



# Smt Nirmala Sitharaman, the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Commerce and Industry says that Competition Commission of India (CCI) needs to continue to be a dynamic regulatory institution keeping in view the stage of economic development of the country and the diversity of the economy

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Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Commerce and Industry, Government of India inaugurated the Second National Conference on "Economics of Competition Law" organised by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) today at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. Shri Arvind Subramanian, Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India delivered the Keynote Address at the Inaugural Session.

Speaking on the occasion Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman stated that CCI needs to continue to be a dynamic regulatory institution keeping in view the stage of economic development of the country and the diversity of the economy. She urged CCI to develop sectoral understanding and engage sector experts for this purpose.

Smt Nirmala Sitharaman added that India cannot and should not be compared to other countries like Singapore or China who have followed different development strategies than ours in the past. She stressed the importance of balancing the needs of opening up the economy to international competition with the other socio-economic requirements of the nation.

Continuing her address, Smt Nirmala Sitharaman stated that the transition from the MRTP Act, 1969 to the Competition Act, 2002 has been nuanced and reflects the change in the economic policy stance of the government. She said that there is nothing like a pro-business or anti-business stand in policy making and that the ultimate interest to be served is that of consumers. She also mentioned that the government is balancing the privatisation process with supporting the private sector in terms of providing level-playing field.

Highlighting the importance of fair competition in public procurement, which accounts for 30% of India's GDP, the Minister of State (I/C) for Commerce and Industry complimented the CCI for its recent orders in cases of bid-rigging in public procurement of cement and mentioned that the Commission's orders should have a preventive effect which should deter infringements by the enterprises.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Conference on Economics of Competition Law will be a two day event spanning March 2-3, 2017. During the course of the conference, twelve research papers on a diverse range of issues relating to economics of competition law will be presented by senior economists from various research institutes and institutes of higher learning of the country. Internationally acclaimed competition economists will deliberate on various economic theories, tools and methods relevant for competition law enforcement at the Conference.

While delivering his Keynote Address on the occasion, Dr. Arvind Subramanian, Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, highlighted the distinction between pro-business and pro-competition policies, complementarities between trade policy and competition policy, importance of ease of exit for competition and the need for effective regulatory mechanisms in the wake of rapid digitalisation and advancement of technologies.

In his introductory remarks at the National Conference, Shri Devender Kumar Sikri, Chairperson, Competition Commission of India (CCI), observed that CCI is assessing policies, laws and regulations relating to different sectors of the Indian economy from competition perspective. He said that the Commission will be connecting with the NITI Aayog for this purpose. Further, he said that the objective is to identify unnecessary and obsolete regulatory restrictions as also to suggest pro-competitive regulatory reforms that would contribute to the nation's larger agenda of improving ease of doing business and propelling economic growth.

The Competition Act, 2002 is an economic law. The role of economics in competition law enforcement is being increasingly recognised across competition law jurisdictions. Keeping this in view, it has been a constant endeavour of the CCI to build capacity in the area of economics of competition law in the country. The National Conference on Economics of Competition Law has been institutionalised as an annual flagship programme of CCI.

The Competition Commission of India, the fair-play regulator of the nation, was established with the mandate to prevent practices having adverse effect on competition, to promote and sustain competition in markets, to protect the interest of consumers and to ensure freedom of trade of market participants in India. The Commission till date has received 488 merger cases and 791 cases of alleged anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant position. Over the years, the Commission, through its orders in diverse sectors such as stock exchange, infrastructure, travel, automobile, real estate, pharmaceuticals, entertainment etc., has been working effectively towards implementing its mandate.

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