

CONSUMER WATCH

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CUTS APPLAUDS ZAMBIA'S SIGNING OF AFCFTA

Zambian President Edgar Lungu signed the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) on February 10, 2019. CUTS International Lusaka applauds the decision of the Zambian government to join in the creation of the world's biggest free trade area as it is expected that the agreement will yield great benefits for the continent.

Both Zambia and Botswana signed the AfCFTA agreement bringing the total number of signatories to 52.

Recognising the importance of the agreement as one that will liberalise trade of both goods and services for all African countries, Zambia will now work towards necessary processes required to ratify the agreement.

In 2018, Zambia did not sign the AfCFTA Agreement and opted to only sign the Kigali Declaration which was a declaratory message reflective of positive political will to launch the Continental Free Trade Area. Zambia indicated that it needed to first undertake consultations with key stakeholders. The signing of the Agreement indicates that this process has been completed however the AfCFTA Agreement will only come into force when 22 countries have ratified the Agreement.

To date, 18 countries have ratified it and Zambia will now also begin this process. As such, it is expected that the AfCFTA could come into force in 2019.

The AfCFTA envisages liberalisation of both trade in goods and services in the first phase of negotiations, and will extend to investment, competition policy and intellectual property in the second phase.

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In engaging with this agreement it is important that as a country, there is a need to build productive alliances and the necessary capabilities for industry take advantage of emerging opportunities, while minimising negative impact such as job losses.

There is no doubt that implementation of the AfCFTA will create both opportunities and challenges. Therefore, the onus is on participating countries to take advantage of emerging opportunities, while minimising the cost of trade openness.

Taken from an article published in Lusaka Times on February 11, 2019

ZAMBIA BANS PLASTIC BAGS

The Zambian Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection has banned the use of packaging materials, such as plastic bags and their resultant waste.

Making the announcement in Lusaka, Ministry's Permanent Secretary Ed Chomba said this is in accordance with Section 58 of the Environmental Management Act No 12 of 2011.

Chomba said this is the extended producer regulations which extend the responsibility of the producer of a product or class of products to the



post-consumer stage of the product or class of products. He said the extended producer regulations is one of the tools that government will rely on to manage, in an environmentally-sound manner, packaging materials, such as plastics and their resultant waste.

(Lusaka Times, 03.12.18)

POOR QUALITY OF DRINKING WATER

Peter Sinkamba, President, Green Party, one of Zambia's political parties, has attributed the provision of poor quality of water by water utilities countrywide to poor regulatory and institutional framework arising from government's failure to enact drinking water quality guidelines and standards.

Reacting to recent reports of poor water quality supplied by water utility companies in Lusaka, Copperbelt and Midlands, Sinkamba bemoaned continued absence of drinking water quality guidelines and standards in Zambia which he says has resulted in water borne diseases, such



as cholera and dysentery being endemic in the country.

The current institutional and legal framework for provision of water and sanitation services in Zambia is archaic and requires a complete overhaul to safeguard lives of the people.

(Lusaka Times, 06.01.19)

ZAMBIA TO MAINTAIN 'NO-GMO' STANCE

The people's position remains that Zambia is a genetically modified organisms (GMO)-free country, and yet the mandated National Biosafety Authority (NBA) seems determined to change this. In September 2017, the NBA held an exclusive meeting in Livingstone to discuss amendments to the National Biosafety Policy.

This meeting was dominated by foreign institutions with a clear pro-GMO mandate. The NBA held another exclusive meeting to develop the regulations for the live release of GMOs in



Zambia in Lusaka on December 06, 2018. Again, this meeting excludes key national policy stakeholders, yet welcomes the strong hand of outside institutions.

(Lusaka Times, 07.12.18)



EXPIRED MEALIE-MEAL BAGS SEIZED

The Public Health Office in Kalabo district of Zambia has seized 329 by 25 kg bags of expired breakfast meal belonging to Superior Milling Limited Company. The office has further seized 11 bags of adulterated maize bran from the same outlet.

Public Health Officer, Maimpa Mumba said the expired products were seized during a joint operation between the Public Health Department of the Ministry of Health in conjunction with the Public Health Unit of Kalabo Town Council.

Maimpa who is also President of Public Health Association of Zambia disclosed to Zambia News and Information Services that the impromptu operation was conducted following complaints from members of the public alleging that the company's outlet was selling adulterated mealie-meal.

(Lusaka Times, 21.01.19)

ZRA INTERCEPTS TRUCKS WITH SMUGGLED ALCOHOL

The Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) elite anti-smuggling squads working together with customs officers from Chirundu boarder have intercepted three trucks in different locations with alcohol believed to be meant for Christmas celebrations worth about K700, 000 in taxes.

ZRA Corporate Communications Manager Topsy Sikalinda said that one of the trucks was intercepted in the southern province on the new bottom road off Siavonga in the bush where it was found offloading into two canter trucks and two small buses.



Sikalinda said the other two trucks were intercepted in Chirundu district after the border town with forged documents purporting to be carrying various furniture fittings.

(Lusaka Times, 03.12.18)

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