

1st April 2020

**PUBLIC NOTICE: COMPETITION AND CONSUMER AUTHORITY PRECAUTION STATEMENT
AGAINST DECEPTIVE PRACTICES DURING THE CORONA VIRUS OUTBREAK**

The Competition and Consumer Authority (CCA) is mandated to provide for the protection of consumers by means of investigation, prohibition and control of unfair business practices. We advise the general public to be cautious of unscrupulous traders and businesses taking advantage of consumers amid the Corona Virus pandemic.

With heightened concerns about the Corona Virus, the Authority has noted several complaints from the public regarding increase in prices for essential products, in particular:

- Some basic food products;
- Healthcare and hygiene products; and
- Dubious products being sold in the market.

In accordance with Section 5 of the Consumer Protection Act 2018, "a supplier shall not, in relation to the marketing of goods or services, by way of words or conduct falsely represent that (a) that goods are of a particular standard, quality, value, grade, composition, style, model, or that the goods have a particular history or previous use; (c) that goods or services have sponsorship, approval, affiliation, performance characteristics, accessories, uses or benefits that they do not have.

Furthermore, Section 15 (4) of the same Act states that "a supplier shall not supply or offer to supply goods which do not conform to the mandatory safety standards for the class of goods set by the Botswana Bureau of Standards or other international bodies recognised by the Botswana Bureau of Standards'.

In addition, Section 15 (5) states that, ' Where the Authority discovers that a supplier is supplying unsafe goods or goods which do not conform to the mandatory safety standards referred to in sub section (4), the Authority may (a) re- call such goods, (b) halt the production, supply, advertisement or importation of such goods, (c) disclose to the public any information relating to the characteristics of the goods which render those goods unsafe; or (d) direct the supplier to replace the goods, refund any consumer who bought the unsafe goods or compensate the consumer for any damage suffered by the consumer in using the unsafe goods at an amount determined by the Authority.'

The Competition and Consumer Authority will take appropriate action against any business or person found to be engaged in deceptive practices or any other trade malpractices in the supply of products intended to fight the Corona Virus.

Finally, the Authority is appealing to all consumers to observe laid down health rules including washing hands and reducing unnecessary travel as ways of mitigating the spread of the Corona Virus. The General Public is advised to be vigilant.

Competition & Consumer Authority

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During the period of Lockdown, consumers can interact with the CCA through virtual platforms such as the website, email and social media as follows:

Website: www.competitionauthority.co.bw

Email: info@competitionauthority.co.bw

Facebook: Competition & Consumer Authority- Botswana

In case of any emergencies the CCA can be reached through the following numbers:
71900900/ 72176175/71319864