



PROGRAMME

20th ANNUAL COMPETITION LAW, ECONOMICS & POLICY CONFERENCE

DATE: 3-4 SEPTEMBER 2026 | **VENUE:** The Marriott Hotel Melrose Arch, Johannesburg

MCs: Londiwe Senona and Ofentse Motshudi

THEME: COMPETITION POLICY FOR STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION: BUILDING INCLUSIVE, RESILIENT AND COMPETITIVE AFRICAN MARKETS

3 September 2026	
08:00 – 08:30	REGISTRATION
08:30 – 09:00	STUDY LAUNCH: TOWNSHIP AND RURAL ECONOMY RESEARCH REPORT Honourable Deputy Minister Zuko Godlimpi (Department of Trade, Industry and Competition “Dtic”); Doris Tshepe (Commissioner, Competition Commission SA); James Hodge (Chief Economist, Competition Commission SA)
09:00 – 09:30	CONFERENCE OPENING ADDRESS & WELCOME: Mondo Mazwai (Chairperson, Competition Tribunal)
09:30 – 10:00	KEYNOTE SPEECH: Honourable Deputy Minister Zuko Godlimpi (Dtic)
10:00 - 11:00	PLENARY SESSION 1: COMPETITION LAW AND INDUSTRIAL POLICY
Background	Across many jurisdictions, governments are increasingly concerned with building domestic productive capacity, supporting strategic sectors and promoting firms that can compete regionally or globally. This has revived the “national champions” debate and the extent to which competition policy should accommodate industrial policy goals. At the same time evidence and thinking in industrial policy has shifted towards a more pro-competitive policy design to ensure productivity growth. This session explores the tensions and complementarities between competition law and industrial policy, including whether support for large domestic firms can promote development, when it may risk entrenching market power, and how authorities should assess claims that concentration or protection is needed to build competitive national or regional firms. The discussion is particularly relevant in the context of the little-used public interest provisions in merger control that allow for assessment of the impact of mergers on a sector and international competitiveness. Similar developmental provisions exist in many other African countries.

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Speakers	Moderator: Pamela Mondliwa (Head Research, Industrial Development Corporation) Panellists: Frédéric Jenny (Emeritus Professor of Economics, ESSEC Business School, (virtual)); Josephat Mkuzingo (Secretary, Fair Competition Commission Tanzania); Prof. Mor Bakhom (Senior Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute and Technical Secretary of Senegal, (virtual)); Dr. Kwezi Mabasa (Researcher, Author, Educator and Public Policy Analyst); James Hodge (Chief Economist, Competition Commission SA)
11:00 – 11:30	TEA BREAK
11:30 – 12:30	PLENARY SESSION 2: PRO-COMPETITIVE REGULATORY REFORM AND THE EASE OF DOING BUSINESS
Background	Barriers to entry do not arise only from firm conduct or market concentration, but also from regulatory frameworks that make it difficult for new firms to enter, expand and compete. Licensing requirements, delays in approvals, fragmented local rules, infrastructure access constraints and compliance burdens can all raise the cost of doing business, particularly for smaller firms and new entrants. It is for this reason that the Commission launched its regulatory review. This session would examine how pro-competitive regulatory reform can support structural transformation by lowering unnecessary entry barriers, improving market contestability and creating a more enabling environment for investment, innovation and inclusive participation. It would also consider how competition authorities can work with government departments and sector regulators to identify regulatory restrictions that limit competition and to support reforms that make markets more open and dynamic.
Speakers	Moderator: Yongama Njisane (Principal Economist, Competition Commission SA) Panellists: Saul Musker (Head of Strategy and Delivery Support, Private Office of the President of RSA); John Davies (Member, UK Regulatory Policy Committee, UK Competition Appeal Tribunal); Kganki Matabane (CEO, Black Business Council); Phumzile Chifunyise (Commissioner, National Planning Commission)
12:30 – 13:30	CONFERENCE LUNCH
13:30 – 14:30	PLENARY SESSION 3: THE ROLE OF COMPETITION POLICY IN ENSURING ECONOMIC RESILIENCE AND AFFORDABILITY OF FOOD AND ENERGY
Background	Continual global economic shocks and climate catastrophes in recent years have left countries exposed to rising commodity prices and supply chain disruptions, causing rising food and energy prices. These shocks are often exacerbated by market features such as ‘rocket and feather’ pricing strategies, price gouging, market concentration and vertical integration resulting in a general cost-of-living crisis. This has led to calls for policies that build more resilient economies to reduce the impact of such shocks on the domestic economy, but also enforcement tools to address what are often transitory abuses. This plenary will discuss how economic resilience should be considered within competition law and the competition law toolkits that can be leveraged to address opportunistic and anti-competitive practices that raise the cost of living.
Speakers	Moderator: Simon Roberts (CMA, UK) Panellists: Kenneth Sithebe (SAHRC, Research Advisor); Dr Susan Mangole (DDG, Competition and Transformation dtic), Wandile Sihlobo (AgriSA & Presidential Envoy on Agriculture); Vitor Jardim Machado Barbosa (Chief of Staff, CADE)
14h30 – 15h30	PLENARY SESSION 4: IMPROVING COMPETITION AGENCY EFFECTIVENESS

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Background	Debates surrounding the effectiveness of competition agencies currently focus on balancing swift enforcement with rigorous analysis and ensuring independence from political influence. Key discussions include the time taken for merger approvals, the appropriate standards of proof for anti-competitive behaviour, and the use of economic evidence to demonstrate consumer harm. In the African context, the debates extend to the effectiveness of enforcement in driving public interest including national development objectives and ownership requirements. This plenary will discuss measures to improve competition agency effectiveness. The discussion will include institutional design, litigation delays, agency independence and new tools to enhance agency effectiveness on public interest.
Speakers	Moderator: Bukhosibakhe Majenge (Deputy Commissioner, Competition Commission SA) Panellists: Adalberto Cauaia, Legal Head Autoridade Reguladora da Concorrencia Angola), Jean Meijer (Managing partner, HSF), Vipin Naugah (Director, Competition Commission of Mauritius), Prof. Bill Kovacic (Director Competition Law Center, George Washington University, (virtual)); Jerome Wilson (Advocate, Group 621 Chambers)
15:30 – 16:00	TEA BREAK
16:00 – 17:00	PLENARY SESSION 5: NAVIGATING CROSS BORDER MERGER REVIEW IN A FRAGMENTED WORLD: COORDINATION, REMEDIES, AND CONFLICTING OUTCOMES
Background	Cross-border mergers are reviewed in parallel by multiple competition authorities with different timelines and legal tests, but increasingly also with divergent policy objectives as countries seek to build resilience and promote their own national champions as strategic objectives. This may result in growing divergence between countries on their competition assessment and perspectives on prohibition and remedial actions both in merger control and abuse of dominance. This session examines how agencies coordinate (and where coordination breaks down), why remedy expectations can vary across jurisdictions, and how parties can manage the risk of inconsistent or conflicting outcomes (including “fix-it-first” proposals, remedy sequencing, and carve out or hold separate structures). It will also explore practical strategies for designing cross-border remedies that are implementable, enforceable, and monitorable across agencies.
Speakers	Moderator: Hardin Ratshisusu (Deputy Commissioner, Competition Commission SA) Panellists: Malick Diallo (Head of Competition, AfCFTA Secretariat, (virtual)), Camelia Grozea (DG Comp), Vitalis Ndalikokule (CEO, Namibian Competition Commission), Ms Siboniselizulu Maseko (CEO, eSwatini Competition Commission), Lebogang Mabidikane (Director, Competition law CDH)
18:00 – 22:00	COMMISSION GALA DINNER FOR CONFERENCE ATTENDEES AND PARTICIPANTS

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8:30 – 9:00	Keynote Speech: Norman Manoim (Judge President, Competition Appeal Court)
9:30 – 10:00	REPORT LAUNCH: THIRD COST OF LIVING REPORT

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Doris Tshepe (Commissioner, Competition Commission SA); James Hodge (Chief Economist, Competition Commission SA)

9:00 - 10:30

ACADEMIC BREAKOUT SESSION I

Breakout 1A: Agency Effectiveness and Regulatory Reforms

Discussants: Mpumelelo Tshabalala and Lebogang Phaladi

Moderator: Simphiwe Gumede

Breakout 1B: Competition Issues in various markets

Discussants: Rahma Leuner and Ange Maseko

Moderator: Tessa Bleazard

Mnqobi Sikhosana and Seapei Molamu “The elastic Clock: A comparative analysis of how South African, EU, and US merger control regimes balance statutory expedition against the procedural friction of third-party participation”

Ngonidzashe Jaure “Building a constitutional approach to competition law, Regulation and interpretation in Zimbabwe” (virtual)

Nomvula Chasakara “Beyond Competition Law Enforcement: Developing an African Digital Competition Governance Framework for AI-Driven markets and Structural Transformation”

Ramela Modise “Speaking across each other: Institutional Silos and the limits of South Africa’s deconcentration project”

Amy Visser, Geoff Visser and Roy Ramphal “De facto standards, de facto barriers: Competition Policy for African Markets.”

Nthabiseng Nkeane, Fatima Massan and Claire Dehosse “The limits of Material Interest: Third Party standing and public interest participation in the Competition Tribunal”

Kyla Endenburg “Banking-Linked grocery rewards and effective food prices: Implications for competition and inclusion in South Africa”

Baneng Naape and Ororiseng Maseng “How regulation and concentration shape Bank Margins in the SADC Region”

Sinethemba Mbeki, Thabang Ndlovu, and Baneng Naape “The Interplay between Global Trade Shifts and competition policy: Evidence from South Africa’s automotive industry”

Cletus Sikwanda “Do pro-competitive regulatory reforms promote competition: Evidence from Zambia’s petroleum sector”

Khomotso Mahuma “Competition issues in fertilizer markets in East and Southern African negatively impact agricultural yields”

Zosuliwe Kala “Breaking Barriers: A comparative case-study of women-led agribusinesses in Uganda and Kenya

10:30 – 11:00

TEA BREAK

11:00 – 12:30

ACADEMIC BREAKOUT SESSION II

Breakout 2A: Competition Law and Tools

Discussants: Jabulani Ngobeni and Ratshidaho Maphwanya

Breakout 2B: AI and Digital Ecosystems

Discussants: Itumeleng Lesofe and Jason Aproskie
Moderator: Linekela Goagoses

Moderator: Omphemetse Kgaladi	
Simbarashe Tavuyanago “Transformative Constitutionalism and Competition Law: South Africa’s transformative merger control as a model on how competition law should be used to realise structural transformation” (virtual) Thato Motau “Locked in: Corporate exclusivity, supplier liquidation, and the Public Interest in South Africa” Donald Kiprop “Leniency should not be that lenient: Towards a culpability-adjusted leniency model (CALM) for addressing abuse of cartel leniency programmes” (virtual) Howard Chitimira & Kudzai Mpofu “A synoptical analysis of the Guidelines on the Exchange for Competitively sensitive information between competitors under the Competition Act 89 of 1998” Siyanda Dlamini et al “The double-edged sword: A critical analysis of criminalisation and fines as tools for competition law enforcement in Rural Zululand” Kaylee van der Bergh “Seen but not safeguarded: Gender responsive competition policy and the unfinished promise of the AfCFTA for South Africa’s women”	Karissa Padayachie-Nair & Reena das Nair “Regulating digital platforms: A comparative analysis of Kenya and South Africa” (virtual) Ryan Hawthorne et al “Competitive interoperable instant payment systems” Donnavan-Jonh Linley “Narrow Price Parity and Market Power in Digital Platforms” Sha’ista Goga et al “Levelling the field: Identifying impediments to access in digital financial services” Rahma Leuner et al “Risk proportionate licensing framework in digital financial services”
12:30 – 13:30	CONFERENCE LUNCH
13:30 – 14:30	ACADEMIC PLENARY SESSION 1: AI, DATA AND ANALYTICAL TOOLS TO ENHANCE COMPETITION ENFORCEMENT (Hybrid session)
Background	The growing use of artificial intelligence, algorithms and data-driven business models is reshaping how market operate and are presenting new challenges to competition law, from algorithmic collusion to personalised pricing. However, the widespread availability of granular data in the information age and the capabilities of big data analytics and AI tools also provide an opportunity for competition authorities to improve the efficiency and quality of market screening, competition assessments, advocacy and compliance monitoring. This academic plenary will examine how academics are making use of these tools for research and how competition authorities can use such tools to enhance their own research and enforcement activities.
Speakers	Moderator: James Hodge (Chief Economist, Commission CCSA)

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	Panellists: Thibault Schrepel (Associate Professor of Law, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam; Faculty Affiliate, Stanford CodeX Center), Karen Croxson (Chief Data, Technology & Insight Officer, CMA, (virtual)); David Imhoff (Economist, Secretariat of the Swiss Competition Commission; researcher on AI and machine-learning tools for cartel detection, (virtual)); Richard May (Competition Expert, OECD Competition Division (virtual))
14:30 – 15:30	ACADEMIC PLENARY SESSION 2: MEASURING MARKET OUTCOMES AND COMPETITION LAW IMPACT: EVIDENCE, TOOLS AND POLICY LESSONS (Hybrid session)
Background	Competition authorities are under increasing pressure to demonstrate the impact of enforcement on a variety of economic variables, from consumer savings to investment and growth. This stems from battles for fiscal resources, the shift to performance-based assessment in government but also debates on whether competition policy supports or hinders industrial policy ambitions. The challenge for competition authorities is the difficulty in measuring both the direct and indirect effects of enforcement work, including the data required to do so, and doing so timeously and cost-effectively. The Commission released a working paper on how it intends to measure its impact based on current best practice globally, along with its own measures around public interest. This academic plenary will explore the methods, data and analytical tools used to understand the impact of competition enforcement and how to improve the impact assessment of the institutions going forward.
Speakers	Moderator: Prof. Thando Vilakazi (UJ and Tribunal) Panellists: Reena das Nair (Executive Director, CCRED, UJ); Isaac Tausha (Chief Economist, COMESA); Greg Jackson (Economist, OECD Competition Division, (virtual)); Ms Siboniselizulu Maseko (CEO, eSwatini Competition Commission)
15h30-15h45	CONFERENCE CLOSING ADDRESS Doris Tshepe (Commissioner, Competition Commission SA)