



THE CARICOM COMPETITION COMMISSION

"Celebrating 5 Years of Service"

January 18, 2013, marked the fifth anniversary of the CARICOM Competition Commission (CCC) headquartered in Paramaribo, Suriname. Established under Chapter VIII of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, the CCC has a mandate to (a) apply the rules of competition, in respect of anti-competitive cross-border business conduct; and (b) promote and protect competition in the Community and co-ordinate the implementation of the Community Competition Policy. The Revised Treaty also requires the CCC to provide assistance to Member States in the area of consumer protection.

With regards to competition law and policy, the agency completed rules of procedures for the handling of anti-competitive cases. Additional work focused on developing internal procedural methods for conducting investigations, and guidelines for determination of fines in instances where anti-competitive business conduct is determined. The CCC has completed its first investigation into the business practices of the Trinidad Cement Limited (TCL) Group of Companies. This case proved significant, as all the claims of the Trinidad Cement Limited (TCL) Group of Companies against the Commission were dismissed by the Caribbean Court of Justice.

Since its establishment, the CCC, with financial assistance from various international development partners, also sought to enhance the knowledge of competition law and policy among Member States. Several workshops were held throughout the region for the judiciary, the business sector and technical officers working in various ministries across CARICOM. The CCC's efforts regarding the sensitisation of judicial officers were especially recognised by the ACP/EU Trade.Com facility in 2010, as a 'best practice' and as a model for other African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) regions to follow.

Advocacy as well formed a key component in the CCC's work programme over the years. The CCC participated in various international and regional round-table events, such as the OECD's Competition Forum, the Latin American Competition Forum, and UNCTAD's International Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy, to mention a few. At these meetings the CCC continued to express the views of CARICOM regarding competition law and policy, and consumer policy. The CCC also actively participates in several International Competition Network (ICN) working groups including the Agency Effectiveness Working Group, the Mergers Working Group and the Unilateral Conduct Working Group. Through its participation in these working groups, the CCC similarly aims to ensure that the special circumstances of CARICOM are considered in the design of best practice manuals, training seminars and any other related work pertaining to competition enforcement.

As part of its work regarding consumer protection, in 2012 the CCC established a forum, via video conferencing, to facilitate dialogue between national consumer organisations in Member States and itself. These meetings allow the CCC to learn about the activities that national consumer organisations are undertaking and any specific challenges these institutions may face. It is hoped that through this facility, the CCC will be able to forge stronger relationships with the national consumer authorities in the region, as well as promote cooperation between these institutions. Currently, the CCC is using the consumer forum to

engage the national agencies on two draft research proposals that have been developed by its staff, with the view that they can be finalised and implemented as soon as resources become available. Additionally, the CCC will continue to engage national competition and consumer agencies in dialogue on areas of mutual importance such as data collection and analysis of consumer complaints, technical assistance, consumer and business education, and advocacy.

As the CCC moves forward, greater effort will be placed towards encouraging Member States that have not already enacted their national competition laws and established competent enforcement authorities to do so. This is in accordance with the obligations set within the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, the CARIFORUM/EU Economic Partnership Agreement and the on-going CARICOM/Canada Free Trade Agreement negotiations. The CCC was particularly pleased in the month of January 2013 to host, in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Suriname a workshop where the Draft Competition Law was presented and discussed with key stakeholders in the private sector, consumers, and government ministries and departments.

The CCC will be making information about competition law and consumer protection in the region, research outputs and other work-related activities more easily available to all stakeholders in the public and private sectors, and consumers through various media outlets including newspapers, publications, journals and websites such as www.caricom.org and www.csmeonline.org.

For further information about the work of the CCC, please feel free to email admin@ccc.sr.