to struggle with the adverse effects of cartelization. Cartels distort the market by controlling prices, stifling innovation, and limiting consumer choice. In cartelized sectors, research estimates that the price of goods and services are inflated by over 25%, which has severe implications for consumer welfare, specifically impeding realizing value of money spent.
12. These are some of the issues that are articulated at length in the book we are launching today.
13. The National Treasury commits to continue supporting the Competition Authority of Kenya achieve its mandate, as we have in the past. This will be through policy guidance and resource appropriation.
14. Once again, I thank you all for taking the time, and flights for some of you, to congregate in Nairobi this week, and at this networking session in particular. I close my remarks by reminding you that it is our collective responsibility to ensure that our markets remain open and competitive to the benefit of our consumers.

Ahsanteni sana!