

All undertakings/companies

Provisions of Competition Law applicable: DG CCP

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ISLAMABAD: The provisions of Competition Law in Pakistan are applicable to all the undertakings/companies including persons, governmental, non-governmental bodies and public and private sector entities.

This was stated by Ikram Ul Haque Qureshi, Director General, Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) while addressing the 1st Consumers IT & Telecom Conference organised by the Consumer Association of Pakistan here on Thursday.

Ikram Ul Haque Qureshi, Director General, Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP), addressing the consumers and the telecom industry highlighted the important features of the Competition Law in Pakistan. He elaborated the history of evolution of Competition Law and its transition from Competition Ordinance, 2007 to the Competition Act, 2010 (Competition Law) which took a period of three years.

While giving the overview of the Competition Law, he emphasised that the scope of the Competition Law in Pakistan and the exclusive and statutory mandate of CCP is to protect consumers from the anti-competitive practices and also to ensure free competition in all spheres of commercial and economic activ-

ity to enhance economic efficiency. He highlighted that the Competition Law benefits the consumers by lower prices, better products/services, more choices and innovation etc.

Regarding the applicability of the Competition Law in Pakistan, an interesting point was highlighted by him that the provisions of Competition Law in Pakistan are applicable to all the undertakings including natural or legal persons and governmental, non-governmental bodies and public and private entities.

He said that the act prohibits the undertakings from abusing their dominant position and entering into prohibited agreements or making a cartel, deceptive marketing practices and to consummate mergers or acquisitions which substantially lessen competition. He said that the CCP is empowered to exempt certain prohibited agreements under the act. He has informed the audience that the CCP is also empowered to impose penalty on the undertakings which breach the provisions of Competition Law. He explained the appeal procedure under the competition act. He stated that an appeal against an order past by a single member shall lie before the Appellate Bench of the CCP. The appeal against the order past by the Appellate

Bench of the CCP shall lie before the Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT). He informed that at the moment the CAT is dysfunctional due to vacant posts of members. The orders passed by CAT may be appealed before the Honourable Supreme Court.

He has also informed the audience that the CCP has taken cognizance of deceptive marketing practices by some telecom companies in the past. While giving examples, he said that one of the telecom companies was marketing its package as "8 ana (cent)" per call however it was found that the rate of the call was more than 8 ana (cent). In another case, a telecom company was marketing its package by claiming that its call was the world's cheapest call. This claim was also found deceptive. He also highlighted that both the telecom operators at that time complied with the directions of the CCP and revised their advertisements.

Ikram Qureshi urged the undertakings not to breach the competition law in their own interest and in the interest of consumers. He has also explained that under the competition law a consumer may be a manufacturer, supplier, distributor, whole seller, retailer and the ordinary and innocent consumers/buyers.