



**RESOLUTIONS FROM THE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER  
DIALOGUE ON COMBATING COUNTERFEIT  
PRODUCTS**

**HELD ON**

**12 MARCH 2025**

**AT**

**THE GOLDEN CONIFER**

**HARARE**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The National Economic Consultative (NECF) in partnership with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce held a dialogue on consequences of counterfeit products at Golden Conifer on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2025. The event was held under the theme, '**Combating Counterfeit Products in Zimbabwe and Fostering Economic Growth**'. Hon. N. M. Ndlovu, Minister of Industry and Commerce, as represented by the Deputy Minister Hon. R. I. Modi, was the Guest of Honour for the half-day event. The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Ministers of Health and Child Care as well as Local Government and Public Works who were representing their respective Ministers.



- 1.2 During the dialogue there was general agreement that indeed the trade in counterfeit products had become a menace in the country and the illegality was militating against economic growth over and above being a threat to human health and life.
- 1.3 The conference noted that although the majority of counterfeit products were coming through imports, the manufacturing of counterfeit products had also

become rampant in the country, particularly in the backyards. Further, it was revealed that the small and medium enterprises were the major culprits in selling counterfeit products, fuelled by the high levels of informality in the economy.

- 1.4 The stakeholders also acknowledged the work being done by the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce on Anti-smuggling whose blitz was playing a part in reducing the illegal importation and sale of counterfeit products.



- 1.5 The following resolutions emanated from the half day dialogue:-

## **2.0 KEY RESOLUTIONS**

### **2.1 Legal Framework/Penalties for Offenders**

The conference recommended the need for putting up stiffer penalties/punishment for any persons/institutions convicted of trading in counterfeit products. The issue of the gap in the law was singled out by the delegates as the elephant in the room when it comes to fighting crimes such as counterfeiting. The meeting noted that, for example, the current penalties were too lenient to deter perpetrators from continuing with the illegality.

This could be done through the enactment of an anti-counterfeiting law which would spell out the levels of punishment/imprisonment for those engaging in counterfeiting.

Other punitive measures should include revoking trading/shop licences for those who would have been found selling counterfeit products.

## 2.2 **Consumer Education and Awareness**

The conference recommended the need for extensive consumer education and awareness on the risks associated with the use of counterfeit products. The meeting noted that in most cases, consumers were unknowingly purchasing counterfeit products given their limited knowledge to distinguish between counterfeits and original products. The need for consumer awareness was said to be a serious issue given that such products had also extended to food, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics thus posing a danger to people's health and lives.

Local Authorities should be roped in carrying out such consumer education and awareness programmes in order to reach the grassroots.



## 2.3 **Capacitation of Institutions working on Fighting Counterfeiting**

The meeting recommended technical and financial capacitation of institutions working on combating counterfeiting. It was noted that in the fight against counterfeiting, there was a capacity constraint whereby for example the law enforcement agencies or ZIMRA officials were not in a position to distinguish

between original and counterfeits products. In that regard, there is need for skills training for such officials to be able to make the distinction.

Such capacitation should also include availing the tools of trade required to undertake the work in fighting the trade in counterfeit products. For example, the surveillance equipment needed in managing the borders.

#### **2.4 Walking the Talk in the Anti-Corruption Fight**

Stakeholders noted that often, the institutions/departments that are entrusted to lead in the fight against illegalities such as counterfeiting were the ones who were at the forefront of harbouring corrupt elements. In that regard, the stakeholders called for stiffer punishment to officials who would be found to be indulging in corrupt activities whilst in the line of their duty.

#### **2.5 Study on the extent and impact of counterfeiting**

Stakeholders noted on the need for carrying out a study that would put into perspective the extent of counterfeiting and its impact on the country so that a systematic approach can be adopted to fighting the problem. Such a study could also encompass case studies from other countries that are successfully fighting or have successfully fought counterfeiting. A study is required to determine how much smuggling and product counterfeiting is a problem in the country.

#### **2.6 Designated Unit to Fight Counterfeiting and Smuggling**

The ZRP should set a designated unit to deal with fake products, anti-smuggling and products counterfeiting.



## 2.7 **Enhanced Collaboration**

Collaborative efforts are required between government, business and civil society in order to effectively curb the proliferation of counterfeit products in the country. Stakeholders emphasised on the need for business to actively support government efforts in fighting smuggling and trading in counterfeits.

## 2.8 **Carving in Sections on Counterfeit Products in Trade Agreements**

The country should advocate for the inclusion of counterfeit products provision in trade agreements with regional blocs such as SADC, COMESA and AfCFTA. This minimises proliferation of counterfeit products nationally, regionally and continentally.

## 2.9 **Certification and Standardisation**

The stakeholders recommended that certification and standardisation should be made mandatory to all suppliers especially those who supply consumable products. Currently certification and standardisation are a voluntary process in the country.



### 2.10 **Use of Information Communication Technology**

The authorities should adopt Artificial intelligence (AI) in fighting proliferation of counterfeit products. Advanced technology can be used to quicken facilities that include whistleblowing.

### 2.11 **Track and Trace System for Medical Products**

All medicinal drugs should have a trace and track system which allows authorities to verify the source and movement of the products.

### 2.12 **Reduce Compliance Costs to encourage formalisation by the SMEs**

The meeting noted that a costly and complex regulatory process drives most businesses into informalisation. Punitive regulations should, therefore, be removed and the laws revised to encourage formalisation particularly the SMEs who are the main culprits on counterfeiting.



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