



**SPEECH OF
YB DATUK SERI SALAHUDDIN BIN AYUB
MINISTER
DOMESTIC TRADE AND COST OF LIVING

IN OFFICIATING THE
PROFESSOR RICHARD WHISH 2ND LECTURE SERIES

12 JANUARY 2023
LE MERIDIEN HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR**

SALUTATIONS

The Honourable Datuk Azman bin Mohd Yusof
Secretary-General
Ministry of Domestic Trade and Cost of Living

The Honourable Dato' Seri Mohd Hishamudin Yunus
The Chairman of
Malaysia Competition Commission (MyCC)

Mr. Iskandar Ismail
The Chief Executive Officer, MyCC

Our Prominent Experts;

1. Professor Richard Whish

Emeritus Professor of Law, King's College London

2. Mr. Will Hayter

Senior Director, Digital Market Unit,
Competition and Market Authority, UK

3. Ms. Krystal Uy-Sia

Director, Mergers and Acquisitions Office,
Philippine Competition Commission (PCC)

4. Ms. Dominique Lombardi

Senior Lawyer

Distinguished guests,

Members of the media,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Assalammualaikum wrwb and good morning

1. First and foremost, please join me to congratulate the Malaysia Competition Commission or MyCC for the commendable efforts in staging this auspicious second installment of Professor Richard Whish's Lecture Series.
2. It is truly an honor for me to officiate such an important event. I would like to welcome and introduce our esteemed experts in competition law: 1) Professor Richard Whish, Emeritus Professor

of Law for King's College, London; 2) Mr. Will Hayter, Senior Director, Digital Markets Unit, Competition and Markets Authority, UK; 3) Ms. Krystal Uy-Sia, Director, Mergers and Acquisitions Office, Philippine Competition Commission (PCC); and 4) Ms. Dominique Lombardi, a Senior Lawyer from Singapore.

3. The competition law and its landscape is evolving rapidly in Malaysia. Many industries are beginning to realize the importance roles played by MyCC and the benefits of an effective competition law enforcement regime. Hence, I strongly believe that the opportunity provided by this lecture series to address the current issues could not have come at a better time.
4. I am confident that we will all benefit greatly from the insights shared by these eminent experts.

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. To begin with, please allow me to briefly describe the charter of the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Cost of Living or KPDN.
6. In essence, the Ministry is entrusted to safeguard consumer interests while simultaneously ensuring that enterprises can conduct their businesses efficiently and effectively in the healthy and sustainable domestic trade ecosystem. The new add-on to our charter amplifies further our charter in protecting our consumers by managing the cost of living in Malaysia.

7. In tackling the issues on cost of living, one of the strategies taken by the current government is shifting its focus towards competition law and policies. Not many realize the importance of competition law and policy in addressing the issues of cost of living. This is to ensure healthy competition among enterprises which will be resulting to better and fair prices for the consumers, our rakyat.
8. As such, the MyCC as the regulatory body in this field would ultimately play a key role in assisting the new government to achieve its objective of addressing the cost of living issues.
9. For that matter, it is essential for us to note the three (3) main priorities that MyCC will be focusing on in 2023. The MyCC has always been a strong advocate against bid-rigging cartels in the public procurement. However for 2023, **our utmost** priority is to investigate cartels activities in the food and agriculture sectors. These cartels have been taking advantage of the people and the government for far too long and it is time to put an end to this malpractice.
10. The MyCC had been making headlines in previous years for its efforts in eliminating cartels and monopolies. The MyCC has so far issued various decisions on cartels and monopolies that has resulted in issuing an estimate of RM 175 million of financial penalties. This track record must continue. Cartels and monopolies must not be allowed to exist affecting higher cost of living as they disrupt the competition in the market for the benefits of business enterprises.

11. Thus I urge for the MyCC to step up its efforts in eradicating this malpractices. And as a member of the cabinet, I can assure that the government will lend its full support for MYCC to eliminate, or if not to reduce the power of cartels and monopolies.
12. **Secondly**, the MyCC will also focus on getting the merger control regime in place. This is currently a missing piece of the competition law in Malaysia. The merger control regime is crucial for the new government as the regime would ensure that consumers are not affected negatively by new monopolies resulting from mergers between major players .
13. We have seen the impact of big mergers around the world and in our beloved country. We have to remember Malaysia is a trading nation with growing economy. We cannot afford to have market concentration especially in crucial areas such as services, retails, food and agriculture sectors. If left unchecked, mergers are also used to camouflage the formation of cartels. Thus, the MyCC has my full support in this. Together, we will ensure that the amendments to the Competition Act 2010 and the Competition Commission Act 2010 are tabled in Parliament as soon as possible.
14. **Thirdly**, MyCC has no choice but to be relevant with current and future trends which is the digital economy. With many businesses rapidly entering the digital era, the MyCC is aiming to promote

innovation but at the same time keeping the consumers' interest at heart which in turn supports the Ministry's objective of reducing the cost of living.

15. In doing so, the MyCC will strengthen its laws to address the issues in digital economy. I was told that the MyCC will soon be carrying out market reviews to identify the root cause within the existing digital markets that distorts competition. It will look into the structure of the market including the conduct of the enterprises, suppliers and consumers in the supply chain and come up with proper recommendations to correct the market behaviour.
16. Recently, we have seen what an abuse of a dominant position by a big tech company and what an effective competition authority is capable of when given the proper support. This was apparent in South Korea as the competition authority is consistent in its decision to fine Google of almost \$177 million for abusing its market dominance.
17. I believe MyCC can do the same, if not better, in preventing these big tech companies from abusing their dominant position and taking advantage of the consumers.

Ladies and gentlemen,

18. With the maturity that the MyCC has built from the day of its inception, I have complete faith that the MyCC will deliver on the priorities that I have just mentioned. In a show of support, the Ministry will be fully committed in working closely with MyCC to ultimately achieve its objectives, hopefully leading to the reduced cost of living.

19. I am confident that with the many exciting projects planned by MyCC, it will be a productive year for the competition law landscape in Malaysia. From the Ministry's perspective, we hope that the MyCC will complement the Ministry's efforts in carrying out his charter.

20. Once again, before I end my speech, I would like to congratulate MyCC for successfully organizing this event today and I hope that all of you here have a wonderful time and gain immeasurable knowledge from this sharing session. The journey to a brighter future may be a long and uphill battle, but there is nothing we cannot achieve if we keep moving forward.

Thank you. Have a fruitful session.

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