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Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

Ref: CCC/CP/CA/1/2023
25 July 2023

CONSUMER ALERT

SUBSTANDARD/CONTAMINATED NATURCOLD SYRUP IDENTIFIED IN CAMEROON

The COMESA Competition Commission ("the Commission") has become aware that on 19 July 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a Medical Product Alert, Medical Product Alert N°5/2023, with regard to a batch of substandard (contaminated) NATURCOLD Syrup identified in Cameroon, and first reported to WHO on 13 March 2023. The substandard medicine is marketed by **FRAKEN INTERNATIONAL (England).**

According to WHO, analysis on samples of the NATURCOLD syrup from Cameroon were made available on 27 June 2023 and analysed in a WHO contracted and prequalified laboratory. The analysis found that the product contained unacceptable amounts of diethylene glycol as contaminants. Diethylene glycol was detected in samples of NATURCOLD as much as 28.6%, whereas the acceptable limit for Diethylene Glycol is no more than 0.10%.

WHO further warned that Diethylene glycol is toxic to humans when consumed and can prove fatal. NATURCOLD Syrup is therefore unsafe and its use, especially in children, may result in serious injury or death. Toxic effects can include abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, inability to pass urine, headache, altered mental state and acute kidney injury which may lead to death.

The affected product has been identified in Cameroon, but it is believed that it may be distributed to other countries or regions through informal markets.

The affected product is indicated as below:

Product Name	Stated Marketer	Expiry Dates	Batch Number	Declared active ingredient
NATURCOLD syrup	FRAKEN INTERNATIONAL (England)	Feb-25	E22053	Paracetamol, phenylephrine hydrochloride, chlorpheniramine maleate

The affected Product is identified as in the below picture:



The affected product is marketed by FRAKEN INTERNATIONAL (England). The United Kingdom national regulatory authority, the MHRA, has however confirmed that no such manufacturer exists in the UK, and enquires are still underway to determine the origin of the product.

WHO has appealed to the public not to use the above substandard products, and in cases where the product has been consumed, and one has suffered from adverse reaction, then they are advised to seek immediate medical advice from a qualified healthcare professional and the case be reported to their respective National Regulatory Authority or National Pharmacovigilance Centre, or reported to the WHO via rapidalert@who.int.

Pursuant to Article 30(1)(b) of the COMESA Competition Regulations, the Commission requests any person who establishes that this product is being sold in COMESA, to avoid their purchase or consumption, and to report the matter to the Commission by contacting **Mr. Steven Kamukama, Manager Consumer Welfare and Advocacy Division** on +265 (0) 1 772466 or by email on: skamukama@comesacompetition.org

Affected persons within the Common Market may also contact their national consumer institutions or any other body with the mandate on consumer protection in their countries.

Further details regarding the alert by WHO can be accessed through the following link: n5_2023_naturcold_en.pdf (who.int)

Registrar
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