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KEBS Publishes **Protocols** for Importation and Trade in Used Textiles and Shoes (Mitumba)

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KEBS publishes protocols for importation and trade in used textiles and shoes (Mitumba)

The Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) has published protocols to guide the importation and sale of used textiles and shoes (mitumba) as the fight against coronavirus (COVID-19) continues. The protocols seek to enhance protection and safety of traders and users while handling used textiles and shoes to avoid the spread of the virus.



“The guidelines provide a framework for enforcing additional safety measures such as cleaning and fumigation of used textiles and shoes at the country of origin before baling, and at the wholesale or retail stores including surrounding areas every day at closure of business,” said Lt Col (Rtd.) Bernard Njiraini, Managing Director, KEBS.

The new protocols also require, among other factors, all importers of used textiles and shoes to REGISTER with KEBS and identify the country of origin of the bales to enable their traceability. In addition, clearance of used textiles and shoes shall only be undertaken through Kilindini port and the Inland Container Depot Nairobi (ICDN).

Traders and interested parties can access the protocols on the KEBS website at www.kebs.org

“We urge importers, dealers and buyers of used textiles to adhere to the guidelines provided in the protocols,” he adds.

The guidelines are based on research and new knowledge corroborated by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), among other research organizations. The protocols are a culmination of several weeks of research and consultations by KEBS with the Ministry of Industry, Trade & Enterprise Development, and the Ministry of Health

KEBS suspended the importation of used garments and footwear, popularly known as “mitumba”, early this year following the declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic by the WHO. This precautionary measure was taken with the main objective of safeguarding handlers and users of used textiles and shoes from any risk of exposure to Corona Virus as the world grappled with the fast spreading pandemic.

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Food Additives: Safe use, regulatory control and empowering consumers

By Col Lt (Rtd.) Bernard Njiraini

Food Additives are substances added to food or food products not as a typical food ingredient but to play a justified scientific technological function(s) in the manufacture, storage or distribution of the product.

Most consumers erroneously refer to food additives as ‘chemicals’ a term used in 1950s within the World Health Organization (WHO) but which has since been revised mainly because some of the food additives in use today are not chemicals as such. Food additives have been used over decades given the indispensable role they play in food processing, food security and nutrition.

According to the General Standard on Food Additives, KS CODEX 192, the justifiable technological use of food additives include: preservation of the nutritional value of food; provision of necessary ingredients for foods manufactured for groups of consumers having special dietary needs; enhancing

the shelf life of products; and to stabilize products or even regulate the acidity of products. The standard further guides that their use should be at the lowest extent possible to achieve the desired effect i.e. the technological justification. It further guides that food additives should not be used to deceive consumers or hide undesirable characteristics of the product such as use of flavour enhancers or colours to conceal retro degradation of food products.

Where use of food additives is inconsistent to the preamble of KS CODEX STAN 192 and in accordance to the approved maximum use levels as provided by the standard, they confer the benefits of innovation and differentiation during



products formulations while assuring the safety of the consumers. This provides consumers with choices, extend shelf life of products thus availing safe products/produce throughout the seasons while reducing wastage. For example, the use of waxing additives on fruits will significantly reduce wastage by extending the storage period thus benefiting both farmers/traders as well as consumers without exposing the consumer to any form of risk. It is therefore very important that before application or use of any food additives that one should refer to the guidance from the standard on food additives so as to establish:

- If that particular food additive has a justifiable reason to be used in the intended products;
- If it is approved for use in that particular food product or produce; and
- The maximum amount approved for use.

These three components in addition to the application of the preamble constitutes the safe use of food additives. Any use contrary to this guidance may amount to abuse of use of the additives and thus expose the consumers to unnecessary health risks.

Consumers on the other hand have a

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constitutional right to information as required by the Constitution Article 46 (b), *'Consumers have the right to the information necessary for them to gain full benefit from goods and services.'* This means that proper declaration of food additives as is the case of other ingredients must be done on product label. The principle of labeling as per KS EAS 40 standard, requires that the label of products should not be false, misleading, deceptive or likely to create an erroneous impression regarding its character in any respect. This means where food additives are used they must

be declared so as to enable consumers make informed decision. The standard in regard to food additives requires that the label should provide the class and specific food additive name e.g. Preservative (Sodium Benzoates) where it has been used. This means that failure to declare food additives, where used, amounts to non-conformance to the labelling requirement and thus if detected either by our quality assurance or market surveillance teams will lead to product destruction, recall or even prosecution for misleading consumers.

Recognizing the challenges faced by most industry players of interpretation of KS CODEX STAN 192 and the various perception in regard to food additives, KEBS has been and will continue educating stakeholders through various forums on the safe use of food additives so as to be able to take their advantage while ensuring the safety of consumers and avoid any use that may mislead consumers in making decision in regard to products. This effort will also be complemented by stringent implementation and enforcement of the standards by both the quality assurance and the market surveillance teams to ensure full compliance to the standards.

The role of comparable measurement in today's globalized economy

By Tom Oduor Okumu

From research, trade, crime scene investigations, product development, sports medicine, medical diagnostics, agriculture and even taxation, biological, chemical, and physical measurements are carried out in many sectors globally, to address specific analytical questions.

Having comparable measurement results in today's globalized economy reduces duplication of tests and unnecessary wastage of time and money and demonstrate transparency and enhance mutual recognition of the test results. In addition, comparability and traceability in measurement are important to ensure fairness and transparency in all decisions made using the results.

This means measurement results achieved on one part of the country or the world can be replicated in another part of the world and accepted to be accurate.

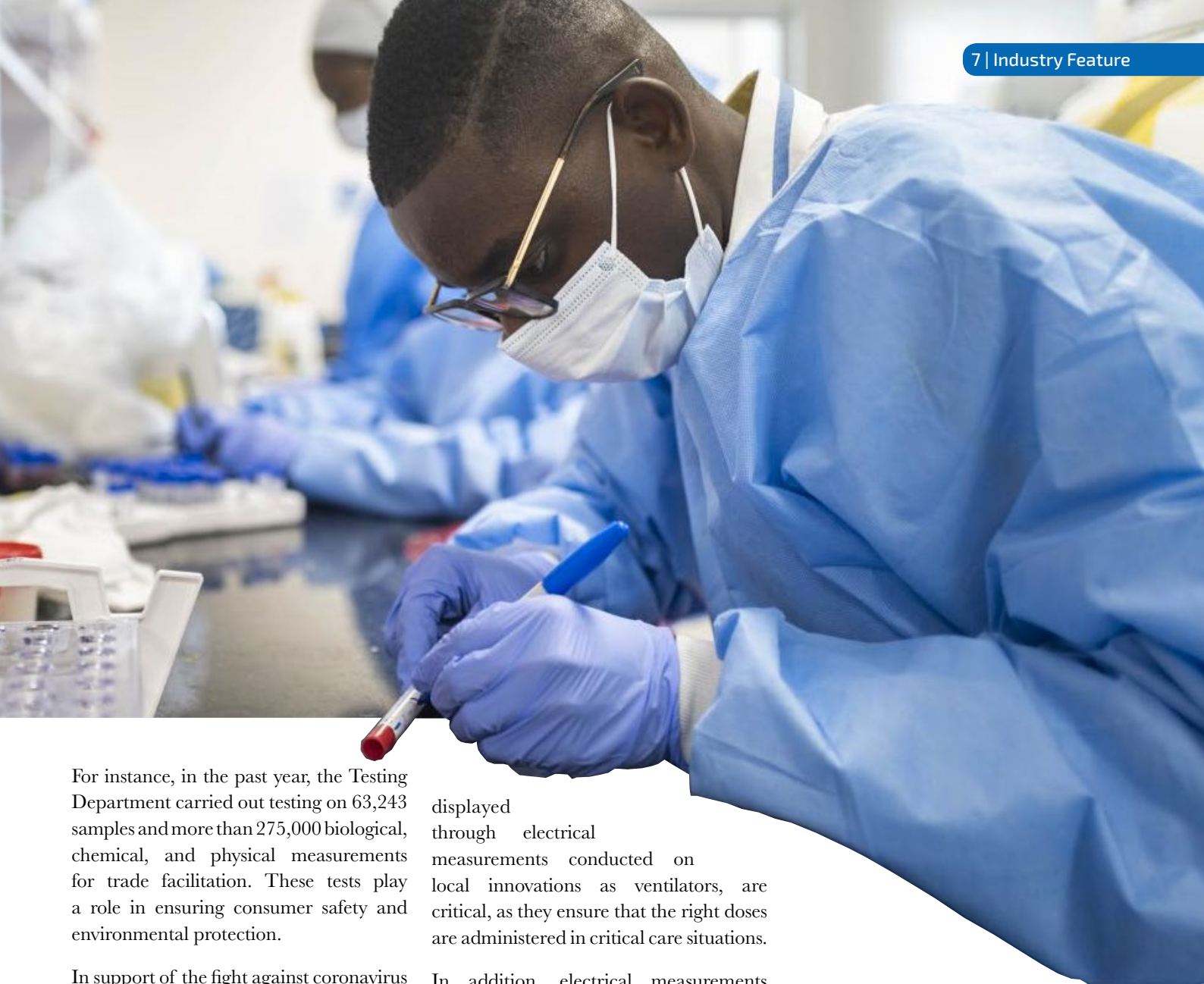
However, this can only be achieved through harmonized or universal measuring processes.



Globally, the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (French Bureau international des poids et mesures) (BIPM) is the non-governmental organisation through which member states act together on matters related to measurement science and measurement standards. The BIPM is mandated to provide the basis for a single, coherent system of measurements throughout the world and that is traceable to the International System of Units (SI). In return, national standards bodies or weights and measurement bodies make reference to the SI units.

Locally, the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) is the national metrology reference laboratory for measurement sciences as mandated in the Standards Act, Chapter 496 of the laws of Kenya. KEBS ensures that all measurements done in the country are comparable and traceable to the universally recognized SI units.

KEBS achieves this through providing testing and calibration services as well as providing facilities for the examination and testing of commodities and any material or substance.



For instance, in the past year, the Testing Department carried out testing on 63,243 samples and more than 275,000 biological, chemical, and physical measurements for trade facilitation. These tests play a role in ensuring consumer safety and environmental protection.

In support of the fight against coronavirus (COVID-19), KEBS has ensured that Biological, Chemical and Physical measurements continue uninterrupted thus making sure that personal protective equipment and products are tested for conformity to specific requirements and their quality assured before certification. Some of the products tested include instant hand sanitizers, surgical face masks, reusable cloth masks, single-use medical examination gloves, single-use sterile rubber surgical gloves, protective clothing used by health workers, health care aprons and overall clothing, anesthetic and respiratory equipment (nebulizing systems and components), sanitization booths, and face shields among others

The measurements undertaken consider product integrity, performance as well as safety for use. An example of safety procedures such as, validation of signals

displayed through electrical measurements conducted on local innovations as ventilators, are critical, as they ensure that the right doses are administered in critical care situations.

In addition, electrical measurements support the vital aspect of validating new equipment to ensure that the new products perform as stated by the innovators. Further, evaluation of biocompatibility (ensuring that materials used are not harmful or toxic to living tissues) of medical devices used in critical care situations such as ventilators require accurate and traceable measurements.

Thus, application of measurements that adhere to the International Units (SI) ensures that products and services are of good quality, ensure consumer safety and are comparable and traceable globally. As such all measurements carried out at KEBS facilitate local, regional, and international trade.

The writer is a Laboratory Analyst currently in charge of Inorganic Chemistry Laboratory at the Kenya Bureau of Standards

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Curbing substandard products through ‘Wajibika na KEBS’ Initiative

The Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) is calling on Kenyans to support the fight against the sale of substandard products in the country through the ‘*Wajibika na KEBS*’ initiative.



The initiative provides an interactive and collaborative platform through which the general public can report any encounters with suspected substandard products on sale via KEBS customer touchpoints including KEBS Official App, emails, SMS, and Toll-Free Numbers.

“The *Wajibika na KEBS* Initiative was born out of the need to put in place a two-pronged approach that encourages collaboration between KEBS officers and Kenyans in tackling the proliferation of substandard products in the country,” said Lt Col (Rtd.) Bernard Njiraini, Managing Director, KEBS.

To *Wajibika Na KEBS*, verify the authenticity of KEBS quality marks by use of the KEBS Official Mobile App

or by sending a the code underneath the quality mark e.g. ‘SM#Permit Number / ISM#UCR Number / DM#Permit Number’ to 20023 to get validity status of the permit. If the details are different, report to KEBS Toll Free Number **1545** during official working hours of **8.00 AM to 1.00 PM and 2.00 PM to 5.00 PM, Monday to Friday.**

Individuals can also verify products using the **KEBS Official App** on Google Play and Apple App Store, or visit our offices countrywide.

It is anticipated that *Wajibika na KEBS* will cultivate and foster a culture of quality, where everybody is accountable for ensuring that the quality and safety of products is maintained.

Live, Grow, Prosper with KEBS

By Charles Wachira

Upon a time, eons gone a great man tried to fathom how things work and came to be.

A sun coming out of its chamber like a bride groom ready to run its race, in the sky.

How bones for a child grow in a mother's womb.

How sea waves repeatedly hit shores but go not beyond.

How seeds though looking different bring a copy of the mother tree when they germinate. After a lot thought and human wisdom he finally concluded 'God said, let there be'. And it was.

Now we have core values as KEBS which are great - Integrity, customer focus, excellence and sustainability. These are what we are. They drive our vision, mission and motto as we deliver on our mandate. In as much as we are passionate about our works, we must be able to summarize the two key core values (integrity and customer focus) into human dignity. Yes, we must see our clients first as human beings and then as entities (firms). Must have a human face. Let the first point of contact for clients with KEBS be a place where they feel dignified. Even if it's the only place she or he was able to visit and be attended. The point of contact should be of joy peace and comfort and not pain, frustration and despair. That way our core values will have meaning and purpose.

And people, clients and others will value us and have a positive outlook on KEBS.

It's my opinion. Retraining, refreshing on the whole aspect of core values and especially customers focus is overdue.

Thanks as always.

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Lake Region, Kisumu*