

Consumer Watch

EDITORIAL

CUTS Rebuked Dishonest Practices in Fake Mineral Water Scam

Police in Lusaka have charged three Chinese Nationals who were recently caught manufacturing counterfeit mineral water for various bottling companies in Zambia, among them *Aquasavana* and *Aquarite*, with the offence of Copyright Infringement.

Police Spokesperson Esther Katongo stated that the three Directors of Guo Shun Limited of Makeni identified as Jiang Chunwu, Liu Guifen and Liu Heling – all Chinese nationals have been charged with the offence of Copyright Infringement contrary to Section 28 (1) (d) of the Copyright and Performance Rights Act number 25 of 2010 Chapter 406 of the Laws of Zambia.

Thousands of mineral water bottles bearing several brands were found at the warehouse with one of the charged Director's family. A group of Zambian employees working there round the clock to fill the bottles and load them on to trucks for distribution to different clients around Lusaka, according to Zambian media reports.

But Dr Mohamed El Sahili, the company Director of Fairy Bottling, which produces *Aquasavana* mineral water, alleges that the Chinese were making counterfeit products, taking empty *Aquasavana* bottles obtained from supermarkets and filling them with the fake water. After the suspects were taken to the police station, several top officers at the Kanyama police station attempted to cover up the crime, Sahili asserted.

Responding to the scam, Chenai Mukumba, Centre Coordinator of Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS International, Lusaka) stated that as a consumer organisation, it is a breach of trust to the consumers as the faith that they have on a particular brand is lost. Mukumba elucidated that it is important for the foreign investors to indicate that they have enough resources to invest in Zambia to avoid dishonest practices.

Besides, CUTS Lusaka urged Fairy Bottlers Zambia Limited, owners of the *Aquasavana* brand to put in place measures to ensure that the situation is resolved and consumers are protected.

*This Editorial has been adapted from
<https://www.zambianobserver.com>, 22.04.18 & <https://www.iol.co.za>, 14.04.18*



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NEWS

Airtel Fined K600 000 for Deceiving Internet Users

The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) of Zambia has fined Airtel Networks Zambia Plc K600 000, in a matter in which a complaint was raised against the company for deceiving Internet users.



On September 13, 2013 the complainant, Macnicious Mwimba lodged a complaint against Airtel Networks Zambia Plc of deceiving Internet users by providing an Internet service called 'unlimited daily/monthly plan' which, according to him, was in fact limited.

The Competition and Consumer Protection Tribunal on February 28, 2018 Chaired by Willie Mubanga State Counsel, delivered a judgement read by Lawyer Eness Chiyenge also ordered Airtel to pay costs incurred by the complainant to include costs of the proceedings in the last four years. Further, the Tribunal has urged Airtel to refrain from advertisements that are misleading to consumers as they are likely to distort their purchasing decisions.

(Lusaka Times, March 02, 2018)

Fairview Hospital Closed

The Health Professions Council of Zambia (HPCZ) has shut down Lusaka's Fairview Hospital for stocking and dispensing expired drugs and for using three unlicensed doctors, among other offences.

Fairview Hospital has further been cited for using expired reagents in its laboratory, which means test results from the facility were unreliable. The Council instructed Fairview Hospital to stop attending new clients. However, according to the Council, existing patients should be relocated to an alternative health facility, where they will continue receiving safe treatment, while the matter was being addressed. This came to light when a team of eight HPCZ Inspectors in the company of Lusaka City Council officials undertook a routine compliance inspection at the Hospital.



"What the Hospital has been doing poses grave harm to patients and we warn that if Fairview does not agree to the charges, we will take them to court", said Frank Lungu, HPCZ Legal Counsel. Lungu also mentioned that the Council had taken the decision to close the Hospital, with a view to protect the public, explaining expired medicines caused a serious risk to the health of patients.

(Times of Zambia, 29.03.18)

Zambia 'BINS' SA Processed Meat

Zambia and three other neighbouring countries have banned imports of processed meat products from South Africa (SA) after a deadly *listeria* bacteria outbreak was linked to a factory in that country.

Mozambique, Namibia and Botswana also issued a similar ban as health alert intensified across the southern region, with chain-stores operating in Zambia being directed to recall their ready-to-eat meat products. *Listeria* has so far claimed 180 lives in SA. "Government has placed an immediate temporary ban on meat, dairy, fruits and vegetables from South Africa in order to prevent the disease (*listeria*) from spreading to Zambia", said Zambian physician and politician Dr Chilufya.

The Ministry had also engaged management at Pick n Pay and Shoprite to ensure that all risky foods were removed from their shelves. Authorities have also been directed to seize and destroy any risky products coming from SA and increase surveillance



of food imports.

"In SA, 85 percent of patients interviewed said they consumed ready to eat meat products of which *polony* was the most common, followed by *viennas*, *sausages* and other cold meats", Dr Chilufya added.

(Times of Zambia, 06.03.18)

Zambia Faces Fuel Price Hike

The Energy Regulation Board (ERB) of Zambia has increased the pump price of fuel effective recently citing changes in two main variables that influence the price of the commodity.



In a statement issued by ERB, it was noted that oil prices had increased on the international market whilst Kwacha had depreciated. Specifically, the last price adjustment on October 17, 2017, Murban crude oil prices per barrel increased by 9.04 percent from US\$58.10/bbl in November 2017, reaching US\$64.85/bbl by December 2017.

Further since the last price adjustment in October 2017, the *Kwacha* (K) depreciated against the US\$ by about 2.15 percent, from an average rate of K9.76 per US\$ down to December 2017-January 2018 level between K9.97 per US\$, causing the price rise.

(Zambia Online, 13.02.18)

Images are acquired from the Internet