

## **WARNING NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC**

### **FAKE BLACK FRIDAY AND FESTIVE SEASON DEALS!**

The COMESA Competition Commission (the “Commission”) wishes to alert consumers to exercise caution when shopping during Black Friday and Festive Season deals, to avoid being ripped off. Black Friday deals refer to special discounts and promotional offers provided by retailers during the holiday shopping season, and it is known for massive price reductions on a wide range of products.



The Commission cautions consumers that many brands may inflate prices in the lead-up to Black Friday and Festive Seasons, allowing them to advertise big discounts that, in reality, are not genuine. In other unfortunate instances, retailers may take advantage of the deal to dispose of fake or unsafe goods. Other consumer concerns with Black Friday and Festive Seasons include:

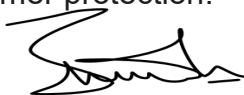
- i. Retailers may take advantage of the high demand and hype by consumers to dispose of fake or goods which are expired or nearly expired.
- ii. Some deals come with no returns or strict conditions, leaving consumers stuck with unwanted or defective products.
- iii. There is normally a surge in phishing scams, fake websites, and fraudulent ads, exposing consumers to risk identity theft and financial fraud when entering payment details on insecure platforms.
- iv. The low prices may encourage impulse buying which can lead to overspending and debt.

In view of the above, the Commission urges consumers to stay alert and shop smart by observing the following tips:

- i. Check the quality of products by reading product descriptions carefully and avoid items with missing safety labels or unclear specifications.
- ii. Shop from trusted retailers and official websites to avoid fake websites and social media ads offering unrealistic discounts.
- iii. Compare prices across multiple platforms to confirm authenticity of the advertised discounts.
- iv. Compare prices on display with the offered discounts and actual prices charged at the counter
- v. Beware of counterfeit products which may be sold at extremely low prices.
- vi. Beware of scammers and fraudsters

The Commission hereby issues a warning to retailers operating in the Common Market<sup>1</sup> who are found to engage in any of the aforementioned conduct, that they will be in breach of the COMESA Competition Regulations, specifically Articles 27 and 28 which prohibits false or misleading representation to consumers and unconscionable conduct respectively.

The Commission further appeals to any person who has been affected by any of the above conduct, or who has observed such conduct being carried out in the Common Market to report the matter to the Commission by contacting the undersigned or to the national authorities responsible for consumer protection.



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<sup>1</sup> The Common Market consists of the following 21 Member States: Burundi, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Libya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.