

**ICN Merida Conference  
( June 23 ~ June 25 )**

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**- ICN future workplan session -  
Introductory Remarks**

**June 25, 2003**

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Chairman  
Korea Fair Trade Commission**

<Greetings>

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is truly a pleasure to be here and to meet all of you.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the Chairman of Mexican Federal Competition Commission, Fernandao Sanchez Ugarte for successfully organizing this second annual conference of the International Competition Network (ICN).

Moreover, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Chair of the ICN Steering Group, Konrad von Finckenstein for giving me this precious opportunity to speak before the heads of competition authorities worldwide.

We have just one last session to go before winding up this conference. This year's conference was thoroughly prepared and I was most impressed by the active participation of member countries. Two years have passed since the launch of the ICN and I believe the second annual conference has greatly contributed to making our organization more mature. In addition, I feel a tremendous responsibility in hosting next year's third annual conference as the head of Korean competition authority.

<Evaluation of the Working Groups' activities >

Before elaborating on the future work plans of the ICN, I would like to look back at the achievements and efforts of the Working Groups so far and thank the Groups for their pivotal role at the ICN.

First, the Merger Working Group has succeeded in making truly substantial and tangible progress. While merger notification and review procedures have direct implications for global business activities, there exists too much of a difference in related regulations among countries. Therefore, it is all the more significant that the Group has come up with the Guiding Principles and Recommended Practices on Notification and Procedures. I believe these principles and practices will benefit businesses by creating a more stable and transparent business environment. These achievements were especially made possible by the efforts of the Chairs of the Merger

Working Group, the United States, the United Kingdom and Israel as well as the member countries of the Group.

The Advocacy Working Group has also made great progress, thanks to the dedicated work of the Chair of the Group, Mexico. The work product of the Advocacy Working Group will serve as useful reference in the competition advocacy work of the ICN members and contribute to the future work of the Capacity Building and Competition Policy Implementation Working Group.

The Capacity Building and Competition Policy Implementation Working Group, launched just at the end of last year, is already accomplishing a great deal. The introduction of competition law by developing countries and transitional economies is not an issue confined to the countries in question. Given that the development of all countries is a prerequisite for the co-existence and co-prosperity of the world, one of the most urgent tasks facing competition enforcers across the world is recognizing that competition leads to prosperity, and sharing such values. In this regard, all the members of the ICN should take an interest in the effective introduction of competition law in developing countries and transitional economies. I look forward to the future activities of this particular Working Group and thank the Chairs of the Group, the EU and South Africa, and the members of the Group.

Let me now turn to the achievements of the Membership Working Group. At the time of the Naples Conference, 75 competition authorities from 66 jurisdictions were registered as ICN members. In 9 months, the Membership Working Group has succeeded in securing new members including Albania, Barbados, India, Kyrgyz Republic, and Bulgaria and now the ICN boasts of a total of 80 agencies from 71 jurisdictions.

<The Future Direction and Challenges>

The ICN, despite its short history of just two years, has made significant progress. However, we still have a long way to go as competition issues are drawing more and more attention. The interest in competition issues is well-illustrated in a number of project plans of each Working Group, and more than 40 discussion topics suggested by nearly 20 countries. However, the ICN suffers from a lack of resources as the organization is run solely on the basis of the voluntary participation of member countries,

without the presence of a permanent secretariat. In addition, the ICN needs to be results-oriented, seeking to develop workable and meaningful solutions for selected projects on competition policy.

Bearing this in mind, the quality of the discussion on the future project plans could be enhanced when carried out on the basis of the following principles:

First, the scope of agenda should be limited to the core area of competition policy. The discussion should focus on the issues that are at the heart of competition policy rather than peripheral issues or the issues that go beyond the key boundary of competition law and policy.

Second, the principle of selection and concentration should be observed when adopting agendas. The interests of both developed countries and developing and transitional economies should be well-balanced and the discussion should be efficiently carried out according to the urgency of the topics.

In this sense, the issue of competition enforcement in the regulated industries could be a very meaningful agenda priority. While the regulated industries such as energy and telecommunications have significant implications in the economies of both developed and developing countries, there is an extremely urgent need to enhance efficiency in these sectors.

Given that such tasks require considerable discussion and time, establishing a working group benefiting from the participation of both the developed and developing countries could serve as an answer in reviewing and prioritizing a number of candidate topics.

Third, disseminating our work product is as important as covering more discussion topics. The best practices, the fruits of the ICN's hard work should not just stop at being a mere research outcome. The ICN should also strive to find ways to make its best practices penetrate into competition law and policy of members and to facilitate the rule of competition in the markets of member countries. The voluntary and proactive participation of member countries would be vital in achieving this, but the ICN, itself, should find a way for effective dissemination of its discussion output.

<Conclusion>

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Up till now, I talked about how the discussion on future projects would be carried out. If time allows me, I would like to briefly touch upon next year's annual conference.

As I mentioned earlier, Korea will host the third annual conference of the ICN. Korea has exerted great efforts toward the launch and development of the ICN, as both a member of the ICN Steering Group and the Chair of the Membership Working Group. It is therefore not surprising that Korea has readily offered to host the third ICN annual conference. The KFTC has already established an ICN Task Force and is thoroughly preparing for the success of next year's conference.

The third annual conference of the ICN will be held in Seoul over two days, from April 21 to April 22. Seoul is a historic place, having been the capital of Korea for 600 years. I can say with confidence that Seoul is a great and exciting city, still relishing the vivid memory of Korea's success in reaching the semi-final of the 2002 World Cup. Moreover, the second Seoul Competition Forum will be organized on April 20, 2004, right before the third annual conference and I urge your strong support for and participation in the event.

Thank you for your attention.