

Consumer Watch

CUTS
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EDITORIAL

Over 1000 Percent Rise in Chlorine Prices Irk Competition Commission

The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission of Zambia said that it will begin investigations for the sudden increase in the prices of disinfectants, in particular Chlorine, in the wake of the Cholera outbreak. Commission Spokesperson Namukolo Kasumpa said that the price of Chlorine reported to have increased between 800 percent and 1000 percent from the observed K3-K5 per bottle to over K25-K30, is not only a source of concern but also defeats the efforts of the Zambia Government in the fight against Cholera.

“The Commission has thus taken keen interest in this matter and has launched investigations”, said Kasumpa. She warned that all traders found to have increased the prices of this ‘now basic’ item without justifiable corresponding increase in the sourcing costs will be taken to task.

“The Commission has repeatedly warned business to desist from engaging themselves in conduct that is unfair and anti-competitive. The applicable fines, if found are up to 10 percent of an enterprise’s annual turnover, then the Commission will not sit idle and watch consumers being exploited in the wake of the Cholera outbreak”, Kasumpa warned.

This Editorial has been adapted from news item published in Lusaka Times on January 16, 2018.



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NEWS

Energy Regulation Board Fines 23 Companies

The Energy Regulation Board (ERB) of Zambia has fined 23 companies and sternly warned one for breach of Licence conditions. ERB Acting Director for Consumer and Public Affairs, Fred Hang'andu said that the fines range from K9,000 to K24,000, which are to be paid by the affected companies within the month of January 2018.

He said the decision to fine the companies was made at the third Regulatory Board of Meeting held on January 19, 2018. Hang'andu said of the 32 licenses, 23 companies were each fined with a sum of K9,000 for breaching license condition 2.4.1, when they failed to submit monthly petroleum industry statistics as required by the ERB.



Hang'andu reminded all energy enterprises that ERB continues to constantly monitor adherence to licence conditions, and take enforcement action where breaches are observed. He said this is in order to assure the public of the highest quality of energy products and services in the Zambian market.

(Lusaka Times, 05.01.18)

Consumers Urged to Know their Rights



World Consumer Rights Day Joint Committee Chairperson Lee Hamunji stated there is need for concerted efforts in creating awareness on the rights of consumers. Hamunji, who is also Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency Public Relations Officer, said that the task of sensitising consumers on their rights should not be left to state agencies alone.

Hamunji also mentioned that the Joint Committee will use the commemoration of the 'World Consumer Day' to create awareness among members of the general public on their rights as consumers of various products. He lamented that most of the consumers are not fully aware of their consumer rights.

The *Zambia News and Information Services (ZANIS)* reports that Hamunji said rights of consumers would not be infringed by suppliers of goods and services once they are made aware. Meanwhile, Hamunji has appealed to the business community in the country to take advantage of the E-commerce. Moreover, he advised business firms engaged in E-commerce not to sale inferior goods to unsuspecting consumers. Hamunji also indicated products sold via E-commerce should be genuine and meet the expectations of would be clients.

(Lusaka Times, 25.01.18)

Year 2017 Records 6.6 Inflation Rate

Zambia Central Statistical Office (CSO) Director of Census and Statistics John Kalumbi said that the annual inflation rate for December 2017 has reduced from 6.3 percent, recorded in last November to 6.1 percent, while the year average rate stands at 6.6 percent. Kalumbi added that the



country's economy has grown by 3.3 percent in the third quarter of 2017.

Kalumbi disclosed in Lusaka (Zambia) that the annual inflation rate had shown a decreasing pattern from 7.5 percent recorded in December 2016 to 6.1 percent recorded in 2017 during the same period. The year-on-year inflation rate was measured by Consumer Price Index (CPI).

(News Diggers, 30.12.17)

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